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PSYCHOSES AND NEUROSES OF URETHRAL ORIGIN.

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MALADIES of a neurastheniac and psychic nature, bordering on the brink of insanity and mental aberrations of minor import, are apt to follow in the wake of diseases of the genito-urinary tract, especially those of the urethra and its adnexa. It is incredible with what persistency the mind of a patient will dwell on pre-existing affections, even if all traces of them have been satisfactorily eradicated. That class of patients is apt to become a burden not alone to themselves, but a positive annoyance to the physician as well, who, after repeated and painstaking examinations, becomes convinced that there is *nothing of any pathological significance* in the entire genito-urinary apparatus, and thus accordingly acquaints the patient of this fact and endeavors to remove his morbid conception. To his dismay, he will, however, discover that this is not so easy. The patient stubbornly clings to his fixed idea that there is something very grave in his urethral tract. No manner of persuasion and reasoning will avail under these circumstances, to dispel his delusion; the patient will run the gamut of a number of physicians, until either some charlatan by divers surreptitious means will actually alleviate him of his fancy or suggestive affliction, or else time alone will effect a cure.

It would be very interesting to learn the underlying etiological factors that give rise to this type of nervous manifestations coincident to the diseases of the male urethra. Various theories have been advanced. One of these goes so far as to ascribe the neurastheniacal symptoms to the absorption of a *virus* from the urethra, which, acting upon the nerve centers, is capable of creating a host of manifestations of a nervous or psychic character. Another of the theories propounded contends that unless a predisposing tendency to unbalanced mentality or a highly nervous temperament exists, such sequelæ are not prone to develop, the presence of a urethritis at some time merely acting as the exciting or determining factor. The latter seems to be the more plausible of the two theories, a feeble nervous mechanism and the perverted volition are wholly responsible for these morbidities in the mental sphere.