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## THE ASYLUM, THE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, AND THE TEACHING OF PSYCHIATRY.\*

By STEWART PATON, M. D.,

Associate in Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University; and Director of the Laboratory, Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital.

**T**HE Alienist is frequently asked if individuals who are mentally deranged receive as good care in a hospital for the insane as patients in the wards of a general hospital. Unfortunately, this question must be answered in the negative. Nor is the main reason for this disparity far to seek, if we consider for a moment the striking differences in the organization of the two classes of institutions.

In our general hospitals the medical care of the patients is entrusted to a staff the individual members of which are expected to devote themselves solely to the discharge of their professional duties. In the hospital for the insane the medical officers are fortunate if a large part of their time and energy is not absorbed in the performance of purely administrative work. Those of you who are familiar with the present system of organization in these institutions will appreciate this fact. Recently the medical superintendents of three of the best known hospitals for the insane in the United States have in my hearing expressed dissatisfaction with a condition of affairs that gives them so little opportunity or leisure in which to study the patients entrusted to their care. The importance of such an expression of opinion can hardly be over-estimated, for it means that the men best qualified by experience to judge such matters appreciate the existence of a radical defect and would be among the first to welcome a thorough reorganization of our hospitals for the insane. When a physician-in-chief finds that it is impossible for him to keep abreast of the times in the practice and study of his profession the work of all his associates on the medical staff must inevitably suffer from the lack of efficient and capable criticism, while, at the same time, they are deprived of an enthusiastic and inspiring leadership. In the face of such condition of affairs, the general medical public seeing that the resident physicians in our hospitals for the insane are permitted to devote only a portion of their time to their professional duties may

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