

## THE PATHOLOGY OF GENERAL PARALYSIS.\*

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Out of the vast subject of the pathology of general paralysis I propose to bring before your notice a few of the points that are of most general interest to the clinician, and that aid him both in clarifying his conception of the disease and in making an early and exact diagnosis of it. From the point of view of pathology the disease is in several respects one of peculiar interest, to the psychiatrist, to the practitioner and to the State. Of all mental diseases it is at the same time the most preventable and the least curable. Its occurrence could if thought desirable be avoided either by the individual or by the State. On the other hand, having once occurred it is absolutely refractory to treatment and leads to a fatal issue more rapidly and surely than almost any other form of insanity. This latter fact renders the early diagnosis of it a matter of high importance not only for the reputation of the physician in attendance, but also for the welfare of the patient's relatives and friends. Again, there are few nervous diseases and no mental diseases the pathology of which is better understood than that of general paralysis. The very fact that it has a specific anatomical substratum is, in itself, of great theoretic interest, and lends a striking and unfortunate support to the erroneous dogma that insanity is always due to disease of the brain. This dogma happens to be true in the particular affection of general paralysis, but in my opinion it would be most misleading to generalise it by applying it to all other forms of mental disorder. The existence of an anatomical substratum is important in two other respects.

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