

## NEUROPATHIC WARDS IN GENERAL HOSPITALS.

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*Mr. President:* As functional nervous diseases have of late occupied a prominent place in the advance of medicine, I thought a few remarks on the practical result of their treatment for the past two years in the special department of a general hospital, might be of interest to this Association.

I may first say that I advocated the formation of neuropathic wards in general hospitals primarily, in the belief that a practical means would thus be found for the prevention of the most serious disease which, not only the physician but the State has to contend with, viz., insanity.

I would here state that by the word "insanity," as used in this paper, I would refer only to the *acute* insanities, the psychoneuroses of Kafft-Ebing; and by functional nervous disease; to those forms especially of so called neurasthenia, in which psychical symptoms predominate, or as it might be termed, acute psychasthenia. The chronic insanities, such as dementia præcox, etc., are not included.

With the many other beneficial results, which arise from the treatment of those functional nervous diseases, in a special department of a general hospital, which do not tend immediately towards insanity in their onward course, I will not detain you.

I would like first to direct your attention to the question of the prophylaxis of insanity from a neurological point of view, viz., by beginning at the earliest stage of the development of nervous disease, and proceeding thence to the more advanced stage, when the boundary-line of insanity is reached.

The question of the prevention of insanity has been discussed chiefly by the alienist, who, in spite of every effort to promote this good work, has been greatly handicapped by the existing condition of affairs, since the patient only comes under his care when