

BEFORE the members of the Ottawa Medico-Chirurgical Society, on December 7th, at the Carnegie Library, Dr. Burgess, superintendent of the Protestant Hospital for the Insane, at Verdun, gave an exhaustive and instructive paper on "The Family Physician and the Insane." Dr. Burgess has made a life study of the brain, and is considered an authority on this, especially throughout Canada. He referred to the wrong public practice that attaches a stigma to families in which there is insanity. It was no more disgrace to have disease of the brain than disease of the lungs, or any other organ of the body. It comes to families of all stations of life, the highest and the lowest. He said that it was the duty of the general practitioners to do all in their power to crush out this unfair belief. He said that in former years the study of the brain was not included in the curriculum of the studies of the general physician, but that it was a very wise change when it was made a part of the medical man's study, instead of leaving it entirely to the specialists. The general practitioner could do much in guarding families in which there are erratic tendencies. He pointed out that children of such parentage should not be highly educated and should follow an outdoor occupation. Regarding sending patients to hospitals for treatment, he said that in nearly every case it was better to send the patient to the hospital. It was at least necessary that the insane person should be taken to new surroundings. He gave an extensive explanation of making out applications for admittance to asylums, which are often done very incorrectly by the physicians. He spoke of the proper methods to be employed to promote sleep, and said that drugs should only be used as a last resort, and then should be changed often to prevent the patient from acquiring the drug habit. He pointed out that in many respects the laws in Quebec regarding the admittance of patients into an asylum were much superior to those in force in Ontario. He had been written to by Ontario authorities, and he believed that shortly there would be many changes in Ontario's laws in this respect. Dr. Chabot, acting president of the society, presided, and a vote of thanks was tendered, moved by Dr. Couzens, seconded by Dr. Scott. In replying, Dr. Burgess said that it would be a great advantage if the name asylum was changed to hospital for the treatment of mental diseases. He said that there was no restraint used with patients in asylums now.