

methods of investigation and treatment are rapidly bringing asylums into closer resemblance to modern hospitals. It is being demonstrated conclusively that the study of insanity must be conducted along the same lines as are pursued in the investigation of other branches of medicine. We know little of the pathology or pathogenesis of the various insanities, yet in other diseases, advances in the study of Bacteriology and Physiological chemistry have gone far towards demonstrating that the great majority of the processes of disease in general are due to toxic elements in one form or another. May we not therefore look to the general organism to discover toxic elements which may originate directly or reflexly the conditions existing in the insane. The relation between changes in the nervous system and general somatic disease is often marked. The lapse of time between the two is so great that the relationship is overlooked.

To Bouchard and his associates must be ascribed the credit of co-relating auto-intoxication and various forms of insanity. All efforts to locate the lesion and demonstrate the exact nature of its pathology have failed to convince us that insanity is due to some definite morbid process or degeneration of nerve cells or neurons. On the contrary, if it be organic disease affecting the nervous system, then the causes we find for physical disturbances are many.

Recent observers have shown that the various fluids of the body undergo decided changes in the insane. The urine has been especially used to demonstrate this. The following conclusions have been drawn; first, that the toxicity of urine is markedly increased in melancholia and diminished in maniacal patients, as demonstrated by the fact that when injected into animals it produces symptoms similar to that form of mental disturbance in the patient from whom the urine was taken. This fact alone favors the idea that the toxæmia is the cause not the effect; second, that insanity is frequently produced by toxins is affirmed by recent investigations of acute infectious, visceral and diathetic diseases.

From this does it not seem a reasonable hypothesis to assume that the sympathetic relation existing between all acute forms of insanity and physical disturbances is capable in the majority of cases of actual demonstration? One of the best arguments in favour of the origin of insanity by auto-intoxication is deduced from the fact that antiseptic and anti-infectious treatment has often given good results.

Since the introduction of asepsis in midwifery the number of cases of puerperal insanity has been greatly lessened. Hansen, Idanoff, and others have laid great stress upon infection or toxic conditions as a cause of the lying-in psychoses. No distinctive organism has been demonstra-