

MENTAL HYGIENE IN RELATION TO SOCIAL HYGIENE.*

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THE kind invitation of Doctor Pagé has caused me to be brought into the midst of this assembly with the burden of addressing you in a language which is not the daily vehicle of my thoughts. However, the difficulty is alleviated by your kind sympathy and the keen pleasure I experience of being in the midst of confreres animated with the most laudable zeal for the betterment of humanity. Not satisfied with living a comfortable existence, you deem such a behaviour void and useless and you want to devote yourselves to the improvement of your science so that in this land of yours there might be a little more sunshine. To promote science in all fields of society is a noble aim and worthy of any educated mind's activity. I always feel at ease in such society. I am sure to find in your hearts the indulgence I need for this paper I am going to read to you with a deep sentiment of our social needs and an ardent desire to bring an end or at least an alleviation of them.

I want to show first what has been done for the betterment of the treatment of the insane and then indicate what mental hygiene must do in order to diminish the dangers to which we are exposed, to stop, if possible, the threatening tide of insanity.

Let us take a look into the history of mental hygiene. This inspection will teach us the wonderful progress that branch of medical science has made since the days of Hippocrates.

In the days primeval, which end with Hippocrates' intervention into the medical treatment of insanity, that illness was considered imputable to the influence of a favourable or irritated deity. The insane were god-possessed. Most of them were said to be the prey of infernal deities, but some were thought to be the friends of superior gods, to be inspired by them and to tell the future through their influence. The Delphic Pithia is one of the most famous examples of this. Virgil describes the Cumæan Sybil as if struggling with the God under whose influence she was about to speak and reveal to Æneas the future of his destiny. Incapable of

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