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DISEASE MONOGRAPH
SERIES NO. 9. STUDIES
IN PSYCHIATRY. VOL. I**

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Studies in Psychiatry

Vol. I

By

Members of the New York Psychiatric Society

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK

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In the early winter of 1903, Dr. Allen McLane Hamilton invited a number of physicians to spend an evening with him for the purpose of discussing the advisability of founding a society for the promotion of the interests of psychiatry. This conference was held and, as a result of it, the constitution and by-laws of the Psychiatrical Society of New York were adopted on March 2, 1903. The Society has grown rapidly but has always retained its original semi-private character. The meetings have been held at the invitation of individual members, but any physician who has shown especial interest or achievements in psychiatry is eligible for membership. Since its foundation, four meetings a year have taken place, at which original contributions have been read and discussions carried on on various subjects connected with psychiatry. Many of the papers have been published, but until now no attempt has been made to collect them in permanent form. When the question of publication came up it was found that an issue of all the contributions would be too great an undertaking. So some papers were chosen for publication now, while others were left for subsequent volumes.

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CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| THE INSANE IN JAPAN. Dr. Frederick Peterson | 1 |
| A STUDY IN RACE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY. Dr. George H. Kirby | 9 |
| THE CURABILITY OF EARLY PARESIS. Dr. Charles L. Dana | 17 |
| THE DIAGNOSIS OF GENERAL PARESIS. Dr. C. Macfie Campbell | 41 |
| CLINICAL VARIETIES OF PERIODIC DRINKING. Dr. Pearce Bailey | 65 |
| A STUDY OF SOME CASES OF DELIRIUM PRODUCED BY DRUGS. Dr. August Hoch | 75 |
| REMARKS ON HABIT-DISORGANIZATIONS IN THE ESSENTIAL DETERIORATIONS, AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF DETERIORATION TO THE PSYCHASTHENIC, NEURASTHENIC, HYSTERICAL AND OTHER CONSTITUTIONS. Dr. Adolf Meyer | 95 |
| X CONSTITUTIONAL FACTORS IN THE DEMENTIA PRÆCOX GROUP. Dr. August Hoch | 111 |
| X COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF THE MENTAL CAPACITY IN CASES OF DEMENTIA PRÆCOX AND ALCOHOLIC INSANITY. Dr. Henry A. Cotton | 123 |
| X THE RELATIONSHIP OF HYSTERIA, PSYCHASTHENIA, AND DEMENTIA PRÆCOX. Dr. Adolf Meyer | 155 |
| OCULAR REACTIONS AMONG THE INSANE. Drs. A. R. Diefendorf and Raymond Dodge | 163 |
| ✓ CYCLOTHYMIA—THE MILD FORMS OF MANIC DEPRESSIVE PSYCHOSES AND THE MANIC-DEPRESSIVE CONSTITUTION. Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe | 193 |
| X OCULAR DISC CHANGES IN DEMENTIA PRÆCOX. Dr. H. H. Tyson and L. Pierce Clark | 209 |
| LIST OF PAPERS READ BEFORE THE NEW YORK PSYCHIATRICAL SOCIETY.. | 209 |
| X THE EYE SYNDROME OF DEMENTIA PRÆCOX. Drs. H. H. Tyson and L. Pierce Clark..... | 212 |

THE INSANE IN JAPAN

BY FREDERICK PETERSON, M.D.,

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK

During a vacation spent last summer (1909) in Japan, I visited a number of institutions for the insane, and through the many courtesies of Professor Kure and Professor Miura of Tokyo and Professor Imamura of Kyoto, I not only saw them under the best auspices but was furnished with much information in relation to psychiatry in Japan which I shall briefly put before you.

The medicine of ancient Japan, like its art, literature and religion, was derived from China by way of Corea. The earliest Chinese medical literature which deals in any manner with insanity dates from about 200 B.C. The earliest historical reference to insanity in Japan is contained in the law of about 702 A.D., which required the insane, epileptics, lepers, blind and crippled to be given over to certain official caretakers, who on taking such cases into their families were absolved from taxation and civic duties. Between these dates and for some time later Japanese physicians were guided in their study and practice wholly by Chinese medical books, in much the same manner as the Europeans for centuries acted only on the authority of Hippocrates, Galen and the Arabian writers. Insanity and epilepsy are well described in the first Japanese book of medicine, the "Ish-inho," appearing in 982 A.D. For several centuries after this, medical treatment fell chiefly into the hands of the Buddhist priests who practised only with magic and prayer, until the period between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, when medicine reawakened and the Japanese physicians out-distanced in all respects their Chinese progenitors and contemporaries. The treatment of insanity during this period did not differ much from that of the more ancient day, and consisted chiefly of the sweat-cure, catharsis, emetics, thermocautery with moxa, hydrotherapy, acupuncture and at times blood-letting. The needle and moxa as

counter-irritants have for ages been favorites of both the Chinese and Japanese in all manner of diseases. Hydrotherapy, described in Chinese literature as long ago as 200 B.C., has always been a preferred method of treatment among the Japanese. Its use in insanity is described in the first Japanese book of medicine already referred to (982 A.D.).

In old times the insane were for the most part kept in families, the milder cases taking part in work on the land, or in the innumerable household crafts of that people. If subject to periods of excitement mechanical restraint was used, anklets, wristlets, chains, and solidly built chambers attached to the paper houses. Often in the country the patients were blistered on the soles of the feet to make them disinclined to run away.

A kind of family care grew up gradually, sometimes evolving into a colony system; and many private asylums were established long before any public asylums such as we have in the West were created.

Along in the early eighties the first public asylum in Japan was organized and established at the present capital, Tokyo. It was constructed somewhat on German lines, but with due regard to the necessities of earthquake architecture, for in a country where an earthquake is almost an everyday occurrence it is essential to build wisely. The Tokyo asylum consists of a series of one-storied pavilions scattered in a considerable park. The German traces in construction and arrangement are of course due to the fact that the foremost Japanese physicians of that day had taken their training in Germany, and the medical profession was wholly directed in all its undertakings by German influence. Nowadays with several universities of their own and a goodly number of medical faculties, quite equal to any in the world, in which all of the professors and the tongue spoken are Japanese, they need not go abroad for medical study.

In the older buildings of the Tokyo asylum the usual western corridor system prevailed, with numerous single rooms, but as time went on they began gradually to remove partitions and to convert the series of single rooms into good sized dormitories. This was the more readily possible because there seems on the whole to be less excitement among the Japanese insane than among the insane of other countries. The extraordinary quiet-