

**THE DEFECTIVE DELINQUENT AND
INSANE, THE RELATION OF
FOCAL INFECTIONS TO THEIR
CAUSATION, TREATMENT AND
PREVENTION**

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The defective delinquent and insane, the relation of focal infections to their causation, treatment and prevention by Henry A. Cotton

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HENRY A. COTTON

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OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

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LOUIS CLARK VANUXEM FOUNDATION

THE DEFECTIVE DELINQUENT AND INSANE

THE RELATION OF FOCAL INFECTIONS TO THEIR
CAUSATION, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

BY

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WITH A FOREWORD

BY

ADOLF MEYER, M.D.

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AND PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

LECTURES DELIVERED AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY,
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FOREWORD

Will the author pardon a frank appreciation of the present lectures by an old friend who has followed the energetic and aggressive work with interest and admiration?

The evaluation of focal infections is an outstanding contribution of twentieth century medicine. To focus the attention upon a potential enemy of health, and fortunately in a field accessible to work without elimination of vital functions, such as we experienced in the days of wholesale ovariectomies and the like, Dr. Cotton has been among the foremost in pushing to its logical end the freeing of the organism of the insidious infections. He appears to have brought out palpable results not attained by any previous or contemporary attack on the grave problem of mental disorder. The advocacy of the aggressive policy unfortunately caught the eager eye of the press and the public before the trial had run the gauntlet of professional criticism and,—what would be more important—retrial at the hands of others. To see the reports and promises spread in a popular or semi-popular course of lectures may add to the tendency to off-hand criticism, yet this is not an age in which paternalism is expected to protect the public with Latin passages when only the initiated should be admitted. Hence why should we judge a frank utterance given at the author's and reader's own risks unless we can offer an equally good and convincing array of facts in favor of a more generally satisfying picture of "things as they are"?

To the physician I should recommend a patient reading, and the determination to judge only by the results of efforts which have been completely carried out. To pull a few teeth without doing a thorough and reasonably complete job, is not doing justice to the demands of the real cleansing. To say that everybody has these difficulties is also a very poor argument. The question is: Does the *thorough* cleansing show advantageous results or not? Is it possible to rouse the conscience for health sufficiently to see to it that the numerous focal infections are attended to before they infest or affect the whole organism?

Can better methods and safe experience reduce the problem to a good preventive and curative technique?

To the lay reader I should give the warning not to sit in judgment over the physician who is conservative and not to run at once to the man who promises marvels. But I should advise those who can do it to ask that funds be put at the disposal of dependable organizations that can put such a promising issue to a thoroughly controlled test. It seems almost impossible to get the support for the necessary organization of controlled work, probably because of the wide-spread illusion that there already exist well-endowed centers of work.

If these lectures stimulate physicians and laymen to furnish means for extensive well-controlled trials, I shall feel that the somewhat extreme claims which go beyond what I personally believe to be my experience, may find their excuse in good results. Let the best agencies come together and give the best talent, the best opportunities for work from all sides. Let criticism be constructive and not only restrictive. Let us see that under proper conditions we may even have a certain surplus of opportunity instead of the deplorable and disgraceful half-way measures with which the study of mental diseases has had to skimp along with just enough for administrative necessities, with hardly a cent of steady support for what the active workers have most longed for and worked for.

The work for mental health must be carried on where active and determined work is the order of the day. The New Jersey State Hospital at Trenton has proved to be such a place. An important experiment is being carried out there. These lectures give a forcible picture of what is being done on focal infections. If means could be made available to carry out and follow out Dr. Cotton's substantial and not merely speculative work, psychiatry would make another large contribution of importance far beyond its own special sphere of mental hygiene, and it would find for its own further development a group of patients relieved of one of the insidious sapping influences taxing humanity, thus offering a free field to work with the many other features which are bound to play a rôle.

ADOLF MEYER.

Baltimore,
April 15, 1921.

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