

PSYCHOTHERAPEUT ICS, A SYMPOSIUM

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Psychotherapeutics, a symposium by Various

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VARIOUS

**PSYCHOTHERAPEUT
ICS, A SYMPOSIUM**

Psychotherapeutics

A SYMPOSIUM

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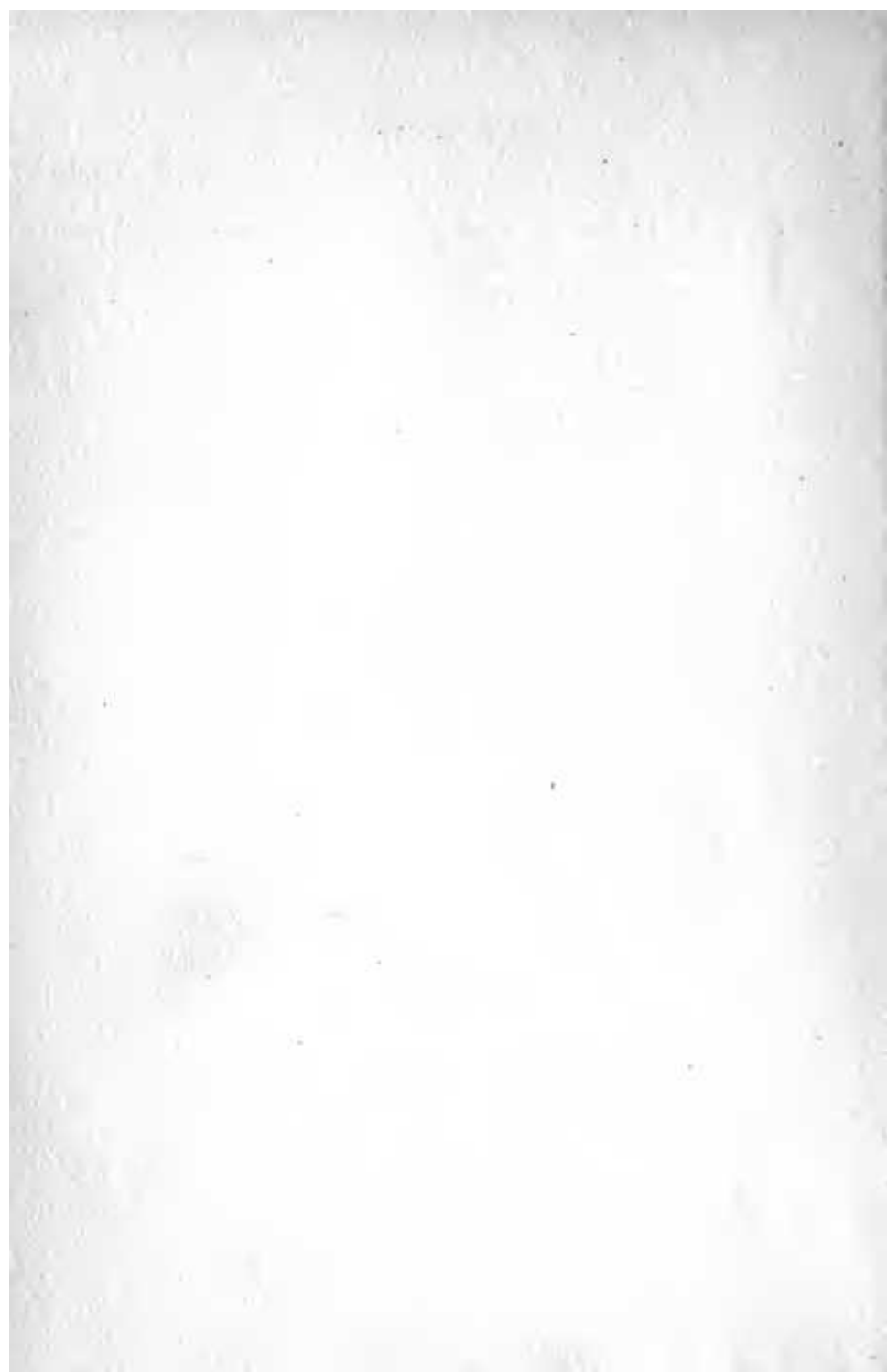
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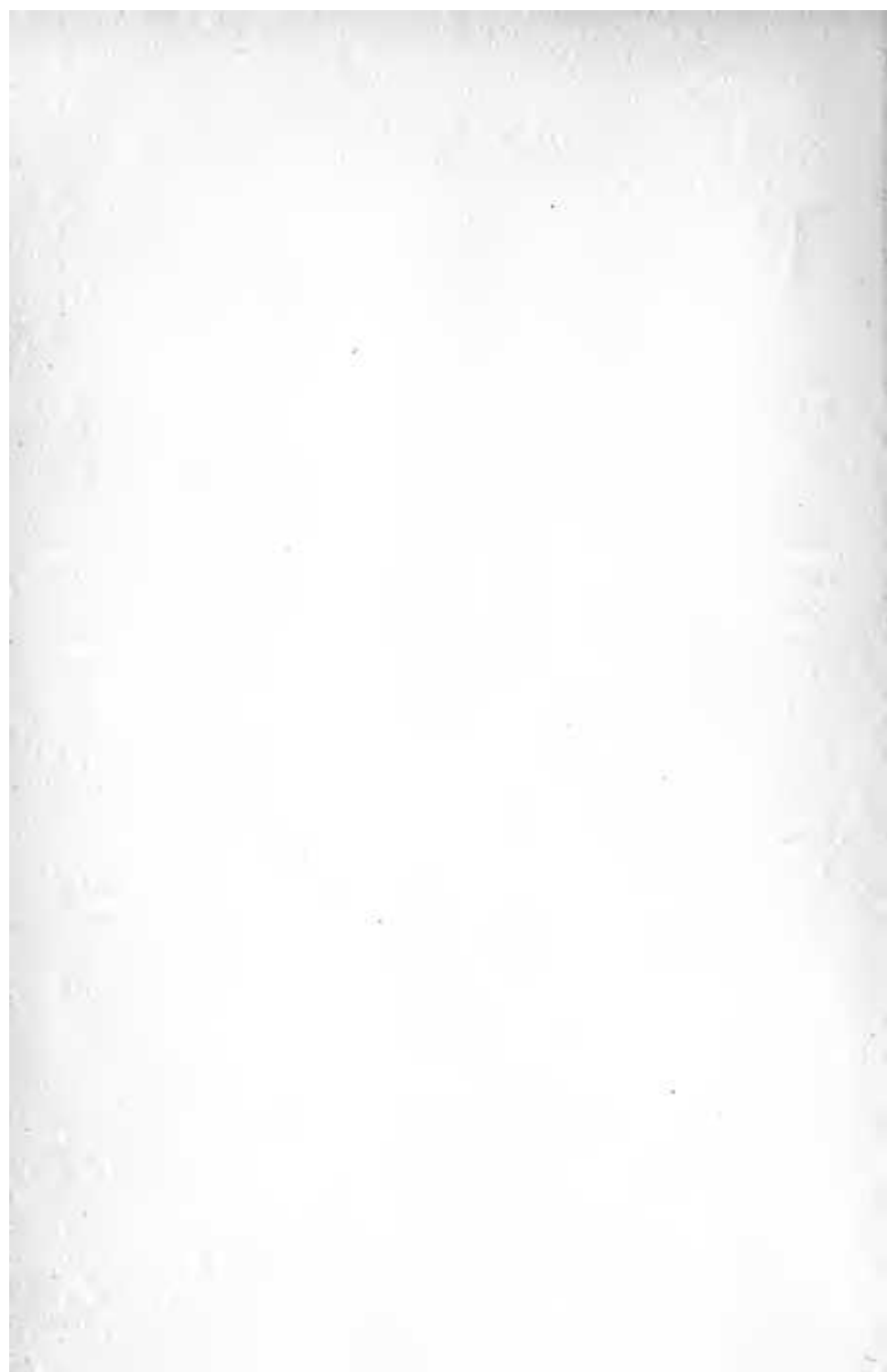
PREFACE

THIS series of papers originally formed a symposium and were read before the American Therapeutic Society at its annual meeting held at New Haven, May 6, 7, and 8, 1909. They are now published in this form through the courtesy of their authors and *THE JOURNAL OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY* in which they originally appeared.



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INTRODUCTION *

IN the endeavor to learn what subjects most interested the members of our society, and what, therefore, it would be best to place upon the program of this meeting, I wrote to almost all of them last winter, asking each to suggest topics for the three symposia, which it seemed desirable to arrange. To this appeal there were many responses, which indicated a wide range of interests and a gratifying alertness to descry new remedial measures. Several of my correspondents proposed psychotherapy; and this suggestion coincided perfectly with the purpose which I had already formed to have, if possible, a discussion on this subject, which has not previously been presented at our meetings, and is of such importance that every medical practitioner, whatever his favorite line of work, should be well grounded in its principles and familiar with its methods. Its presentation is generally a grotesque mixture of fact and fancy, of truth and error, the good and bad so speciously blended as to make the product at once alluring and dangerous to untrained minds. Indeed, most physicians and some neurologists have little appreciation of this branch of the healing art, and treat it cavalierly, if they deign to give it any consideration. The time seemed opportune for a careful, serious, scientific study of the subject by this society, the only national organization in America devoted exclusively to therapeutics. Furthermore, it was plain to me that this association, whose single purpose is so conspicuously declared

* [*Prefatory Note*: In his address as President of the American Therapeutic Society, Dr. Frederic Henry Gerrish discoursed on "The Therapeutic Value of Hypnotic Suggestion," beginning his essay with a statement of the origin and purpose of this symposium. These explanatory remarks serve so aptly as an introduction to this series of papers that, with permission, they have been transposed to this place. THE EDITOR.]

by its name, was under a peculiar obligation to the profession in the premises, and ought, as far as possible, to correct the misapprehensions which prevail concerning psychotherapy, and accord the sanction of its interest and influence to this valuable form of treatment. By great good fortune the aid of eight physicians was enlisted in this cause, all of whom are learned in modern psychology, expert in neurology, skilful in psychotherapy, and enthusiastic in expounding their favorite doctrines. They constitute a galaxy, which cannot be duplicated on this continent. Their symposium, which will occupy the entire afternoon to-morrow, will be most illuminating and well worthy of your earnest and studious attention.

Before it was known that a satisfactory symposium on psychotherapy could be arranged, I had determined to consider one phase of it in the address, which custom requires your president to make, and this for several reasons: it is as far as possible from the hackneyed; it ought to interest and be understood by every medical practitioner; it is the least comprehended of the psychotherapeutic methods; that to which the most strenuous and even savage opposition is habitually made, and that, therefore, which needs the most explanation and defense; it is almost uniformly treated unjustly because ignorantly; and finally, it has been the subject of so much study and observation on my own part that on no other topic of general medical importance did I feel as well qualified to speak to you with an approximation to authority. Many years ago, when I had a considerable general practice, I used this psychic agency very extensively for a long time; and while the concentration of my energies on another branch has necessitated the abandonment of this and some other lines of therapeutic activity, my interest in this subject is still strong, and my desire to have it understood and employed by the profession is undiminished. Therefore, I ask your attention for a little time this morning to the therapeutic value of hypnotic suggestion.