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

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PSYCHIATRICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

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Vol. I

By

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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 Psychiatric 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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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 Inamura 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The earliest Chinese medical literature which deals in any manner with insanity dates from about 200 B.C. The earliest historical reference to insanity in Japan is contained in the law of about 702 A.D., which required the insane, epileptics, lepers, blind and crippled to be given over to certain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