

The Needs of our Time in respect of the Surgical Treatment of Insane Patients [Ce que Doit Être à notre Époque La Chirurgie des Aliénés]. (Rev. de Psychiat., March, 1907.) Picqué.

The writer's text is Leroy Broun's paper, "Preliminary Report of Gynæcological Surgery in the Manhattan Hospital," of which a brief summary was given in the *Journal of Mental Science* for July, 1907, p. 656. Picqué states that whilst he is in certain respects in agreement with Leroy Broun, his general conception of the surgery of the insane differs so profoundly from that of the American writer that he wishes to explain briefly his own views.

Certain surgeons, says Picqué, have made the extraordinary claim that it is possible to cure insanity by the removal of healthy organs, such as the ovaries or the testicles; or by quite unjustifiable operations on the brain. He feels that it is necessary to protest against such teaching and practice, the only effect of which can be to arrest the progress of surgery for the insane. Now, as formerly, Picqué is convinced that the surgeon is justified in operating on an insane patient only when there exist formal indications for the operation it is proposed to perform. Moreover, his investigations on the subject of post-operative psychoses have shown him that the surgeon, in undertaking an operation in a mentally afflicted patient, must always take into consideration the possible effects of his procedure upon the mental state. In a patient apparently sane, but predisposed to insanity, an operation may induce a post-operative psychosis; and in a patient already insane an operation may lead to an aggravation of the mental disorder. He has long maintained that in the insane and in those predisposed to insanity the question of operation demands consideration, not from the surgeon only, but from the alienist as well.

Picqué then speaks of operation for the relief of displacements of the uterus in cases of mental disorder. Whilst these displacements are frequently met with in the insane, Picqué has found that the patients are apt to have hypochondriacal ideas and functional troubles altogether disproportionate to the degree of displacement. Many of the patients demand operation, but in a number of cases the only result of operation was to aggravate the mental disorder. In these respects the results obtained by Picqué appear to have differed most markedly from those obtained by Leroy Broun, the latter stating that in fifty-one cases in which he operated for the relief of uterine displacement the cure of the mental disorder appeared to be hastened by the operation.

Passing to the consideration of other surgical measures in insane patients, not concerned with the reproductive organs, Picqué points out that improvement may sometimes follow operation in a manner quite indirect. For instance, certain patients—melancholics, for example—need active occupation for the relief of their mental troubles, but this is rendered impossible by some bone or joint lesion. An orthopædic operation, by restoring the use of a limb, may exercise an indisputable, though indirect, action towards the restoration of mental health.

The surgery of the insane, concludes Picqué, concerns itself, not merely with those actually insane and confined in asylums, but also with

those potentially insane (in whom the surgeon has to consider the possibility of a post-operative psychosis). In those actually insane the surgeon endeavours—(1) to discover the somatic causes of insanity, that is, to determine the relations which may exist between surgical lesions and the diverse forms of mental alienation ; (2) to discover the modifications which the mental state may render necessary in surgical therapeutics, as regards the choice of method and the operative technique ; (3) to study the pathological varieties of disorder most frequently encountered in insane patients.

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Occupation-Therapeutics for Patients suffering from Mental Disorder
[*Beschäftigungstherapie bei Geisteskranken*]. (*Psychiat. Neurolog. Wochenschr.*, May 11th and 18th, 1907.) Starlinger, J.

The writer opens by pointing out that it has long been recognised that work is one of the elementary human needs, without which complete mental integrity cannot be secured, and that regular occupation has for many years been recommended and utilised in the treatment of mental disorder. It is only recently, however, that work has been *systematically* employed for therapeutic purposes, and that its immense importance has been recognised as a part of asylum administration. At Mauer-Öhling, the institute of which Starlinger is superintendent, special attention has from the first been devoted to the *employment* of the insane, whether curable or incurable. By occupation, in this relationship, the writer understands any kind of continuous activity, whether useful or not ; and the term embraces not only every kind of work, but also all amusements to which no contra-indication exists.

Among useful occupations, that is, *work* in the ordinary sense of the term, must in the first place be enumerated all kinds of agricultural operations ; every variety of handicraft can also be utilised, whilst for women every variety of domestic occupation is available. There are properly fitted rooms for drawing, painting, and other artistic occupations. A number of the patients also find employment in the offices of the institution. Finally, there are many special occupations which can be utilised in the asylum, such as letter-carrying, driving, road-making, etc.

Starlinger then passes to consider occupations not directly useful—amusements and games—which are all of a similar nature to those utilised in any large English asylum.

The writer lays stress on the importance of interest and continuity in the occupations allotted.

In the institution under consideration there has never been any disastrous result from the employment of the patients. Among 1,420 patients, as many as one half will be regularly employed. Notwithstanding the great number thus engaged, and notwithstanding the risky nature of many of the occupations, there has during thirty-two years never been a serious accident to a patient. Starlinger gives an interesting table showing the percentage of those suffering from various forms of mental disorder whom it was found possible to keep regularly employed :