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Medical Dissertations of Psychiatric Interest  
Printed before 1750



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# Medical Dissertations of Psychiatric Interest

Printed before 1750

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## Preface

A clinician and teacher is under obligation to study current and past medical literature, thus increasing his knowledge and widening his critical perspective.

History of medicine was frequently taught as if the growth and development of psychiatry was essentially limited to the last two centuries and its connection to psychology, philosophy and cultural changes was neglected. The relationship to medicine in general was recognized but historically little explored.

In the period of 1925 to 1935 when I was at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, under the leadership of ADOLF MEYER psychiatric practice and teaching had become part of medicine. FREUD's contribution became increasingly evaluated. The development of the Department of History of Medicine forced the clinician to look for a better orientation in his special field. With this background, I considered it an essential task to develop a historical psychiatric library at Cornell University Medical College when I joined the faculty in 1936. At that time I found nowhere a library which could offer a satisfactory collection of books for a historical orientation in psychiatry. With the growth of the library we became increasingly aware of the lack of well-established psychiatric data in various periods of medical history. Every effort was made to gather good descriptions of clinical material, containing sufficient details to illustrate the gradual development of theories and practice. Observations, published since the 16th century, offered an opportunity to fill to some extent the gaps in the development of psychiatry, indicating that since the Renaissance progress had been greater and more steady than had been assumed. Recognizing the contribution of many medical dissertations of the past and present centuries, those of earlier centuries were collected and studied. The results are presented in this book. The search for these dissertations led to many libraries in this country and abroad.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the many librarians and their staffs who helped me and made me feel welcome.

Professor THOMAS F. HEFFERNAN (Adelphi University) wrote the scholarly translations which are included here. Without his valuable contribution it would have been difficult to write this text.

I also wish to acknowledge my appreciation to the Confinia Psychiatrica for permission to reprint the chapter on mania, and to the Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences. From time to time I have quoted without specification material from a paper *Felix Platter and Psychiatry*, *J. Hist. behav. Sci. 1*: 10–23 (1965).