struction in New York City, through its Educational Committee is being extended at least in part, throughout the entire State, in conjunction with the state and county medical societies.

The plan of the Graduate Fortnight has been formulated by this Committee as a part of this program and it is the purpose of the Academy to extend the benefit of the post-graduate facilities of this great City to all who may choose to come and take part in these meetings. At the present, we can only offer two weeks. Perhaps later we may offer you more. We also plan to extend our most active assistance to every organization throughout the entire land which is interesting itself in this most insistent demand for post-graduate medical instruction. Many plans are under consideration. Were Dr. Kast able to speak to you tonight he planned to present to you an entirely feasible project, designed to bring this thing about, one might almost say, a world-wide project. I do not feel that I should attempt to more than declare our object tonight, and on the part of the sub-committee to welcome you to our Second Graduate Fortnight.

SUMMARY OF THE EXTEMPORANEOUS ADDRESS ON

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE MENTAL HYGIENE MOVEMENT *

MR. CLIFFORD W. BEERS

Founder and Secretary of *The National Committee for Mental Hygiene* and of *The American Foundation for Mental Hygiene*

Mr. Beers prefaced his remarks by alluding to the time, some twenty years ago, when the discussion of a mental hygiene or psychiatric topic at a medical meeting was a

* At the request of Mr. Beers only a summary of his remarks on October 7 is herewith published because so many of the incidents related by him in his talk are presented in a more interesting and carefully worded way in his autobiography, "A Mind That Found Itself."

rare occurrence. The present Graduate Fortnight, devoted entirely to the mental and nervous aspects of medical problems was, therefore, he said, a most significant event, thanks to the developments that have taken place since the inauguration of the mental hygiene movement and the rapidly growing interest shown in mental hygiene not only by the medical profession but among all classes of people. The lack of this interest on the part of physicians generally before the importance of mental hygiene was recognized, the speaker suggested, was undoubtedly an important contributing factor to his own misfortune as a victim of mental disorder, in that it effectually prevented him from receiving in the early stages of his illness the proper care and treatment that might have averted a complete breakdown and rendered unnecessary a protracted period of residence in hospitals for the mentally ill.

Mr. Beers referred to his autobiography, "A Mind That Found Itself," which describes his hospital experiences, the publication of which led to the founding of The National Committee for Mental Hygiene. Paradoxically, he said, this organization might not have been founded, certainly not by him, had the medical schools been teaching psychiatry thirty to forty years ago. That the situation in this respect has materially improved, he said, is evident from the development of such medical services as the Department of Mental Hygiene at Yale University and in other educational institutions in this country. Had such a department existed at Yale when Mr. Beers was an undergraduate (in the eighteen nineties) his breakdown might have been prevented, according to the opinion of psychiatrists familiar with his case.

While the teaching of psychiatry in medical schools has been considerably extended in recent years, Mr. Beers continued, there is still a great need for stimulating interest in mental and nervous diseases on the part of the general practitioner, as even now instances of the neglect of individuals heading for mental breakdowns, due to a lack

of knowledge regarding the nature of mental conditions on the part of family physicians, come to the attention of the National Committee from all parts of the country. However, the very fact that these unfortunate people, directly or through their families, appeal to the National Committee and to State Societies for Mental Hygiene for help in their difficulties, the speaker said, was an indication that the mental hygiene activities of the past twenty years were having pronounced educational effect and that these organizations were achieving one of their principal aims, in that it is now possible to put these people in contact with psychiatrists who can give them the advice and treatment they need. Mr. Beers also counted it a gain to know that in many more instances, today, the general practitioner at least recognizes the true character of his patient's condition and, if he cannot himself manage it, knows where to refer the case for the necessary study and treatment. The present series of meetings, therefore, constitute a notable contribution toward the spread of knowledge concerning mental and nervous disorders within the medical profession, for which The National Committee for Mental Hygiene and affiliated societies are deeply grateful.

Indicating the magnitude of the problem of mental diseases, Mr. Beers pointed out that there are today approximately 300,000 persons under care in mental hospitals, or more than there are patients at any one time in all of the general hospitals of the country combined. The 1928 hospital census of the American Medical Association showed that 1 out of every 325 persons in the United States was a patient in an institution for nervous or mental disorders (including the feebleminded and epileptic), while only 1 out of every 2,406 persons was a patient in a tuberculosis hospital. Twenty years ago when the mental hygiene movement started, there were approximately 187,000 patients in mental hospitals. The great increase, the speaker said, was due, not to any actual rise in the rate of mental cases developing in the American population that could be statistically established, but to

the far greater provisions existing today for the care and treatment of these cases, and to the fact that, thanks to the educational influence of the mental hygiene movement, people suffering from mental disorders are seeking admission to mental hospitals in greater numbers than ever before. There is no longer in most families the same reticence or sense of shame that there used to be over the occurrence of a mental case within the family circle, and this change in the public attitude toward insanity has had a beneficial effect on the whole situation, by helping to bring the problem of mental disorders as it actually exists in this country to the surface, and therefore making it easier to deal constructively with it.

With more adequate hospital facilities for cases in need of active treatment, it is possible to think and act more effectively in terms of prevention through the establishment of such mental-health services as psychiatric or mental hygiene clinics, child guidance clinics, college and school departments of mental hygiene and other centers of advice and treatment for those suffering from or in danger of developing mental troubles. In the opinion of conservative specialists in mental disease, about half of all cases of mental or nervous disorder could be prevented by the timely application, largely in childhood and adolescence, of knowledge already available. Effective ways of applying this knowledge on a nation-wide scale have been worked out by The National Committee for Mental Hygiene and progress is already being made in the schools and colleges, in industry and in the community generally.

A gratifying indication of the progress that is being made in preventive mental hygiene work in the community, the speaker said, was the fact that there are today nearly 500 mental clinics providing regular service to the public for the study and treatment of children, over 300 of these clinics having come into existence since 1922, whereas twenty years ago, when the movement began, there were almost none. As an example of the development of community interest in the possibilities of a mental hygiene

program, he mentioned the recent establishment of a child-guidance clinic in Niagara Falls, New York, under the terms of the will of the late Mrs. Martha H. Beeman of that city, who left a fund of $400,000 for child welfare. After months of study of the various ways in which this money might be used, it was decided by the executor to devote the entire fund to child-guidance work. The plans for the clinic have not only been worked out under the direction of members of the staff of The National Committee for Mental Hygiene but that Committee, under the deed of trust, is to serve in a continuing capacity as special adviser on plans, policies and personnel.

Mr. Beers closed his talk with a brief description of the National Committee's activities, of the plans for the First International Congress on Mental Hygiene, which is to be held in Washington, D. C., from May 5th to 10th, 1930, and of The American Foundation for Mental Hygiene, recently incorporated by a group of officers of the National Committee for the purpose of serving as custodian and administrator of gifts and bequests for use in financing mental hygiene work and agencies in all parts of the field.

THE INVOLUNTARY NERVOUS SYSTEM *

WALTER LANGDON BROWN
Physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London

I come to you from the oldest hospital in the English speaking world; six years ago we celebrated our 800th anniversary. In a sense our hospital is the direct grandchild of the original temple of Aesculapius at Epidauros, whence the Romans brought the statue of the god when they founded a temple of healing on Tiber Island. In Christian times this temple became the hospital and the Church of San Bartolomeo, and it was while a patient here that Rahere conceived the idea of erecting the Hospital

* Delivered October 8, 1929.