

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Difference Between Functional and Organic Disease



uch confusion concerning the curability of chronic diseases by the various methods of treatment arises because people do not understand the difference between **functional** and **organic** chronic disease. For instance, there is a close resemblance between pseudo- and true locomotor ataxy. Often it is difficult to distinguish functional lung trouble from the organic type of the disease. In our practice, several cases of mental derangement which had been diagnosed as true paresis proved to be of the functional type and under natural treatment recovered rapidly.

**Functional** diseases may present a very serious appearance and may be labeled with awe-inspiring Greek or Latin names, and yet yield readily to natural methods of living and treatment.

In diseases of an **organic** nature, however, right living and self-treatment are usually not sufficient to obtain satisfactory results. In such cases all forms of active and passive treatment must be applied, and even then it is frequently difficult and sometimes impossible to produce a cure.

Chronic diseases of a functional nature develop when an otherwise healthy organism becomes saturated and clogged with food and drug poisons to such an extent that these encumbrances interfere with the free circulation of the blood and nerve currents, and with the normal functions of the cells, organs and tissues of the body.

Such cases resemble a watch which is losing time because its works are filled with dust. All that such a waste-encumbered watch

or body needs, in order to restore normal functions, is a good cleaning. Pure food diet, fasting, systematic exercise, deep breathing, cold bathing and the right mental attitude are usually sufficient to perform this physical housecleaning and to restore perfect health.

Functional disorders yield readily to the various forms of metaphysical treatment. Remove such patients from the weakening and destructive effects of poisonous drugs and of surgical operations, supplant fear and worry by courage and faith, and the results often seem miraculous to those who do not understand the power of the purifying and stimulating influence of clean living and of the right mental attitude.

In diseases of the **organic** type, however, good results are not so easily achieved. A body affected by organic disease resembles a watch whose mechanism has been injured and partly destroyed by rust and corrosive acids. If such be the case, cleaning and oiling alone will not be sufficient to put the timepiece in good working order. The watchmaker has to replace the damaged parts.

This is easy enough in the case of the watch, but it is not so easily accomplished in the human body. Besides, in many instances the corroding acids are the very medicines which were given to cure the disease and the injury and destruction of vital parts and organs is only too often the direct or indirect result of surgical operations.

The watchmaker may remove those parts of the watch which are suffering from organic trouble, and replace them by new ones. This the surgeon cannot do. He can extirpate, but he cannot replace. Operative treatment leaves the organism forever after in a mutilated and therefore unbalanced condition, and often prevents and frustrates Nature's cleansing and healing crises.

### The Limitations of Metaphysical Healing

In the writings of metaphysical healers we often meet the assertion that they can cure organic diseases as easily and quickly as functional ailments. If they understood better the difference between functional and organic disorders as explained in the foregoing pages, they would not make such deceptive and extravagant claims. They would then realize the natural limitations of metaphysical healing.

I do not underestimate the great value of mental, metaphysical and spiritual healing methods. Of these I shall speak more fully in

subsequent chapters. But I do claim that we can and should aid Nature's healing efforts not only by the right mental attitude and the prayer of faith, but also by natural living and many different methods of physical treatment.

Mental attitude alone will not clean the watch. To concentrate on the work of housecleaning without using broom, soap and water is not sufficient. Reason and common sense teach us that the removal of physical, material encumbrances can be, to say the least, accelerated by the use of physical or physiological agents. Anyone who has observed or himself experienced the efficacy of natural diet, cold-water treatment, massage and osteopathy in dealing with the morbid accumulations in the system will never again underestimate the practical value of these "brooms."

In our study of the nature and purpose of acute diseases we have found that Nature tries to purify the system from its morbid encumbrances through inflammatory, febrile processes (acute diseases) and that these cleansing efforts of Nature are generally prevented, checked and suppressed by allopathic methods of medical and surgical treatment, and thus changed into chronic disease conditions.

The metaphysical healers do away with these suppressive methods of treatment and allow Nature's acute cleansing and healing efforts to run their natural course. Thus they profit by the fundamental laws of cure without understanding them. **The acute disease, whose very existence they deny, is in reality the cure.**

Furthermore, rational mental and metaphysical treatment supports Nature's efforts actively by supplanting the weakening and paralyzing fear vibrations with relaxing and invigorating vibrations of hope, confidence and faith in the supremacy of Nature's healing forces. Under these favorable conditions, the organism will arouse itself to the purifying and constructive healing crises (the chemicalizations of Christian Science) and through these eliminate the morbid encumbrances and restore normal structure and functions.

While functional disorders, in nearly every case, yield readily enough to the natural methods of living and of treatment and to the right mental attitude, it is different with organic diseases.

When waste matter, ptomaines or poisonous alkaloids and acids produced in the body as a result of wrong diet and other

violations of Nature's laws have brought about destruction and corrosion in vital parts and organs—when dislocations and sublaxations of bony structures, or new growths and accumulations in the forms of tumors, stones or gravel obstruct the blood vessels and nerve currents, shut off the supply of the vital fluids and thus cause malnutrition and gradual decay of the tissues—when, in addition to this, the organism has been poisoned or mutilated by drugs and surgical operations, then its purification and repair becomes a tedious and difficult task.

Not only must the mechanism of the body be cleansed and freed from obstructive and destructive materials, but the injured parts must be repaired, morbid growths and abnormal formations dissolved and eliminated and lesions in the bony structures corrected by manipulative treatment.

In organic diseases, the vitality is usually so low and destruction so great that the organism cannot arouse itself to self-help. Even the cessation of suppressive treatment and the stimulating influence of mental and metaphysical therapeutics are not sufficient to bring about the reconstructive healing crises. **This can only be accomplished by the combined influences of all the natural methods of living and of treatment.**

It is in cases like these that metaphysical healing and hygienic living find their limitations. Such organic defects require systematic treatment by all the methods, active and passive, which the best Nature Cure sanitariums can furnish. It may be slow and laborious work to obtain satisfactory results, and if the vitality is too low or the destruction of vital parts and organs has too far advanced, even the best and most complete combination of natural methods of treatment may fail to produce a cure.

However, this can be determined only by a fair trial of the natural methods. The forces of Nature are ever ready to react to persistent, systematic effort in the right direction and when there is enough vitality to keep alive there is likely to be enough to purify and reconstruct the organism and in time to bring about improvement and cure.

This, then, explains why, in the organic types of diseases, metaphysical methods of treatment alone are insufficient. At least one-half of the patients that come to the Nature Cure physician have faithfully tried these methods without avail, but the failures are

easily excused by lack of faith, wrong mental attitude or something wrong with the patient or his surroundings.

In our experience with patients who had formerly tried metaphysical methods of healing faithfully, but without results, we sometimes come face to face with a curious and amusing phase of human nature. As our patients improve under the natural regimen and treatment, they gradually return to their first love and ascribe the good effects of natural treatment to a better understanding of “the Science.” As health and strength return, they say: “Formerly I did not know just how to apply the Science, but now I know, and that is why I am growing better.”

I suppose this form of self-deception which we have frequently observed is due to the fact that people feel flattered by the idea that Providence has taken a special interest in their case and cured them by miraculous intervention. It is so much more interesting to be cured by some occult principle than by diet and cold water.

Undoubtedly it is this miracle-loving element in human nature that makes metaphysical healing so much more popular than plain, commonsense Nature Cure.

Not long ago Professor Munsterberg investigated the claims of Christian Scientists that they were constantly curing diseases of the organic type. He reported his findings in a series of articles in *McClure's Magazine* (1908), stating that he inquired personally into one hundred cases said to have been cured by Christian Science and found that ninety-two of them had been of the functional type, while eight were claimed to have been organic, but that in no instance could this be proved beyond doubt.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There is a tendency among professionals to think that “If I can't do it, it can't be done.” We now know that it is possible for spiritual healing to take place even in organic disease. That said, we must also admit, that a great deal of what passes for spiritual healing, especially in front of an audience, is just hype.

The underlying principle behind all such healing was enunciated centuries ago by the Master from Nazareth when he exclaimed, “Thy faith hath made thee whole.” We in our own efforts to help mankind are in harmony with the views of Dr. Lindlahr and believe in using all known methods to assist our patients in their efforts to achieve wellness. While spiritual healing is a part of that help, it is not an exclusive part.

