

# The Medical Roundup

by *Walter Alvarez*

Emeritus Consultant in Medicine, Mayo Clinic  
Emeritus Professor of Medicine, Mayo Foundation

## Our Neglect of the Mentally Disturbed

I keep getting letters from persons who say, "I wish you would quit harping on mental troubles and here I am, full of insanity, alcoholism and epilepsy, and so I just don't want to hear a word about such troubles."

So talk about muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis if you want to, but leave mental disease alone.

As Mr. Gorman of the National Mental Health Committee of Washington, D.C., said the other day, this is the attitude of most physicians, and I am ashamed to say, of most physicians today. None of us want anything to do with the greatest medical problem that faces the country. I can practice 15 years without seeing a case of muscular dystrophy or multiple sclerosis, but every day I see men and women who are mentally upset and in need of psychiatric help. As Mr. Gorman recently pointed out so forcibly, every other hospital bed in the land is occupied by insane persons, and for every mentally disturbed patient in a hospital there are 20 outside—many of them in a terrible problem in their relatives.

Every week a number of mothers with a mentally disturbed son ask me what to do. The lad is not insane enough, or insane enough all the time, to be committed; but he is unemployable; perhaps he is traveling about, charging things to his parents and rapidly using up their meager savings. What can the mother do? To whom can she appeal? How can she get her son into a mental hospital when he sees no need for being treated? Where can she find a psychiatrist willing to struggle with the problem of a hostile and impecunious man who will not admit that he is ill? I am sorry to say I do not know the answers.

May Be Well Upset? Let us say that we talk the lad into going to the nearest state hospital. Will he be happy there? No. He may well be so upset by the conditions in an antiquated and badly over-crowd-



**ON THE MEND**—Tennis star Art Larsen is shown at home in Hayward, Calif., after release from the hospital. He was injured in an accident on his motor scooter Nov. 10 and was paralyzed. He lost the power of speech but has been able to speak with difficulty the past few days. He is still paralyzed on one side and may have to return to hospital for further neuro surgery.

★  
**USE FUEL FROM TIMBER**

Phone 2-8086  
For The Ideal  
Replace  
Fuel

WISHING ALL  
A VERY MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

**TIMBER PRODUCTS COMPANY**

ed institution that he will be worse. As Mr. Gorman says, the conditions in many of our state hospitals are a disgrace to our civilization.

Will the man get good treatment? He may or he may not, depending on the generosity or stinginess of the legislature in that particular state. As my good friend, the medical superintendent of the mental hospital in a poor state used to say

to me, sadly, "How can I hope to do anything for my patients when there are several hundred of them and I have only one assistant?"

And if the lad goes into a hospital and comes out well—will he be able to find a job? Read Mrs. Hackett's book "The Cliff's Edge" (McGraw Hill) and learn that the man who has just been discharged from a mental hospital cannot get a job even as a laborer—no one will have him. Thank God for the few kind men who today are trying to combat this situation!

Finally, if a child becomes so mentally disturbed that the parents cannot handle him, where can he be taken? In many states, nowhere. According to Mr. Gorman, in this country there are only 30 residential treatment centers which can take care of only 2,000 children a year. They

have 10 times as many applicants as they can accept. The Child Welfare League estimates that there are 50,000 emotionally disturbed children for whom we Americans have made no provision. In our schools we have one psychiatrist for every 50,000 children.

**Funds for Clinics**  
A while ago the father of a criminally psychotic boy wrote me—"No one will take him until he kills some child, and this I expect him to do any day." It is good to hear that the Pennsylvania legislature recently appropriated over a million dollars for psychiatric clinics for children.

Mr. Gorman keeps pointing out that our laws and our methods for handling the mentally disturbed are antiquated. Other countries have shown that many of the mentally disturbed can be cared for humanely in homes.

Canada has shown that many disturbed persons can be taken care of in either "day" or "night" hospitals. The man may be in a hospital during the day, getting treatment, and at night he returns to his home. Or, he works all day and stays in the hospital at night.

If many general hospitals had a division in which disturbed persons could be helped, these persons would not get the terrible stigma of having been in an "insane asylum." As I see it, there is a tremendous need for part-pay centers to which puzzled relatives of a mentally upset person could go for information and for advice as to the best way to handle and care for their loved one. Perhaps there could be persons—not policemen with a police wagon—but kindly, well-trained men who could come to a home in an

Sunday, December 23, 1956

MEDFORD (OREGON) MAIL TRIBUNE—THREE

**GIVE BEAUTIFUL LIVING GIFTS POINSETTIAS** ●  
All Sizes . . . All Prices.

Potted  
Camellias - Cyclamen - Azaleas - Dish Garden Plants and Dish Gardens ●

Cut Flowers - Carnations, Roses, Mums, Poinsettias  
Colorful Plants Gift Wrapped and Delivered on Your Date

**MARSHALL NURSERY & FLORIST**  
12th & Newtown (Open Sundays & Holidays) Ph. 3-1657



**GIVE HER THE GIFT OF AN EXTRA HOUR OF FREE TIME -- 365 DAYS A YEAR!**

**GIVE HER A G-E MOBILE MAID AUTOMATIC DISHWASHER --- Needs No Costly Installation! ROLLS RIGHT UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE!**

**START PAYMENTS IN MARCH**

### NEEDS NO INSTALLATION

- 1.** Roll Mobile-Maid over to your sink . . . snap handy faucet connection onto your faucet . . . and it's all ready to do your complete dishwashing job.
- 2.** Just brush off loose food to prepare dishes for Mobile-Maid. NO PRE-RINSING REQUIRED.
- 3.** Load all dishes and utensils on the new, easy to load adjustable racks. Easily accessible, they require no moving or sliding to take your full load . . . and can be adjusted to hold your tallest glasses, largest plates.
- 4.** When Mobile-Maid does your dishwashing, everything is sparkling clean—hygienically clean—washed in water far hotter than hands can stand.



**GE** Mobile-Maid DISHWASHER  
REGULAR \$199.95

**\$169.95** EASY TERMS

- King-Size Capacity — holds glasses, dishes, silver — yes, pots and pans, too!
- Completely Automatic — pre-rinses, washes, rinses, dries.
- Ideal for Apartments, Bungalows, Rented Homes, Every Home.

ONE YEAR PARTS AND LABOR WARRANTY

**ASHLAND HOME APPLIANCE CO.**  
115 E. MAIN

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU --- AND TO YOURS**

**WRITTEN MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!**  
IF AFTER TWO WEEKS YOU ARE NOT FULLY SATISFIED WITH YOUR G-E DISHWASHER --- YOU CAN RETURN IT FOR A FULL REFUND OF ALL MONEY PAID.

**HOME APPLIANCE CO.**  
YOUR GENERAL ELECTRIC DEALER  
115 EAST MAIN • MEDFORD