

Clarence Orion Cheney

July 10, 1887 — November 4, 1947

Dr. Clarence Orion Cheney entered the field of Psychiatry upon graduation from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, in 1911. He was Assistant Physician and Pathologist at the Manhattan State Hospital from 1911 to 1917. Dr. Cheney's work during this period resulted in valuable histopathological investigations in dementia praecox and in focal infections. His interest in pathology persisted during his life. The training in pathology formed his scientific medical attitude which never permitted him to accept theories and claims which were not related to established facts.

The following twenty years were spent in clinical and administrative psychiatry in various New York State Hospitals. From 1931 to 1936 he was Director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Hospital, and from 1933 to 1936 he was Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University. When Dr. Cheney assumed the position of Medical Director of the Westchester Division of the New York Hospital, he was appointed Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Cornell University Medical College.

Until his death, Dr. Cheney participated actively in the undergraduate teaching. His lectures on legal aspects of psychiatry formed an important part of the teaching program. His interest in psychiatric treatment was manifested in several publications and, in recent years, dealt especially in the methods of insulin and convulsive therapy. This progressive attitude in treatment expressed itself in his teaching of medical students and his psychiatric colleagues. His influence was felt widely, and was recognized by his election as president of the American Psychiatric Association.

During the ten years of his leadership at the New York Hospital, Westchester Division, Dr. Cheney found ample opportunity to demonstrate his unusual abilities as hospital administrator. A gradual building program led to extensive renovation. In the construction of a building for excited and highly disturbed patients, Dr. Cheney realized many thoughts with regard to their treatment which he had developed during his years as a hospital psychiatrist. He oriented the hospital to an active treatment program which resulted in a constantly increasing number of admissions of acutely ill patients who are benefitted most by treatment. As a member of the Medical Board of the New York Hospital, he had an opportunity to help in forming the policies of this teaching center.

Dr. Cheney's interest in graduate and postgraduate education had become obvious during his years of service in the various state hospitals, and became especially fruitful when he was Director at the Psychiatric Institute and at

the Westchester Division of the New York Hospital. His “Outlines for Psychiatric Examinations” have influenced psychiatrists greatly, and are used in many hospitals and medical schools.

In all his manifold activities during a highly successful life, Dr. Cheney has been open to new thoughts and tolerant of the viewpoint of others. His frankness and kindness have made him respected by his colleagues and admired by his grateful patients and their relatives.

Askar Diethelm