al⁴ as an axonal form of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a patient who died 28 days after onset of neuropathic symptoms and the case described by Honovar³ who died 18 months after onset (see above), might represent a later stage of a very severe demyelinating neuropathy as we have described.

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Huntington's Chorea

George Sumner Huntington (1850-1916) was born in East Hampton, Long Island and trained with his father Dr George Lee Huntington in local practice before attending the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University, graduating in 1871. A year later he moved to Pomeroy, Ohio and on February 15 1872 read his paper on chorea¹ before the Meigs and Mason Academy of Medicine in Middleport, Ohio. He was twenty two years old.

"It is as common and is indeed, I believe, more common among men than women, while I am not aware that season or complexion has any influence in the matter. There are three marked peculiarities in this disease:

1. Its hereditary nature.
2. A tendency to insanity and suicide.
3. Its manifesting itself as a grave disease only in adult life."

Addressing the New York neurological society in 1909 he recalled:

"... riding with my father on his rounds, I saw my first case of 'that disorder'... the way the natives

always referred to the dreaded disease... We suddenly came upon two women, mother and daughter, both tall, thin, almost cadaverous, both bowing, twisting, grimacing. I stared in wonderment, almost fear."

The affected family was further studied (by Jelliffe, Tilney and by Vessie²) and traced to Bure in Essex, whence they sailed to Boston Bay in 1630. Over a thousand descendants are thought to have succumbed, many being tried for witchcraft since their chorea was regarded as "a derisive pantomime of the sufferings of the Saviour during crucifixion."

Huntington spent the rest of his life in Dutchess County in general practice. He was a keen sportsman, artist, and flute player who modestly referred to his work as "my virgin contribution to medical lore."

JMS PEARCE

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