

## **FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY**

### **Hecker**

Ewald Hecker was born on October 20, 1843, in Halle, Prussia. Hecker studied architecture and medicine from 1861 to 1866. He worked with Karl Ludwig Kahlbaum in Görnitz until 1872 and became one of his closest friends and his chief of staff. In 1891 Hecker purchased his own psychiatric hospital in Wiesbaden, in western Germany. Because of his political liberalism, he was never awarded an academic professorship of psychiatry at a university hospital, but he was honoured with a professorial title in 1907. Hecker is mostly known as the originator of the concept of hebephrenia (1871) and as the expositor of Kahlbaum's "clinical method". However, he is also be remembered for his revolutionary spirit and progressive ideas, which strongly diverged from the mainstream of psychiatry of his time.

For Hecker, the importance of establishing a humane environment for the patients became so paramount that he even took some patients into his own household. In his day, Hecker made himself a name as a hypnotherapist and psychotherapist mainly for patients with cyclothymia, anxiety, and sleep disorders and he provided the touchstone for today's integration of psychological treatments into psychiatry. His scientific publications covered such diverse topics as malingering, forensic psychiatry, and physiological and pathological laughter, distinguishing him as a scientific enthusiast and empathic therapist. He married in 1871, had two sons and one daughter, and died after a series of strokes in 1909.

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