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NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

ITS CONCOMITANT EVILS—ITS PREVENTION
AND CURE—A CORRECT TECHNIQUE
OF LIVING FOR BRAIN WORKERS

BY

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I.

INTRODUCTION.

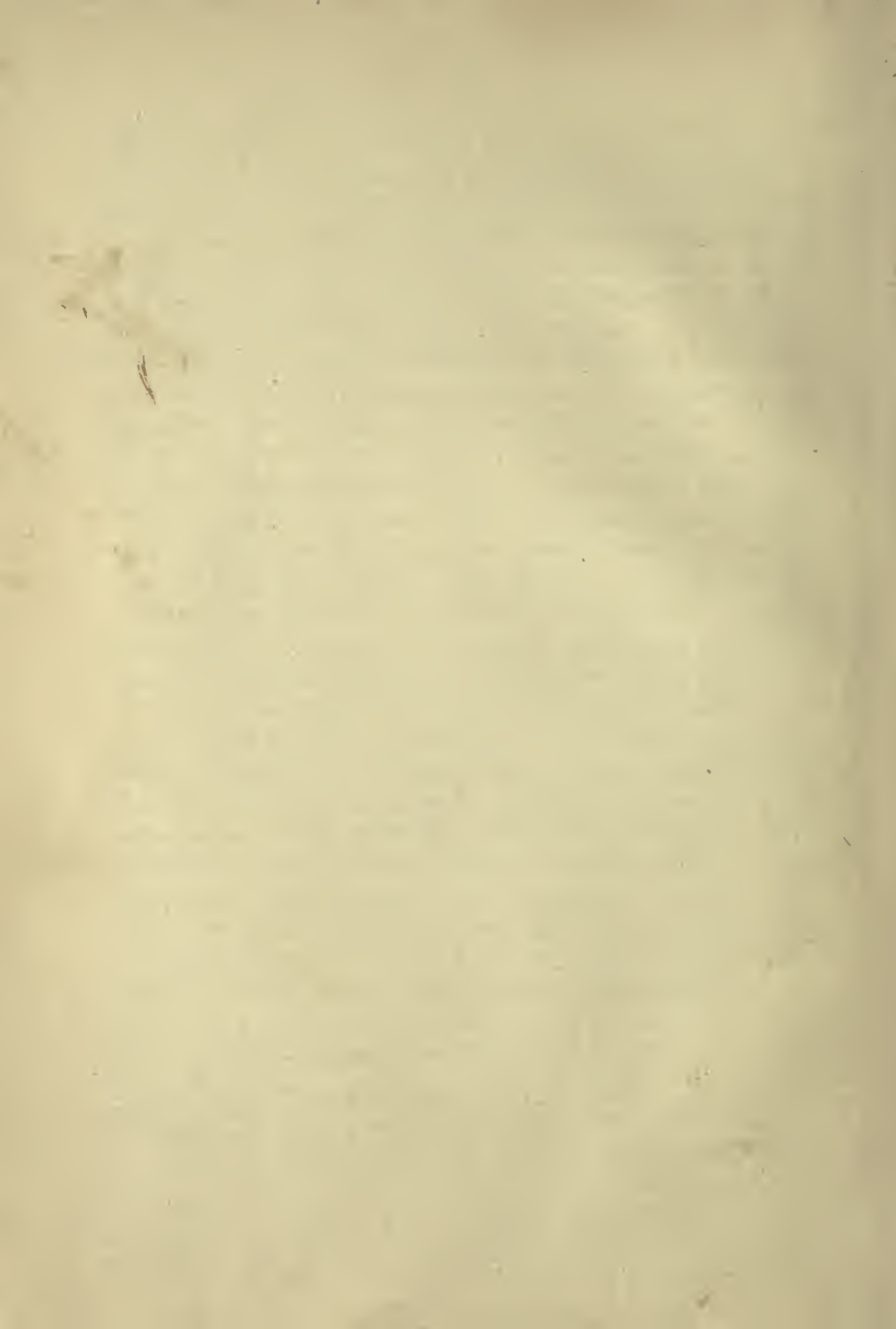
There are many persons who suffer from obscure symptoms without any evident cause. Their enjoyments of pleasure and the comforts of life cease and they become indifferent to subjects which were formerly of interest to them. Presenting no evidence of ill-health, their relatives and friends are unsympathetic and suggest that the patient go to work or "throw off the imaginary feeling" or "use more will power." They run the gamut of physicians who, finding them healthy in appearance and physically sound, tell them "you are only nervous," "there is nothing the matter with you," and, after a desultory conversation, dismiss them with a prescription for a nerve tonic. There are physicians, but they are fortunately few, who are inclined to regard symptoms of a vague nature as imaginary, or that the individual thus suffering is a hypochondriac. Now the term *hypochondriasis*, as employed by the physician, means a groundless fear of disease which has no real existence, but exists only in the imagination of the patient. Imagination may be responsible for a few diseases, but I contend that an imagination which can create a disease is in itself not in a state of health. "No one can be a hypochondriac at pleasure," says Lavègne.

These unfortunates are acutely susceptible to any imputation on the honesty of their statements and, fearing that none suffer as much as themselves, and obtaining no relief, they gradually sink into the "slough of despond." The heads of such patients never feel just right. Their sleep is disturbed and they feel depressed in the morning. Their memory becomes defective, and they apprehend a loss of reason. Sexual disturbances, indigestion and constipation supervene to add to their misery. They show less endurance and become irritable. There are no objective signs of their suffering, for their symptoms are wholly subjective. Such cases have been

described variously as hypochondriasis, nervousness, brain strain, nervous waste, nervous prostration, nervous exhaustion and nervous breakdown. Physicians designate the symptoms by the Latin word, NEURASTHENIA, which means nerve weakness, and the sufferer is called a *neurasthenic*. It was Beard, of New York, who, in 1869, first directed general attention to a condition marked by irritable weakness, and adopted for it the term neurasthenia. In Europe, it was at first derisively called Beard's disease, or the American disease, and some even referred to it as Americanitis. Herbert Spencer regarded the trouble as essentially American, a view which is decidedly incorrect inasmuch as it is a disease of the whole civilized world. Very often the cause of neurasthenia may be resident in some organ of the body. It may be the sexual apparatus, the nose, throat, or digestive tract, hence all neurasthenics should willingly submit to a thorough examination by their physician, for without a removal of the cause, all treatment will prove ineffectual. The strides made in diagnostic medicine have been enormous, and with the wonderful X-rays at our command, who can gainsay the Biblical quotation, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known." We have medical as well as social fads. To call every disease with nervous symptoms, neurasthenia, is essentially wrong. Neurasthenia is unaccompanied by any tangible evidence of organic disease. Therefore the diagnosis of neurasthenia is only warranted, when, after a systematic and thorough examination of the body, no evidence of organic disease can be elicited. A careful examination of the bodily functions is a tedious and painstaking act, and necessitates considerable skill on the part of the physician. Patients coming to the physician for advice and relief do not understand this. They presume that feeling the pulse, looking at the tongue, and tapping the chest constitute the sole diagnostic aids of the physician. The real skill of a medical man lies in his diagnosis of the case. Diagnosis is the goal of a physician's erudition, and justifies the Latin aphorism, "He who diagnoses well, cures well."

The cure of disease will always be an important duty of the physician, but the trend of modern medicine is in the direction of preventing disease. The efficiency of the physician will be greatly enhanced when his services to his patients are less intermittent and more constant. The public may yet regard as commendable the Chinese custom of paying the physician only during the period health is maintained, all emoluments ceasing during sickness. There is a well-known Italian epitaph "I was well—wished to be better—read medical books—took medicine—and died." Pope's maxim, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," pertains in all cogency to matters medical. The most dangerous dilettanteism is that of medicine. The object of this brochure is to inculcate the grand precepts of hygiene whereby disease may be prevented. Any book tending to make "any man his own physician" should read "every man his own executioner." Without an intelligent conception of disease by the layman and his hearty co-operation, the physician finds much difficulty in the rational treatment of his patient, and this is especially true of the neurasthenic. Credulity is belief without reason, and scepticism, reason without belief, but all patients are neither credulous nor sceptics. Neurasthenia is a demoralizing disease, producing depression, irritability and unreasonableness, and no disease warrants more fitly the remark of Johnson, "Every man is a rascal as soon as he is sick." A neurasthenic should never be his own physician, for, like a lawyer who conducts his own case, "he has often a fool for a client." This little volume is dedicated to all those who are liable to, or suffer from nerve exhaustion, with the hope that it will rescue the former and help the latter to recover.

Southwest corner Van Ness Avenue and California Street,
San Francisco, Cal.



II.

THE CAUSES OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

Every individual is endowed at birth with a definite amount of nerve capital. The amount allotted to each individual can never be the subject of computation; some have more, others less. Every mental act leads to brain waste, but there is also repair of this waste, and when this equilibrium of waste and repair is maintained, normal brain vigor continues. Let this health equilibrium be disturbed and at once the foundation is laid for an irritable weakness of the entire nervous system. Neurasthenia rarely develops before the age of twenty or after fifty. It is a nerve disorder arising at a time of life when the struggle for existence is most pronounced, a time of life when the greatest demands are made on the nervous system, hence, a period between the third and fifth decades furnishes the greatest number of cases. Both sexes suffer, but not equally, the males preponderating. Extremes of climatic conditions favor the development of the disease. All races are victims. Hebrews and Slavs are susceptible to it, and the Scandinavians in this country furnish a large contingent. The law of heredity does assert itself most emphatically as a factor in nervous breakdown. "The world is beginning to perceive," says Galton, "that the life of each individual is, in some real sense, a continuation of the lives of his ancestors." Holmes, the poet physician, observes that "we are omnibuses in which all our ancestors ride." "The Gods visit the sins of the fathers upon the children."

NEUROTIC HEREDITY.—There are a number of nervous diseases of direct hereditary character, transmitted from generation to generation. Aside from the transmission of an unstable nervous system, there is a law of heredity known as the *law of sanguinity*. Two parents may have normal organisms, and yet produce offspring with defective nervous

constitutions. The perfect organization of the progeny is the result of three factors—the quality of the germ (which brings matter), the quality of the sperm (which brings force) and the suitability of the one to the other. The following are some of the laws of heredity :

1. The child may inherit the attributes of either parent solely.

2. It may inherit the qualities of one parent in some respects and of the other in other respects.

3. It may inherit the father's attributes for one period of existence and the mother's for another.

4. Attributes tend to appear in the progeny about the same time of life at which they became manifest in the parents.

5. Attributes of the father tend to be inherited by the sons and of the mother by the daughters.

6. Attributes may be transmitted in latent form from one generation to another, to reappear in a third or fourth or still more remote generation—a phenomenon called "reversion."

There is a variation in the degree of hereditary taint. Thus neurasthenia is not so serious a heritage as epilepsy, imbecility or insanity. The taint in a family is greater the larger number of members afflicted. The indications of a neurotic heredity, known as *stigmata*, may be manifested by defects of moral sense, of memory, attention, will, or judgment. It is heredity which makes the nervous organization so unstable as to collapse under strain.

The stigmata of the degenerate may be physical, psychic or both. Many notable writers who have made a psycho-anthropologic study of degenerates do not attach the same significance to physical stigmata as does Lombroso. The chief physical stigmata are: cranial and facial deviation, recession of the lower jaw, large or small mouth and thick lips, abnormally shaped and misplaced ears, defective and misplaced teeth and high palate. Criminal anthropologists find such deformities very common, although there are a class of occasional criminals who show no peculiarities, a type called by Lombroso "the criminal man." Unless the physical stigma has attained such a degree of structural anomaly as to impair the normal

function of a part, no great importance is to be attached to it. Some of the psychic stigmata are the following: 1—Precocity or retarded evolution of intellect. 2—Extreme changeableness and irritability. 3—Exaggerated consciousness and a fanatical religious zeal or great moral depravity. 4—Intense egotism with no regard for the feeling of others. 5—Extravagant and cranky motives and desires. 6—One-sided talents and disproportionate development of mental faculties.

While recognizing the undoubted influence of heredity, we are inclined to go too far in ascribing to Nature the many inflictions of individuals, for instead of being "more sinned against than sinning," it is just the opposite, for man is often the victim of his own vicious habits. Ingersoll was asked on a certain occasion whether he thought he could have made things better if he had had the creation of them. His reply was "I would have made health catching instead of disease." He was unquestionably wrong, for the gift of every living thing is usually health, and for most diseases man is generally to blame for having violated at some time or other a natural law, and transgression has brought the penalties with it. No disease exemplifies more aptly the Scriptural text, "The way of the transgressor is hard," than does nervous exhaustion. "To be of any use at all," says Balfour, "we must put ourselves in Nature's place and work as Nature works."

The immortal Darwin says, "Our lives are but a bundle of consequences; our present is but the outcome of the past." It is by trifling advantages momentarily minute that Nature either worsens or improves the status of our vitality, and it is by securing these trifling advantages and turning them to the good of our patient that vital declension is averted and chronic ailments remedied when that is possible. A recent writer, Prof. Putnam, introduces the personal equation as a factor in disease, and limits the responsibility to the individual and not to heredity. He attempts to explode the pessimistic fatalism attached to heredity and assures us that a just regard for the laws of hygiene will help to avert disease. He says that "fortunately for the educational outlook, the evidence has begun to accumulate that a morbid inheritance is not the inevitably

crushing and baneful thing that it has been thought. We come into the world, each one a being of limited capacity, but, in other respects, free to become what circumstances make us, and responsible, to the extent of our capacity, for our lot. We bring no ticket-of-leave which stamps us as drunkards or maniacs on probation, but we do bear, in the histories of our ancestors, a certificate that hints by what efforts and by what avoidances we can make ourselves reasonable successes in our respective lines. There is no original sin and not even as it seems to me, original propensity, but only original capacity and original limitation, and even limitation is only another name for latent capacity."

PARESIS—It is an every-day observation to hear of men of keen perception and ambition who excel in zeal and energy as business or professional men falling victims to paresis. The slow and earnest plodder who goes through life leisurely without scintillations of genius is the man to be truly envied. The ambitious man, with limited nerve capital and no reserve force, who lets loose his wings and soars to lofty heights, will be certain to emulate Icarus, whose wings were composed of wax. The predisposing cause of *paresis* is sententiously expressed by Mickle, "A life absorbed in ambitious projects with all its strongest mental efforts, its long-sustained anxieties, deferred hopes, and straining expectation." "It is the pace which kills" and "burning the candle at both ends" are popular expressions of the same conditions which lead to paresis. To the foregoing causes must be added *syphilis* and excess in the use of *alcohol*. Statistics show that sixty-five per cent of all paretics have had syphilis. The relation of syphilis and paresis is essentially this: The poison of syphilis weakens the constitution and vitiates the blood and prepares the brain for its final dissolution by exciting causes like alcoholism, excessive venery, brain strain and excitement. "Once syphilis, always syphilis" said the erudite Ricord. Syphilis is, however, a mild disease with our present methods of continuous treatment. It is only when treatment has been inefficient or when the individual gives himself over to excesses, that the virulency of its tertiary manifestations is provoked. It behooves syphilitics, and they

unfortunately constitute a large proportion of our population, to live a life free from the glittering promises of ambition, with all its concomitant evils, and above all, to abstain from the use and abuse of alcohol.

Alcohol is responsible for at least twenty per cent of all cases of paresis.

OCCUPATION—Labor of whatever kind demanding mental or physical over-work will cause neurasthenia. Merchants, teachers and professional men furnish large numbers of neurasthenics.

The *chief causes* of neurasthenia are *mental overwork* associated with *anxiety, worry* or *excitement*. To these must be added the abuse of *alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, bodily disorders, physiologic factors* and *moral causes*.

MENTAL OVERWORK—Brain activity is always associated with an increase in the amount of blood in the brain, hence it frequently happens that brain workers, who pursue their intellectual work after meals, suffer from indigestion, for the blood so essential to digestion is attracted to the brain. The greatest amount of work that the brain can do without fatigue is during the early morning hours, for sleep has served to recuperate a fagged brain. From the early morning hours the ebb of nerve force begins, attaining its maximum discharge in the middle of the afternoon, a time when the nervously exhausted are most weak. The evening meal temporarily stimulates the brain functions, masking as it were the depressed state of the nervous system. Then follows sleep. This is nature's method of regulating waste and repair. The brain worker requires more sleep than the laborer, and if he deprives himself of the requisite amount of sleep, he is laying the foundation for a protracted siege of nervous prostration. Nature's preventive and cure of disease is sleep. The ancients spoke of sleep as the half brother of death. Insomnia or sleeplessness is the forerunner of severe mental disturbances. The truism "laboring art can never ransom nature from her inaidable estate," can aptly be applied to insomnia.

WORRIMENT—Dr. H. C. Sawyer, of San Francisco, in his admirable work on “Nerve Waste,” expresses himself as follows regarding worry: “If a long, flexible, finely-tempered sword be supported at its extremities and subjected to a moderate weight at its middle, it will bend, and as often as the weight is lifted from it, will fly back to its natural shape, though this act be repeated a million times; if an excessive weight be brought to bear upon the steel it is snapped in twain; if the blade be subjected to the strain of a lesser but still too heavy weight, it will yet respond up to a certain point of strain; if the too heavy weight is maintained during months and years, the resiliency and elasticity of the blade is impaired, the sword becomes crooked, inelastic, lifeless. So it is with human vitality. A man may sustain heavy day strain throughout a long life, if the succeeding night hours are periods of true relaxation. It is the carrying of business cares and worriments over night that impairs the fiber of the delicate and high strung nervous organization of the nervous constitution.”

There is a “Don’t Worry Society” among whose members are hundreds of brain workers. An English writer of prominence asserts that the majority of people kill themselves by lives of indolence of mind and body. Mental inactivity is injurious to physical health, and it is rare to find the idler among the list of centenarians. Healthy brain activity is essential to life and justifies the aphorism that it is not work but worry that kills. That enviable man whom nothing worries is the kind, considerate and patient man whom we occasionally meet in this busy world. The ill-tempered, irritable and pessimistic individual, with deranged digestion, is the man with an unbalanced nervous system who has disregarded the natural law of waste and repair. We know but little of the changes undergone by the brain in nerve exhaustion, although investigations made on animals suggest many things which are applicable to the human being. When, for instance, intense fatigue is induced in animals by stimulation with electricity or by the exercise of normal functions to the point of exhaustion,

the nerve cells of animals become altered in shape, and appear shrunken, and it is only after hours of rest that the cells resume their normal appearance.

PHYSICAL OVERWORK—This results in bodily fatigue, which is really fatigue of the nervous system. This fatigue is brought about by the development in the body of poisons which exercise a paralyzing influence on the delicate nerve centers.

THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL—One of the greatest scourges of the nervous system is alcohol. Alcohol in persons of a nervous temperament, even when consumed in the smallest amounts, induces organic changes in the nerve tissues like those of old age. Alcohol is essentially a medicine, and not a substance for habitual consumption. The habitual use of alcohol stands foremost, after heredity, as a single independent cause of insanity. The psychic degeneration of alcoholism is characteristic, and consists of gradually weakening memory and will, slowness of perception and judgment, loss of the moral and esthetic sense, with paroxysms of depression, anger and irritability. There is no organ of the body which is not implicated in chronic alcoholism, but it is as a *nerve intoxicant* that its most pernicious effects are manifest. A moderate indulgence in alcoholic beverages at meal times is certainly not harmful to persons active in mind and body, but in those with a neurotic heredity their use is always injurious.

TOBACCO—Tobacco like alcohol is a drug. When used in moderation by those accustomed to its effects it is generally harmless. Some are soothed by its use, whereas others are intoxicated. The temperament of the individual is the only real index of its action, for, "what is one man's meat is another man's poison." Excessive smoking results in throat irritation, dyspepsia and a peculiar affection of the heart known as the "*tobacco heart*." Oculists describe a partial blindness known as *toxic amblyopia* as a result of the excessive use of tobacco, yet when the habit is discontinued, vision is, as a rule, restored. The cigarette is more dangerous than the cigar, not only because it is used to excess but because the smoke is inhaled.

COFFEE, TEA AND COCOA—These substances while not essential are nevertheless indispensable to many persons. Like all luxuries and it is well to specify them as such, the harm arising from their use is the result of overindulgence. Taken in excess, they retard the digestion of starchy foods. A single cup of coffee at breakfast must be regarded as a stimulant, while taken at night it is often the cause of insomnia. There is a device known as the *ergograph* by which muscle force is measured. It has been shown by the ergograph that coffee will increase muscular power and so will small doses of alcohol, yet, when taken in large quantities, they depress muscle vigor. There are many nervous affections wholly attributable to tea and coffee. Some of the ill effects of excessive coffee drinking are, headache, palpitation of the heart, vertigo and confusion of the intellect. The most important signs from which habitual coffee drinkers suffer are those affecting the nervous system, which a foreign medical correspondent thus describes :

“Sleep disappears, or is accompanied by terrifying dreams. In an upright position the patient complains of a sensation of vacuum in the head and often of vertigo. At this period of the intoxication there is very marked trembling of the upper and lower limbs, and also fibrillary trembling of the lips that may spread to all the muscles of the face and to the tongue. Painful cramps also make their appearance in the muscular masses of the calf and thigh, particularly at night, preventing sleep.”

Similar evil effects follow from the use of too much tea. And for these reasons physicians have for a long time warned their patients against the chronic intoxication and other severe ills incident to the free use of coffee and tea as beverages.

BODILY DISEASES — Syphilis is an important cause. There are some persons who once having contracted the disease, invariably interpret every bodily derangement as a manifestation of syphilis. These unfortunates can however be given the positive assurance, that a case of syphilis properly and continuously treated rarely leads to bad results. Whenever the nutrition of the body suffers from whatever cause, the nervous apparatus in some persons is the first to suffer.

PHYSIOLOGIC FACTORS—*Puberty* in both sexes, and the puerperal state and change of life in women, as well as the tissue changes peculiar to old age (*senility*), are periods in life when the delicate nervous system is subject to excessive strain which increases its vulnerability. *Puberty* takes place between the thirteenth and twentieth years, resulting in remarkable physical and mental changes. The evolution of the sexual characters and development of reproduction, give rise to entirely new sensations and powerful emotions. In the boy, the mind becomes occupied with emotional, sentimental, amatory and fantastic imaginings, and it is at this time that the vicious habit of masturbation is likely to be formed.

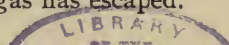
In the *puerperal state*, pregnancy diminishes the vitality of woman, debilitating and weakening her entire system, thus rendering her a prey to the many disorders of nervous breakdown.

The *change of life*, known as the *menopause*, in women between the ages of forty and fifty, is another period fraught with mischief to the nervous system, and it is rare to find in this period of involution a woman who is free from nervous manifestations. The disequilibrium associated with the cessation of ovulation and menstruation is a menace to mental integrity.

During the *senile period* of life the tissue involution is likely to be attended by numerous mental disorders. A conspicuous sign is loss of memory for recent events and the individuals interest becomes centered in his physical comforts and needs.

BRAIN CHANGES IN NEURASTHENIA—Physiologic experiments demonstrate that in fatigue of the nervous system, the *nerve cells*, which in health are plump, become shrunken, and become restored to their original shape and size only after prolonged rest.

Brain cells, when quite fresh and vigorous, may be likened to small balloons inflated ready for an ascent. They are round and full, and when seen under the microscope they give evidence of being distended. The cells of the tired brain, on the other hand, are seen to be shrunken, as an air ball or toy balloon from which most of the air or gas has escaped.



When our brains begin to work after a refreshing rest or sleep they are, says a recent writer, full of nerve fluid, which the absorbents of the body and brain have stored up there like bees fill their comb. So soon as work begins, this vital force is sapped to meet the demands upon the brain, and the process that goes on during the whole time it is working may be described in the following way:

Imagine that these cells are small goblets filled with liquid, and that they have a tiny stem, through which runs a tube or opening; the liquid in the goblet is drained by the demands of mind and body, and slowly trickles through the opening, drop by drop, until either the work ceases or the goblet is exhausted.

This latter condition is not often reached, for the simple reason that the owner of the brain is very much more likely to collapse. When the cell has yielded half its vital fluid you begin to experience a feeling of fatigue, and if you go on drawing the contents of the cells you are doing yourself injury in a proportionate degree, and nature will make you pay for it in some way or other.

But all the cells are not involved in any kind of mental work, which means that one part of the brain may be very actively at work while the other is resting and storing up nerve fluid. Thus it is that a man suffering from brain fag may leave his books and go golfing or cycling and feel that he is really resting; other cells are being called upon for work now, while the tired ones—those required for mental activity—are enjoying repose.

But it follows that the part of the brain which is called into activity for bodily exercise is now getting tired, while the other part of the brain is still at work to some extent, and so the whole of our brain cells become fatigued, and total rest in the shape of sleep, is absolutely essential.

III.

THE GENERAL SYMPTOMS OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

GENERAL SIGNS—These may be divided into—1—*motor disorders*. 2—*sensory disturbances*. 3—*disturbances of the special senses*.

MOTOR DISORDERS—*Muscular fatigue* is a constant sign. Effort in walking is exhausting and leads to prostration. Sustained effort is impossible. The slightest muscular effort is attended by *trembling*. So characteristic is this sign that Lemarcq found it in 85 per cent of neurasthenics. Some patients complain of trembling knees and shaking hands or the tremor only becomes evident in the handwriting. There may also be muscular twitchings in the lips and face.

SENSORY DISTURBANCES—*Headache* is a common sign. It may be constantly present or invoked by any mental or muscular effort or some emotion. The headache is usually confined at the base of the brain or it may be located on the top or front of the head or at the temples. Some describe the headache as a heavy weight or constriction about the head. Some describe the sensation of a closely fitting lead cap on the head. Some experience a heaviness or throbbing and a sensation as if wind or water were running under the scalp.

Backache, confined to the small of the back or accompanied by pain running up between the shoulders or through the loins and down the limbs, is a frequent sign.

Spinal tenderness is common, and may be so pronounced as to interfere with sitting or lying down. A favorite location for the tenderness in women is at the extreme end of the spine. There may be sensations of hot flushes, cold, numbness, stiffness, soreness, etc., in any and all parts of the body.

EYE SIGNS—An early sign is a blurring of the vision on using the eyes for any length of time which may become so pronounced that the person becomes unable to perform any work requiring the use of the eyes for any length of time. Often the vision becomes veiled and things look strange and unreal.

OTHER DISORDERS OF THE SPECIAL SENSES—Abnormal ringing, singing, whistling and roaring sounds are heard although the hearing itself is never seriously impaired. *Taste* is often impaired. Nothing tastes exactly right or there is a bitter taste in the mouth even when no food is taken.

IV.

THE SPECIAL SYMPTOMS OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

The signs may be confined to single organs like the brain, heart or the stomach and intestines whereas in reality, they are mere manifestations of a general breakdown of the nervous system.

BRAIN SYMPTOMS—The capacity for mental work becomes lessened. Any mental effort is attended by a sense of fatigue and distress. Fixing the attention on anything is difficult and often impossible. There is loss of *Memory*. Ideas do not occur with the usual vigor and patients often affirm that "they cannot think straight." The fear of insanity is common with such persons. Attracted by their symptoms, they become introspective, misconstrue their sensations and develop *phobias*. Becoming morbidly self-watchful they pass into a condition of *hypochondriasis*. It is rare for the morbid fears to become insane delusions. *Fear* in neurasthenics develops as a result of weakness and loss of courage. Some fear to be alone, some fear darkness, others narrow or high places, etc. Some fear dirt or infection by disease. A neurasthênic recognizes the absurdity of his fears and is able to dispel them whereas the hypochondriac regards such fears as actual conditions and cannot be convinced to the contrary. *Diminished affection* for those dear to him is another sign which often distresses the patient. He becomes irritable, fault-finding and resentful. He dreads meeting acquaintances or people. He approaches his daily task with a sense of weariness. He becomes emotional and lachrymose on the slightest pretext. He recounts the history of his illness to everyone who will listen and often seems to delight in so doing. As a rule, he regards the future with disgust. He cannot bear to read the morning papers lest some accident, murder or sudden death may distress him.

Sleeplessness is one of the earliest signs. Sometimes there is difficulty in falling asleep, or the sleep is constantly disturbed. Occasionally the sleep is sound and deep, yet the patient awakens in the morning unrefreshed and often feels more depressed than upon retiring. On closing the eyes in bed, there is, at times, sudden jerking of the legs, or a feeling as of falling. When *dreams* disturb the sleep, it indicates that the latter is not sound, but partial. In dreams, the brain is in part awake; the will is dormant and the imagination runs riot with incongruous and fantastic images. When many brain centers are active, dreams are consistent and coherent, while, when few centers are working, they are unreal and extravagant. Dreams are evidence to the physician of unsound sleep. The dreaming period, in health, rarely occurs until the time for awaking approaches. If the dreaming period comes on early, there is some disorder present in the body which retards the complete rest of the brain. Attempts have been made to classify dreams, but such classifications, from a psychologic standpoint, are purely arbitrary.

HEART SIGNS—*Heart palpitation* is a frequent symptom. Palpitation means that the patient is conscious of his heart's action. A conscious knowledge of any organ constitutes disease of that organ, not necessarily organic, but more often functional disease. A person with a healthy heart is not conscious that he has such an organ. In the mild forms of palpitation only a fluttering or sinking feeling is experienced. In the more severe forms, the heart beats violently against the chest, the arteries throb and the action of the heart is increased to as many times as 150 pulsations per minute. In *nervous palpitation*, the face becomes flushed, and after the attacks, large quantities of urine are passed. An attack may last only a few minutes or may continue for hours. Palpitation is most often caused by some digestive disturbance or may result from emotions or prolonged muscular or mental efforts.

Ruskin has truly said: "No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort; a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it without effort. The body's work and the head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively

without effort. Neither limbs nor brain are ever to be strained to their utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be gotten out of them; they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquility and constancy. We are to follow the plough from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in raceboats at the twilight; we shall get no fruit out of that kind of work—only *disease of the heart.*”

Irregularity of the heart is another sign. An evidence of *enfeebled circulation* is shown by cold hands and feet. Sudden *flushings* and *sweats* and pulsations of the large artery of the abdomen are exceedingly frequent to the great annoyance of the patient.

STOMACH SIGNS—The more I observe dyspeptics, the more certain is my conviction that *nervousness* is responsible for the majority of cases. We are a nation of dyspeptics owing to our ceaseless and intense living methods. Repair is not commensurate with waste and there comes a time to many of us when our functions must suffer. All the organs of the body in health work harmoniously; one is dependent on the other for the normal performance of its work. If one suffers they all suffer, yet some one organ, it may be the heart, the stomach or the liver, usually bears the brunt of nerve exhaustion. Why this is so, is difficult to say, other than by supposing that every person like Achilles has some vulnerable spot. Some persons when they have a “*nerve storm*” center all their abnormal sensations in the heart, others in the stomach, others in the head, etc.

Nervous indigestion is a frequent complication of nerve strain. The appetite may be unimpaired and even voracious. At other times, the mere thought of food is repugnant. Often the food eaten lies like a heavy weight. The patient belches and is apt to bring up a sour fluid giving rise to heartburn. The tongue may be perfectly clean throughout the disturbances of digestion. The day has waned when the physician, after casting a furtive glance at the tongue, feeling the pulse and asking a few desultory questions about the stomach, proceeds to prescribe what has been facetiously called a “*shotgun*” prescription; embodying pepsin and acid to increase digestion,

an alkali to correct acidity, a tonic to promote digestion and a purgative to move the bowels. Such a prescription is as much a contradiction as the "whisky cocktail" described by the perturbed Frenchman, "a little whisky to make it strong, a little water to make it weak, a little lemon to make it sour, a little sugar to make it sweet, and then you say, here's to you, and you drink it yourself." The scientific physician of to-day takes nothing for granted. He places the patient on a "*test meal*," after which, he withdraws the contents of the stomach and subjects it to chemic analysis. Having ascertained the ingredients of the gastric juice, he is ready to fulfil his duties as an up-to-date practitioner, and prescribes accordingly. In the majority of cases of nervous dyspepsia, chemic analysis shows no anomaly, and digestion is found to have been completed within the normal time limit. The latter facts are alone characteristic of nervous dyspepsia. Were the digestive trouble of a nature other than nervous, there would be decided changes in the gastric juice and in the character of the digestion. It is strange how soon nervous dyspeptics discover that it is not wise to eat too much when nervous or excited, for it is at such a time when the gastric signs predominate. Prof. Bouchard has written a learned treatise on "Auto-intoxication in Disease." He clearly shows that man is constantly standing as it were on the brink of a precipice; every moment of his life he runs the risk of being overpowered by poisons generated within his system. The healthy and unhealthy body is a receptacle and a laboratory of poisons. Self-poisoning is only inhibited by the activity of the skin, kidneys and bowels. Now these poisons are normally manufactured in our intestinal canal, and were it not for the action of the bowels, kidneys and skin, many of us would succumb to auto-intoxication. In *indigestion*, these poisons are generated by stagnant food, and give rise to blood poisoning.

Auto-intoxication from indigestion does not always manifest itself by the classic signs of indigestion, and it is not infrequent that the physician fails to elicit from the patient subjective evidence of indigestion.

THE INTESTINAL SIGNS—The chief sign is *constipation*. Torpidity of the bowels may run in families. Sedentary habits, coupled with excessive eating and a disregard to the call of nature as well as the character of the food eaten, are common causes of constipation. In *neurasthenia* the muscular tone of the bowels suffers and it becomes incapable of moving the fecal matter onward into the rectum. There are some persons who are persistently constipated without suffering any inconvenience. A patient once told me, in detailing his symptoms, that as far as his bowels were concerned, they were in perfect condition, as they moved regularly once a week. The majority of persons, however, complain that unless they have a daily evacuation they suffer from languor, headache, loss of appetite and depression. So potent an influence does a free evacuation have on the condition of well being that even Voltaire was induced to write: "Those persons who are in good position . . . whose bowels are freed by an easy regular peristaltic movement every morning as soon as they have breakfasted . . . those who are thus favored by nature are mild, affable, gracious, kind. A *no* from their mouth comes with more grace than a *yes* from the mouth of one that is constipated."

A recent German writer has collected a large number of cases of neurasthenia dependent wholly on constipation and the evil results thereof. He contends and his contention cannot be questioned that the bowels normally manufacture poisons which, when absorbed, influence the delicate nervous system. Hypochondriacs are usually constipated, and so are the insane. One of my patients, who is an habitual sufferer from constipation and has periodic *nerve storms*, finds immediate relief after taking a saline purgative. The physiology of defecation is practically as follows: The fecal matter formed in the large intestine sets up a motion known as *peristalsis*, which moves the fecal mass through the large bowel, dropping it into the rectum. At the latter point "a call of nature" takes place and an evacuation is the result. If no response is made to this "call" by the individual, whether through laziness or attention to other duties, the watery portion of

the fecal mass is absorbed, passes into the circulation and intoxicates the nervous system. Persons who suffer from this *auto-intoxication* have a muddy skin, dark rings under the eyes, cold extremities and an unpleasant taste in the mouth, dark, offensive and insufficient bowel movements and a heavy urine, which leaves a deposit on standing.

SECRETORY DISORDERS—The urine is scant and dark, or it may be abundant and light colored. During or after a nerve storm it is usually of the latter character. Often there is some bladder irritation and the urine is passed frequently. Perspiration is usually profuse, especially after the slightest mental or physical exertion, and the "cold, clammy hand" is a common condition.

The *sexual disorders* will be considered in the chapter, SPECIAL FORMS OF NEURASTHENIA.

V.

THE GENERAL TREATMENT OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

RELIEF FOR MENTAL OVERWORK—Sleep is without doubt the natural restorative of a fagged brain. The writer, when suffering from brain tire, finds more relief by three days' absolute rest in bed than by a sojourn of two weeks in the country after the conventional manner. Sleep is, however, a restorative that cannot always be summoned at will. The inventor, speculator, student and business man must seek *mental recreation*. The brain worker who seeks diversion and does so constrainedly defeats the objects of such diversion. The diversion adopted must be agreeable. *Travel* is often suggested as a method of mental recreation but it is often done in such a perfunctory way that the victim returns to his habitual routine work more exhausted than recuperated. They may change their skies but not themselves. Indulgence in extraneous literature, the cultivation of a fad, some regulated exercise like golf, bicycling, hunting, etc., are excellent means of diversion. Employment prevents melancholy—it is restful to the body. Inaction, idleness and the constant pursuit of pleasure, for the sake of pleasure, simply encourage premature old age. Above all things in seeking physical exercise as a means of diversion, be sure to avoid physical overwork. Physical exhaustion is naught else but nervous fatigue, for every physical act is the result of nervous energy. The limit of physical exercise is fatigue. Rational exercise is never exertion but a gradual and progressive use of muscles diverting the blood from the overtaxed brain throughout the entire body. Neurasthenics who overexercise, develop poisons equally as injurious as those generated by brain strain.

RELIEF FOR WORRIMENT—"Worry, not work, kills." Worry in persons previously unaccustomed to great responsibilities is one of the greatest factors in the premature loss of

health and life. Worry, grief, passion and fretting are powerful nervous shocks. They arrest the functions of digestion and impair the bodily functions. *Self-control* is the palladium against nervous prostration. I have never met nervous prostration in individuals who have acquired a knowledge of self-government. We are all competent to construct for ourselves a philosophy of complacency. Such philosophy need not resolve itself into indolence and apathy nor need it assume the aspects of stoicism. When misfortune or disaster overtakes the Turk he attributes it to the will of God or more often to fate (*Kismet*) and he piously ejaculates: "It is fate (*Kismet dir*) or God will provide" (*Allahkerim*). The cultivation of some belief which inculcates the doctrines of contentment should be encouraged. It may be a difficult matter to control the emotions but mastery can be attained by training. I know many neurasthenics who suffer relapses whenever exposed to some intense emotion. When self-control is difficult, individuals must avoid conditions which introduce them to such influences. They must avoid going to funerals, reading death notices and the newspapers, cultivate the companionship of people who may dream of unhappiness but wake up laughing. The worries of some people are often so ridiculous that they must be regarded as the emanations of a diseased mind. I know one woman, who, after a rest cure for nervous prostration, suffered only one inconvenience and that was, that she had heard that recovery from a "rest cure" lasted only five years, and at the end of that time she feared she would suffer a relapse. My patient was very much like the woman whose doctor asked after her health replied dolefully: "I feel very well; but I always feel bad when I feel well, because I know I am going to feel worse afterward."

ELIMINATION OF FACTORS CONDUCIVE TO NEURASTHENIA—Knowing that the perennial unrest of body and mind, continuous emotional excitement like grief, worry and anxiety, make up the causative elements of nerve waste, our primary object is to eliminate the cause. We must guard ourselves from drifting upon the shoals of nervous degradation. Remember that when nervous breakdown once occurs, recovery is

only possible to a certain extent, and relapses are frequent. As Courtney puts it: "Hardly any of them come out of the conflict unscathed, and though many recover sufficiently to cope with the ordinary duties and trials of life, they are *never* quite capable of weathering its real storms."

THE REST CURE—In a little book, "Fat and Blood and How to Make Them," Dr. Weir Mitchell has created a new era in curative medicine, and the victims of nervous prostration and hysteria are his debtors. He has simplified a task heretofore almost impossible of attainment, viz: the cure of a pronounced case of nervous prostration. It would be ridiculous to affirm that all cases can be cured by the rest cure, any more than to say that any method of treatment, yet devised, will cure all cases of the disease to which it is adapted. This much one can conscientiously and conservatively say—it cures and benefits a greater percentage of cases than any other known method of treatment. The cardinal points of the rest cure are *isolation* of the patient, *rest with exercise* and *over-feeding*. A rest cure attempted at the patient's home is rarely attended with success, hence the necessity of absolute isolation that is, the execution of the cure away from home to obtain the necessary control of the patient. The most important element of treatment is *moral control*. Loving and sympathetic relatives can never appreciate the nature of the patient's symptoms. There are some patients who thrive poorly on absolute isolation, in which instances they are occasionally permitted to see at intervals their friends and members of their family. An *intelligent nurse* is indispensable—a poor nurse is worse than useless. The details of the method are essentially as follows: The patient is confined to bed, and under no circumstance is allowed to get up, to read, or write. The patient is even fed by the nurse, the object being to secure perfect passivity of mind and body. Absolute rest is not always enforced, the method being modified to suit the individual case. It is the rule for patients to affirm that it is impossible for them to remain in bed continuously, and it is but natural that they should make this statement, for their extreme restlessness only announces the instability of their nervous system. Contrary

evidence is soon forthcoming after absolute rest in bed and the manifestations of nerve irritability are subdued. It is then that they share the enthusiasm of the poet when they proclaim: "O bed! O bed! delicious bed! That heaven upon earth to the weary head!"

After rest in bed for several weeks the patient is allowed to sit up. To facilitate digestion and build up nutrition during the rest cure, massage and electricity are employed daily. Massage and electricity give exercise to the unused muscles, improve the circulation and promote the absorption of nourishment. Inasmuch, as all neurasthenics suffer from indigestion, and consequently imperfect body nourishment, diet is a most important factor in the rest treatment. Great discretion is exercised by the physician in the selection of the proper diet, and when this is accomplished, it is surprising what prodigious quantities of food can be taken by the patient undergoing the rest cure. The improvement in nutrition is manifested by increase in weight which may be all the way from 10 to 40 pounds. In many individuals hydropathic treatment is employed with water of varying degrees of temperature, and it is surprising to note the sedative and tonic influences of cold water when the patient is accustomed to its use. Of late, *hypnotism* or treatment by suggestion has been employed in the treatment of neurasthenia, and it must be confessed that its intelligent employment is capable of marvelous effects in ridding the patient of morbid ideas and in inducing sleep, which, even with drugs, is often times impossible.

Healthy suggestions made by the physician, I regard as indispensable in the treatment of many cases. The dangers of hypnotism are exaggerated, for no one can be hypnotized against his wish. Prof. Bernheim, the apostle of hypnotism, has this to say: "It is the duty of the physician to select what is useful in suggestion, and to apply it for the benefit of his patients. When, in the presence of sickness, I think that therapeutic suggestion has a chance of success, I should consider myself to blame, as a physician, if I did not propose it to my patient, and if I did not even make a point of getting his consent to its employment." The influence of mind on body

is every day illustrated by the introduction of some new fad or delusion in the treatment of disease. It is difficult to conceive that such results are effected by the mind as a simple thinking organ; on the contrary, the mind must be regarded as a force like light, heat and electricity which operates for good or evil on the bodily functions. Strong mental impressions may actuate disease, and even death, or they may act by curing disease. Joy and hope stimulate, whereas grief and despair depress the bodily functions. Sutton, a recent writer, presents the following facts :

First—That mental emotion may induce sickness or death within a brief space of time, or even immediately, and in persons of robust health.

Second—The physical phenomena induced by such cause indicate a deep perturbation—vibration—of the nervous system, and are generally of a dynamic character.

Third—Thought strongly directed to any part tends to increase its vascularity and consequently its sensibility.

Fourth—Thought strongly directed away from any part diminishes vascularity and lessens sensibility. The more so when associated with powerful emotions. (A key which unlocks Christian science and other “fads.”)

Fifth—The emotions may cause sensations, either by directly exciting the sensory ganglia and the central extremities of the nerves of sensation, or by inducing vascular changes in a certain part of the body, which excite the sensitive nerves at their peripheral termination.

Sixth—There is no sensation, whether general or special, excited by agents acting on the body from without, which can not be excited also from within by emotional states affecting the sensory ganglia, such sensation being referred by the mind to the point at which the nerve terminates in the body. (Tukey.)

Christian science is suggestion plus absurdity; divine healing, suggestion plus faith in God; Dowieism, suggestion plus prayer and holy terror; Weltmerism, suggestion plus imagination, pure; magnetic healing, suggestion plus imagination, also; osteopathy, suggestion plus massage; homeopathy, suggestion plus nothing; allopathy, suggestion plus tubfuls of

drugs that either kill or cure; regular or rational medicine, suggestion plus the best common horse sense available, or suggestion and medicine mixed with the best quality of brains obtainable. No suggestion in this that the quality of brains is indisputably good in all cases—or perhaps in any. Yet that is the scientific principle at the base, and it may be used with telling effect in all cases of sickness, and is infinitely better than the delusions of the day by so much as it substitutes intelligence for ignorance and does not produce that disaggregation of personal consciousness and temporary insanity that is the *sine qua non* in Christian science, etc.

THE PARTIAL REST TREATMENT—In cases of *mild neurasthenia*, and for patients who cannot give up their entire time to the full rest treatment, which is often the case in men, the following partial rest treatment may be employed: On *waking* in the morning, a cup of cocoa is taken and the patient should remain in bed twenty minutes longer; after this, the patient rises and takes a cool or cold sponge or shower bath, after which the skin is vigorously rubbed with a rough towel; following the bath, breakfast is taken, after which the patient should lie down for an hour and remain at absolute rest, without reading. At 10:30 a glass of milk is taken, when the patient may go out for a walk or drive or attend to business. At 1 o'clock luncheon or dinner is taken, after which meal the patient should lie down for an hour. In the afternoon any recreation may be taken, or attention paid to business until 6:30, when dinner or supper is taken, followed by rest for an hour. At 9:30 the patient should retire for the night. Massage should be taken once a day; before rising in the morning, after the morning cup of cocoa, or in the evening before retiring. A wineglassful of malt should be taken with each meal, and if the patient has impoverished blood, some simple iron preparation should be taken. In conclusion, "It is reiterated," says Courtney, "that affections of the brain and nervous system are in greater measure preventable than those of other parts; consequently the mental and nervous salvation of the individual is, practically speaking to a very marked extent, within his own hands, and may be worked out by him through rigid attention to the guidance of hygienic laws."

VI.

THE SPECIAL TREATMENT OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

INSOMNIA.

THE THEORIES OF SLEEP—The *anemic* theory supposes that during sleep there is a decreased amount of blood in the brain. The *toxic* theory supposes that in consequence of the wear and tear of the body tissues, *waste products* are generated which have a benumbing influence on the brain cells which preside over the *senses*. A strong proof of the latter hypothesis is adduced by the following observation of Strümpell: A young man had lost all power of sensation except in the right eye and the left ear. When the former was covered by a bandage and the latter stopped by a plug the brain of the subject was practically isolated from the outer world and the invariable result was genuine sleep. "The substance of the brain," says Hammond, in "Sleep and Its Derangements," "is consumed by every thought, by every action of the will, by every sound that is heard, by every object that is seen, by every substance that is watched, by every odor that is smelled, by every painful or pleasurable sensation, and soon each instance of our lives witnesses the decay of some portion of its mass and the formation of new material to take its place."

During sleep the physical and mental functions are at rest. Sleep is more essential to life than food. In sleep, *muscular relaxation* is absolute, and the *amount of air* inspired by a normal man is one-seventh of that used during similar periods of quiet wakefulness. The *pulse* is less rapid and the brain contains less blood. The first few hours of sleep are the most valuable because they are most profound.

AMOUNT OF SLEEP NECESSARY — In the time of Solomon, the twenty-four hours were divided into three parts—eight hours for labor and occupation, eight hours for rest,

refreshment and recreation and surcease of all labor, and eight hours for sleep. The object of sleep is the reconstruction of overworked organs and it would be too arbitrary to determine the number of hours necessary for sleep, for its real value lies more in the intensity of sleep than on its duration. Again, the amount of sleep necessary is commensurate with the mental and physical exercise of the waking hours. Eight hours of a disturbed dreamy sleep is barely the equivalent of two hours of a deep, dreamless sleep. For this reason, we can easily understand why men of the greatest mental activity are usually the briefest sleepers. Frederick the Great required only five hours' sleep and Pitt only three hours. Brown says, that at four years, twelve hours' sleep are needed; at fourteen years, ten hours; at seventeen, nine and one-half hours; then seven or eight hours during adult life. In *old age* continuous sleep is rare and the necessity less; but frequent naps during the day and night, make up the average. In cold countries more sleep is required than in warm climates.

CONDITIONS FAVORING SLEEP—A well ventilated room, cool, dark and quiet. A comfortable bed with a moderate amount of covering. Mental worries and intense thoughts interfere with sleep. Sleep is a powerful habit. A person who awakens at a certain hour for several successive nights, eventually establishes the habit of awakening at that hour. The habit should be cultivated of retiring and awakening at a definite hour.

THE CAUSES OF INSOMNIA OR SLEEPLESSNESS—Prof. See divides all causes of insomnia into: 1—*Psychical*, and 2.—*Physical*. The causes of *psychical insomnia* include cases of sleeplessness dependent on mental emotion, to thought, worry, that is, to causes not directly dependent on organic disease. Young, the well known author of "Night Thoughts," was presumably thus afflicted—

"From short as usual and disturbed repose,
I awake. How happy those that wake no more;
I awake emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous, where my wrecked despondent thought
From wave to wave of fancied misery
At random drove, her helm of reason lost!"

The worries of the student, the merchant, the speculator, homesickness and disappointments are of this order. In the treatment of such cases, the physician is often powerless to act.

“Who shall minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
'Rase out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?”

PHYSICAL CAUSES—Every deviation of health is characterized by disturbance of sleep, but in most cases where a vicious sleep habit is established, it tends to persist. Among the chief causes are: 1—*Brain strain*. 2—*Organic disease* of the brain and arteries. 3—*Stomach* and *intestinal* diseases. 4.—Irritation of the sexual organs. 5—Poisonous substances (*toxic insomnia*).

THE INSOMNIA OF BRAIN STRAIN—An increase in the supply of blood to the brain eventuating in *cerebral congestion*. It is an undoubted fact, that the brain strain of severe mental labor is measurably lessened by an adequate amount of physical exercises. Physiologists and hygienists have shown this to be true, yet we must be cautious in going to the other extreme, *taking too much physical exercise*; for otherwise, the poisonous substances generated by *muscular fatigue* only tend to excite the brain and tend to insomnia.

THE INSOMNIA OF ORGANIC DISEASE OF THE BRAIN AND ARTERIES—Whenever the nutrition of the brain is compromised by actual disease, then insomnia of an aggravating and persistent character results. When the insomnia is caused by brain congestion, there is flushing of the face, redness of the eyes, giddiness, confusion of ideas, and sometimes stupor.

THE INSOMNIA OF STOMACH AND INTESTINAL DISEASE—In *indigestion*, toxic substances are developed which irritate the brain and prevent sleep. In many instances, the accumulation of gases in the stomach and intestines by pressing on important organs, notably the heart and lungs, induce sleeplessness indirectly. Some persons sleep best, if, before

retiring they take a light repast; others, on the contrary, would find such a procedure an indiscretion, certain to be followed by insomnia. Sleep after eating is a salutary procedure. It draws the blood from the brain to the stomach and thus facilitates digestion.

TOXIC INSOMNIA—Insomnia induced by the indiscriminate use of poisonous substances like alcohol, coffee, tea, tobacco, etc. Not infrequently the inhibition of any one of these substances will often cure an intractable insomnia.

TREATMENT OF INSOMNIA—It has been truly said that if *sleep* and *hope* should be taken from man he would be the most miserable being in existence. Much can be attained by obeying the laws of hygiene. Attention must be directed to a minute investigation of all the bodily functions to ascertain the fundamental condition, of which insomnia is a mere manifestation. We possess many *drugs* which, when prescribed by the physician with discretion, may be regarded as harmless, yet drugs should only be used as a last resort, for any drug which induces sleep by overpowering the body is not entirely without danger. Generally speaking, an adequate amount of *physical exercise* is necessary in all sufferers from insomnia. Nothing is more conducive to sleep than exercise taken in the open air. Some *diversion* for the brain worker may be found in change of scene and society. "Seeing that too much sadness has congealed your blood and melancholy is the nurse of frenzy, therefore have thought it good for you to hear a play, and frame your mind to mirth and merriment which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life."

No detail should be neglected in ascertaining the cause of insomnia. Tea or coffee should not be taken at the evening meal and tobacco should not be used, at least some hours before retiring. A glass of warm milk, or a cup of hot bouillon before retiring may prove beneficial in inducing sleep. Some derive sleep by taking a glass of beer or malt extract before retiring. If the sufferer from insomnia be a literary man or student, all intellectual effort should be stopped at least an hour before retiring, and the interval filled in with some extraneous dull reading. When this fails, no intellectual work should be

done after supper, reserving that work for the early morning hours. Some cases of insomnia only yield after a *complete change of scene* free from excitement and sight seeing. *Active exercise* before retiring, with dumb-bells, pulley-weights or Indian clubs, followed by a tepid or warm sponge bath, often induces healthful and refreshing sleep. *Climate* is an essential consideration in those who suffer from insomnia. Warm climates are soothing and cool climates stimulating to the nervous system. On account of the cool nights in mountainous districts, refreshing sleep can often be obtained. Some find benefit by residing at the seashore.

Hydrotherapy is a valuable adjunct in the treatment of insomnia. Schneller's experiments proved conclusively that ice applied to the head of an animal caused contraction of the blood vessels of the brain which persisted for a short time after the ice was removed. The brief application of cold or warm water to the surface of the body is stimulating, but if prolonged, depressent. A *cool sponge bath*, or even a cold plunge before retiring, will provoke sleep. The secondary effect of cold to the skin, is to dilate the blood vessels which draw the blood away from the brain. Many sufferers find relief in a prolonged *warm bath* before retiring, the effect being sedative on the nervous system. Others find equal benefit in a *hot foot bath*. Some find relief in a *Turkish bath* followed by general massage. The *wet pack* has done heroic service for many nervous persons. It is used as follows: A sheet having been wrung out of cold water, is thrown over the patient from neck to ankles, and over this several dry blankets, with a hot water bag to the feet and a cold wet cloth to the forehead. The patient remains in the pack from half an hour to an hour, and is then vigorously rubbed with a coarse dry cloth until the skin glows. The wet pack may be given every night or several times a week.

Hot compresses, consisting of flannels wrung out of hot water, applied to the abdomen and covered with dry flannels, are often efficacious. A *hot bag* may be substituted. The *cold douche* to the head, or a *shower bath* to the head and spine, are frequently serviceable.

Massage is often of service in insomnia when every other hygienic measure fails.

Some persons can induce sleep by having recourse to the *hop pillow*, which should be moistened with spirits before being placed under the head of the patient. Among *drugs*, *bromide of potash* is the least harmful. For an adult, 30 grains may be taken in sweetened water before retiring and repeated in an hour if necessary. It is especially useful in nervous cases.

Electricity, when properly employed, especially in the form of *static electricity*, is almost an indispensable remedy in insomnia. Contrary results often follow its injudicious application. The *galvanic current* has a tendency to make some persons sleepy and is to be applied in the evening, The *Faradic current* makes most people wakeful. Electricity is especially useful in the insomnia of brain strain and alcoholism.

Hypnotism is likewise an indispensable agent when judiciously employed.

A common procedure for inducing sleep is energetic and frequently repeated opening and closing of the eyelids. *Auto-suggestion* is often of service. The patient should go to bed with the firm conviction that sleep is bound to follow. One may imagine observing all the phenomena incident to sleep in another person. The reading of dull books or concentrating the mind on some blank and wearying picture makes the mind receptive to only one suggestion, viz: sleep are some means often employed.

“ A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by
One by one ; the sound of rain and bees
Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, wide sheets of water and pure sky.”

TREATMENT OF THE HEART SYMPTOMS.

THE TREATMENT FOR PALPITATION OF THE HEART—
Absolute rest in bed in a large ventilated and darkened chamber with the clothing removed. The application of an *ice-bag* to the region of the heart or cloths saturated in cold water are very effective agents. Swallowing small pieces of ice or drinking

large draughts of cold water or a glass of hot water are procedures frequently adopted. To *prevent* attacks of palpitation, excitement of all kind must be avoided and tea, coffee, and alcohol must be discontinued or at least reduced. When the palpitation is dependent on impoverished blood, *iron* in some form is serviceable. When a *stomach disturbance* is at the bottom of the trouble it must be cured. Electricity is an effective agent. When everything else fails, the *rest cure* gives remarkably good results.

TREATMENT OF NERVOUS DYSPEPSIA—In the majority of instances, indigestion is caused by too *rapid eating* and the consumption of too much food. Digestion begins in the mouth. This is especially true of the digestion of starchy foods. Many dyspeptics are cured of their evil by thoroughly masticating their food. A meal should be regarded as a pastime, not a necessity. It is difficult and even impossible to lay down any definite rule for the kind of food to be consumed, for "one man's food is another man's poison." The *nervous dyspeptic* is as a rule, poorly nourished. It is absurd to suppose that nervous prostration can be cured without increasing and making the nourishment effective. An exhausted nervous system demands a plentiful supply of good nutritious food. Beard maintains in his classic work on "Sexual Neurasthenia" that flesh is the natural food of man. His theory of diet is founded on the theory of evolution and finds expression in the following three propositions: 1—Living beings feed on that which is below them in the scale of development. 2—The best food for man is that which is just below him or nearest to him in the scale of development. 3—Food is difficult of assimilation for man in proportion to its distance below him in the scale of development. It is undoubtedly true, that those who subsist exclusively upon meat are capable of greater mental and physical exertion than those who consume vegetable food. Animal food contains the greatest variety of nutriment and is generally most easily digested. Beef is more nutritious and stimulating than mutton. The flesh of very young animals is less nutritious and more difficult of digestion than the flesh of the matured animal. *Oysters* are very nutritious and digestible

when consumed raw. *Oatmeal* is a frequent cause of indigestion in the nervous dyspeptic. Eggs, milk and fish are very nutritious. When the dyspepsia is severe, an exclusive *milk diet* for several weeks proves curative. The daily amount necessary must never be less than three pints and as much as a gallon. A large glassful should be drunk slowly every hour, and, when toleration is established this amount may be increased at shorter intervals. The digestibility of the milk may be increased by adding a pinch of salt or a teaspoonful of lime water to each glass. Some prefer taking the milk diluted with water or seltzer. When *whole milk* is loathsome, it may be skimmed or substituted by buttermilk. *Farinaceous foods* should, as a rule, be excluded as they create flatulency and heartburn. Too much liquid should not be taken at a meal as it dilutes the gastric juice and inhibits digestion. *Hygienic measures*, such as exercise and bathing, are indispensable, for, by increasing the tone of the nervous system they indirectly improve digestion. Sufferers from nervous dyspepsia will find material aid by carrying out the *partial rest treatment* and confining themselves to the following diet which excludes starchy foods which are notoriously indigestible in neurasthenic persons.

On *waking*, eight ounces of equal parts of hot milk and seltzer water, taken slowly. *Breakfast*, steak or loin chops with fat, soft boiled or poached egg, cream toast (very little), half a pint of milk and a small cup of coffee. *Lunch*, 10 A. M., small teacup of squeezed beef juice with stale bread. 12 M., rest or sleep. *Midday meal*, 12:30 P. M., fish, chicken, scraped meat ball, stale bread with plenty of butter, baked apples and cream, two glasses of milk. *Lunch*, 4 P. M., bottle of koumyss, raw scraped beef sandwich or goblet of milk. 5:30 P. M., rest or sleep. *Dinner*, 6 P. M., meat or fresh soup, roast or mutton, game, stale bread (sparingly), fresh vegetables, (excepting potatoes). Eat slowly, chew the food thoroughly, and never eat when excited or exhausted. Poorly prepared meals are often a source of dyspepsia. Washing the stomach by means of a tube is often indicated for the relief of dyspepsia. *Constipation* is frequently a cause of dyspepsia and loss of appetite.



Personally I have observed only temporary good to result from the use of such agents as pepsin, pancreatin and hydrochloric acid. To stimulate digestion *strychnin* is often invaluable. The addition of common salt to our food stimulates digestion. Alcohol should be stopped, although there can be no objection to a moderate use of some light wine taken with meals.

RULES FOR DYSPEPTICS.

RULE I.—Eat slowly and chew the food thoroughly. If the foregoing are not observed then follow the rule of Sir Andrew Clark, viz: Count the bites. For every mouthful of meat thirty-two bites must be allowed, or one bite to every tooth. If the meat is tough sixty-four bites must be allowed, and ninety-six bites if very tough. This rule is an almost positive protection against dyspepsia and will, in most instances, cure the disease.

RULE II.—Solids and liquids must be taken at separate times. Liquid taken with food in those with weak stomachs dilutes the gastric juice and retards digestion. Then again, when liquids are not taken with the food it induces the patient to chew the food thoroughly or otherwise it cannot be swallowed. If at breakfast tea or coffee must be drunk it is better taken at the completion of the meal.

RULE III.—Farinaceous and proteid foods should not be taken at the same meal, in other words, the same character of food only should be introduced into the stomach at the same meal. For example: Bread and butter may be taken at breakfast, but no meat, fish or eggs. Luncheon should consist of fish, eggs or meat, but no bread, potatoes or other farinaceous food. Supper should consist of the same kind of food as at luncheon or farinaceous food only. Introducing the same kind of food into the stomach at each meal insures the completion of digestion at the same time, and not at different times, as would be the case if the character of the food taken at a meal is different.

RULE IV.—If liquid must be taken at a meal, the best drink is hot water, taken on rising in the morning, at 12 o'clock and again at 4 P. M. Taken at these intervals there will be no dilution of the gastric juice and the contents of the previous meal will be washed out of the stomach.

TREATMENT OF CONSTIPATION.—Each case of constipation must be investigated as an individual one. *Habit* is an important factor. The desire to go to stool must never be neglected, in fact it is to be encouraged by a systematic habit of going to the toilet every morning whether or not the desire is present. Such a practice will often cure the costive habit. Many persons find that a cigar or pipe after breakfast acts as a laxative. Massage of the abdomen is constantly practiced, but I confess never to have seen any good results from its use, save in children and very young persons. Many persons succeed in obtaining a daily evacuation by taking certain articles of food. *Fruit*, raw or cooked, taken at breakfast, is often effectual. Some find oatmeal or brown bread to have a similar effect. Water should be drunk in abundance, especially before retiring or on rising in the morning. Others find that a glass of raw milk taken before breakfast will act as a laxative. *Exercise* is of great value, especially exercise like horseback riding, which brings the abdominal muscles into play. The continued use of *purgatives* is a dangerous practice. They are only temporary in action and make the bowels more constipated than ever. The least objectionable agents of this class are the natural purgative waters like Carlsbad and Hunyadi Janos. In California we possess an effective natural water called Bythinia. Suppositories of glycerin or a daily enema of cold water is of great value. The same may be said of *olive oil*. Glycerin (a tablespoonful to four tablespoonfuls), thrown into the rectum is very effective. Cold sponging and baths are valuable additions to the measures suggested.

VII.

SPECIAL FORMS OF NEURASTHENIA.

CONGESTIVE NEURASTHENIA.

Whittle, of London, in 1889, wrote an interesting brochure on this special form of neurasthenia, but it seems to have escaped the serious consideration of the medical profession. I have repeatedly been able to confirm the observations of Whittle. He describes a form of nerve depression resulting from *brain congestion* and illustrates the remarkable efficacy of blood-letting, either by leeches or venesection in its treatment. The particular patients who are thus benefitted, look to the uninitiated eye, the picture of health, but are really miserable victims to whom actual pain or some evident disease would prove an agreeable distraction. Their faces are flushed, eyes watery and there is a lightness in the head with occasional aching of a dull, heavy character about the forehead. The majority of cases occur between the ages of 30 and 40, very few under 25 or over 50. This includes the most active and wearing period of life. If a man can stand the strain of this period, he will be proof against anything he may encounter afterward. Congestive neurasthenia occurs more frequently in males than females and the most constant factor in its production is continuous brain strain.

During sleep, such as it is, the body rests but not the brain. As a result the brain becomes unduly charged with blood, leading to congestion, which nothing seems to relieve so quickly and marvelously, as blood-letting. *Leeching* is one of the good remedies out of fashion, and while formerly it was the custom to bleed too much, it is unfortunate that now we do not bleed enough. I remember one congestive neurasthenic who, by actual calculation, had consulted twenty-three different physicians, among whom were some of the leading nerve

specialists of Europe. In addition he had made a number of sea voyages and visited many celebrated spas but with absolutely no relief. Incidentally an eye trouble necessitated the application of leeches by his oculist to the temples resulting in immediate relief to his nerve symptoms which had hitherto baffled all treatment. Six months later his old symptoms returned but the reapplication of leeches and the withdrawal of blood from the brain vessels was as successful as in the primary instance.

URIC ACID NEURASTHENIA.

Brain workers often suffer from a series of perplexing symptoms which baffle the skill of their medical advisers. Such sufferers are usually good livers and lead sedentary lives. With such, insomnia, headache, mental depression, backache and dyspepsia are prominent signs. Such individuals are really sufferers from *uric acid poisoning*. It was Alexander Haig, of London, who, in his memorable work on "Uric Acid as a Factor in the Causation of Disease," made many perplexing problems clear which had heretofore remained unrecognized. Uric acid occurs in the blood in traces during health. It is derived chiefly from foods, and persons who eat an excess of food and take little exercise produce an excessive quantity of uric acid, which accumulating in the blood, gives rise to a train of symptoms. The blood is naturally alkaline and holds the uric acid in solution, but if from any cause the blood becomes acid, it can no longer hold the uric acid in solution, and consequently the latter is precipitated. Now the joints, muscles and ligaments are favorable sites for the precipitation of uric acid, hence those who suffer from *uric acid poisoning* complain of muscular pains in the back and joint stiffness. The *heart* is also frequently affected. Every time a muscle contracts, and the heart is essentially a muscular pump, it produces an acid. Now an acid favors the precipitation of uric acid, hence the heart attracts uric acid, which, accumulating in its substance, eventually leads to inflammation and weakness of that organ.

Headache is a frequent symptom and so is *neuralgia*. The *urine* is highly acid, highly colored, and deposits a brick dust sediment on standing. Chronic diseases of the liver and kidneys owe their origin to the excessive formation and defective elimination of uric acid.

TREATMENT OF URIC ACID NEURASTHENIA—Insomuch as overeating and overdrinking, combined with insufficient muscular exercise, are the essential causes of uric acid poisoning, persons predisposed to this intoxication should live temperately, abstain from alcohol and eat moderately. Any hereditary tendency can be overcome by an open air life with an abundance of exercise and regular hours. *Meat* must be eaten sparingly, especially red meat. Authorities differ in their recommendation of food, some advising an exclusively vegetable, others an animal diet. A good rule is to diminish the amount of food, especially meat, consuming the latter but once a day and to get up from the table always feeling a little hungry. "Moderation in all things," says Balfour, "is a certain passport to longevity. It enables us to live healthy for as long as we may." Water, especially mineral water, should be drunk freely, as it cleanses the blood and favors the elimination of uric acid. The skin should be kept active by some form of exercise sufficient to produce free perspiration. An occasional Turkish bath should be taken. Care should be taken to avoid chilling of the skin by dressing warmly. A large number of remedies have been suggested to promote the excretion of uric acid,—such remedies as the lithium salts, colchicum, iodide of potash, piperazin and the salicylates, but they ought not to be taken without the advice of a physician. For general use I can warmly recommend a preparation known as the *Vita Aurantii litholytica* (Haber). Each tablespoonful of the solution, containing phosphate of soda, 30 grains; citrate of lithia, 5 grains, and salicylate of soda, 2½ grains. Of this solution, a tablespoonful is taken in water after each meal. It has a laxative effect, and when this becomes too pronounced, the dose may be reduced.

SEXUAL NEURASTHENIA.

When the symptoms of neurasthenia predominate in the sexual apparatus, we speak of *sexual neurasthenia*. In neurasthenia the *sexual power* is usually very much diminished, either by incomplete erections, premature ejaculations or night emissions. Married men find this weakness a source of much mental suffering, and the constant fear of impotency prompts them to seek medical advice. It is, without doubt, true that the majority of functional troubles of the sexual organs are of a neurasthenic nature. Whatever the changes may be in his sexual apparatus, the unfortunate sufferer is inclined to exaggerate them by a vivid imagination or by the perusal of quack advertisements. Normal ingredients of the urine, such as phosphates and urates, passed by such persons, is declared by charlatans, to be seminal fluid. Although seminal fluid may be passed during urination or defecation, it is nevertheless a rare occurrence.

Involuntary seminal emissions in a healthy unmarried man, occurring at different periods, must always be regarded as an evidence of good health. It is only when the emissions are followed by depression, vague pains in the head and a feeling of exhaustion, that they are to be regarded as harmful. Some individuals suffer no inconvenience from night emissions, occurring even as often as several times a week, whereas in others, a simple emission once a week, or even less often, is attended by the signs previously noted. Seminal emissions may be the cause of nerve depression, not the consequence of the loss of semen, but from the nerve exhaustion following. More often, the emissions are the result of nerve depression. It frequently happens that sufferers from seminal emissions attribute their trouble to the habit of self abuse. While the habit is unfortunately well nigh universal among both sexes and animals, and frequently attended by dire results, the latter have, no doubt, been greatly exaggerated.

Spermatorrhœa or the passing of semen with the urine or during defecation is indicative of grave debility of the sexual apparatus. It is usually the result of neglected or improperly

treated seminal emissions. Many cases of so called spermatorrhea it must be emphasized are really urethral discharges, other than semen. The microscope alone can determine the nature of the discharge.

Impotence signifies one of the following conditions: 1. — Deficiency of desire and power. 2. — Deficiency of power with increased desire. 3.—Abnormal erectile power known as priapism in which there is no discharge of semen. Very often the impotence is imaginary, a form known as psychical impotency. It is strange that people are not better educated in regard to their sexual functions. All they learn is of a suggestive nature by the reading of erotic literature and quack advertisements. Among the prominent *symptoms* of sexual neurasthenia, are: dimness of vision, back pains, mental depression and defective memory, dyspepsia, palpitation of the heart and dizziness. In *women*, sexual neurasthenia presents symptoms similar to that of man, although they occur with less frequency. Some suffer from nocturnal orgasms accompanied by dreams and they awake feeling nervous, depressed and exhausted. In married women, the sexual appetite may be increased at first, but it rapidly disappears to be followed very often by distaste or even disgust.

The sexual hypochondriac. — This unfortunate creature, boy, girl, man or woman, usually lives a life of profound despondency, the result of a real or fancied disturbance of the sexual organs. Such cases demand a true explanation of the disorder, but when the morbid state of mind is encouraged by the charlatan only direful results follow. There is no sufferer to whom truth is more repellent than the sexual hypochondriac, in fact his morbid fear is a delusion which he wishes to have verified. The sexual hypochondriac may be the victim of one of the following disorders: Involuntary seminal discharges, impotency, masturbation, or syphilophobia. ✓

Involuntary seminal discharges are quite natural and occur in all persons who lead a correct and continent life and are not unlike menstruation occurring in women at periodic intervals. The "night emissions" are not necessarily the involuntary discharge of semen but are often made up of a fluid

derived from the prostate gland. Some persons secrete a larger quantity of prostatic fluid than others, hence it is quite within the limits of health for such individuals to have involuntary discharges at more frequent intervals. Then again, the character of food eaten has a notable influence on the amount of seminal or prostatic fluid secreted. The *milky character* of the urine in the sexual hypochondriac is not semen but *phosphates*, a fact which is made evident when a little acid is added to the urine, resulting in the complete disappearance of the milky character of the urine. The mucilage-like fluid observed at the head of the penis after stool is often of no consequence, consisting as it often does of the secretion of the prostate gland.

Impotency, or fondly called "lost manhood" by the advertising quack, is in most instances an imaginary condition. True manhood finds no index in the vigor of the sexual apparatus. The more man approaches the condition of brute creation, the more powerful is his sexual instinct.

As man and woman ascend the scale of moral and social life, there is less inclination for the performance of the sexual act. Such individuals are both potent and impotent at times. The best type of a married man is only potent in the presence of his consort. If he demonstrates this potency toward another his moral standard is as low as the negro who commits rape as often as occasion permits. An indefinite number of unforeseen conditions like mental and physical fatigue, disgust, worry and anger, conduce to make every man impotent at times. The fear and timidity which possess the newly married are evidences of morality and not sexual weakness. It has been estimated by a trustworthy statistician that at least 60 per cent of young husbands fail in the first sexual attempts after marriage. There are many individuals who are impotent, owing to their overwhelming fear of contracting some disease. There are persons who manifest impotency toward certain women, but who are fully capable of performing the act with others.

Unnatural practices are bound to be followed by impotency. The sexual act when aroused by artificial means finds no response when invoked by natural methods. Sexual

psychopathy, or the attainment of sexual desire by unnatural means, is a stigma of degeneration manifested in persons who have inherited or acquired a defective nerve organization, and is common among the insane.

Masturbation may conduce to severe disturbances in the mental and physical health, but as the habit is stopped at an early period of life, as soon as the indecency of the habit is explained, no possible consequences ever arise. We must all encounter a period in life when there is a conflict between the passions and one's better self, but the latter is usually the victor in the combat. It is not an exaggeration to maintain, that, in the majority of instances, the evils arising from masturbation practiced moderately, and for a short period in youth, are largely mental, developed from the loss of self-respect and the sense of unmanliness.

Syphilophobia is the morbid dread of having contracted syphilis. When other venereal diseases have, or are supposed to have been acquired, the mental suffering in some individuals is equally intense. The anxiety of mind conquers the entire being. Sleep, digestion and nutrition are in consequence impaired, and the unending terror may last a lifetime unless controlled by the conscientious physician, who is often able by the modern aids of science, to make innocuous the indiscretions arising from venereal disease. Often the sexual madness has no real foundation; a harmless skin eruption, lax, or too tightly drawn testicles, innocent pimples and the like are apt to be construed as manifestations of some disease of the blood.

TREATMENT OF SEXUAL NEURASTHENIA—*Conjugal hygiene*. Normal sexual intercourse is the most powerful passion of human nature conducive to strong and vigorous health. When followed by a feeling of well being, it is healthful but, if on the contrary it is followed by depression, the act is harmful. Unnatural methods of intercourse such as withdrawal, use of condoms and prolongation of the act are especially harmful and are often the essential cause of a protracted siege of sexual neurasthenia. It must not be forgotten that the health of the offspring is largely dependent on the condition of the parents at the time of the conception and for this reason,

the laws of sexual hygiene should be observed most rigorously. Spitzka affirms that "children begotten by a drunken father have repeatedly been found to be epileptic, imbecile, deaf, mute or insane." Undue repetition of the sexual act is repugnant to the moral sense and is certain to be followed by evil consequences. Sexual intercourse is intended for the purpose of reproduction and the prevention of conception is an injustice to society and results in injury to both sexes.

The *treatment of seminal emissions* is ~~generally a simple~~ matter when conducted by the physician. Aside from local measures the building up of the nervous system is an absolute essential. To arrest the emissions entirely in a continent unmarried man is an impossibility. What can really be achieved is this, to allow the emissions to continue without any detriment to health. Marriage, while offering immunity in the majority of instances, is not invariably productive of such results, for there are many married men who continue to have emissions. This is of course usually unnatural and often indicates that the strength of the organs is imperfect, or because no real pleasure is derived from the act or because there still remain traces of former sexual troubles. Before emissions can be controlled, sexual excitement and masturbation must be avoided. The diet should be non-stimulating. Spices, alcoholic drinks, strong coffee and tea must not be used. Before retiring very little fluid or food should be taken. Sleep should not be prolonged and early rising is important. The patients should never lie on the back and the covering should be light and the bed hard. When patients awake in the morning they should at once empty the bladder.

The treatment of sexual neurasthenia in general, means the correction of general nerve depression. Aside from *local treatment*, which may be necessary when strictures or old discharges complicate the trouble or when a tight prepuce exists or rectal irritation from piles or retained fecal matter, the essential object always, is the relief of nerve depression on which the sexual disorders are dependent. Charlatans often aggravate the sexual weakness and irritability by employing drugs and different kinds of apparatus which *temporarily*

stimulate the debilitated organs, leaving them in a worse condition than ever before. In no other disease is meddling treatment so disastrous as in sexual debility, and many individuals have been permanently injured by such measures. There are no specific drugs in the treatment of sexual neurasthenia. Even *moral treatment*, so often vaunted by medical writers, is of little avail, and while the mind frequently operates to the disadvantage of the sexual apparatus, there is no affection which is less amenable to moral treatment than sexual neurasthenia. Patients see no results in expectancy. They want results and the results which they are so eager to obtain can only be achieved by a correct toning of the nervous system.



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