

brain in the form of a single constant, never-lost idea : and, as the dropping of water over a period of years will wear a groove in a stone, so does worry gradually, imperceptibly, but no less surely, destroy the brain cells that lead all the rest—that are, so to speak, the commanding officers of mental power, health and motion.

Worry, to make the theory still stronger, is an irritant at certain points, which produces little harm if it comes at intervals or irregularly. Occasional worrying of the system the brain can cope with, but the iteration and reiteration of one idea of a disquieting sort the cells of the brain are not proof against. It is as if the brain were laid bare and the surface of the brain struck lightly with a hammer every few seconds, with mechanical precision, with never a sign of let-up or the failure of a stroke.

Just in this way does the annoying idea, the maddening thought that will not be done away with, strike or fall upon certain nerve cells, never ceasing, and week by week diminishing the vitality of these delicate organisms that are so minute that they can only be seen under the microscope.—Pharmaceutical Products.

NEURASTHENIA AND HOW IT WAS CURED.

By J. S. Kennedy, M. D., Chambersburgh Pa.

There has been much printed lately concerning the cause, pathogeny, and the ultimate results of neurasthenia, that it must be something of unusual value to detain the attention of the busy practitioner. The history of several cases which have come under my care the last two years, may be of some value to others laboring under the dread disease, and to the physicians having them under treatment.

Neurasthenia, as we all so well know, takes on divers and multitudinous aspects, and it may take months of careful study to diagnose it correctly—even specialists have been known to make mistakes, and how much more are we who practice in the inland towns away from hospital facilities, liable to false diagnosis. The name neurasthenia was originally given to this disease by Bouchut, and

as we now understand it, it applies to an exhaustion of the nervous system occurring in persons of a peculiar temperament—the neurotic constitution. The most important factor in this peculiar affection is, as is now generally admitted to be—heredity—from this type we have children who are unusually precocious—very susceptible to moral and intellectual training, have feeble digestion, imperfect secondary assimilation, and a general failing of the excretory organs. They need but little encouragement to expand into a selfish hypochondriac—they are eternally interrogating these organs, imagining this, that, and the other thing, until they have a well developed case of neurasthenia on their hands, aggravated and assisted to a full development by the mistaken kindness of friends and family. The subjects revel in the consciousness of possessing certain incurable diseases, they never (?) sleep, and they are continually—day and night, dwelling in an atmosphere of nervous tension. They are beset with fears that some of the numerous affections may suddenly break out in some unknowable form—all this is increased by petting, and by some foolish parent or some bosom friend—approving and magnifying these symptoms. It is not confined to children or young people—all ages are represented. One of the cases is that of a medical officer in the United States Army. This gentleman was a fellow comrade of mine in the service, and we both spent years in Arizona and New Mexico, both seeing severe Indian scouting, privation and hardships, in winter's cold and summer's heat, under that one great Indian hunter, General George Cooke.

Among the causes above all in my opinion, are self-abuse, sexual excesses after marriage, dyspepsia, excessive study or attention to business, and the alcoholic habit. The spinal pain and tenderness are not present in all cases, consequently there can be no congestion, and in fact there is no change in the nerve centres, and as this disease has shown no tendency to shorten life, we are forced to come to the conclusion that it is functional in character.

Whether this be true or not I think the experiences of all physicians who have been called to treat this special neurosis, tend to-