

## I.—CIRCLES ASSOCIATED WITH FUNCTIONAL DISORDERS

### (a) Neurasthenia

Perhaps the commonest and most protean of functional disorders is neurasthenia. "In no complaint does it happen more frequently that the patient gets into a Vicious Circle, the fundamental disorder producing symptoms which again maintain and aggravate the disease."<sup>1</sup> Owing to the infinite variety of its manifestations the disease has been described as *non morbus, sed morborum cohors*, and in truth there is scarcely an organ that may not at one time or another be affected. Any of the local disorders may be complicated by a Circle, whether the mental faculties or the digestive, vascular, sexual or other systems are involved.

**Insomnia.** A familiar example occurs in insomnia, an obstinate complication in the neurasthenic, and one which so disturbs the nerve centres as to intensify the primary trouble. Clifford Allbutt describes insomnia as "generally one of the links of the Vicious Circle in which the victim is en-chained."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ballet, *Neurasthenia*. Introduction by Campbell Smith, p. XXVI.

<sup>2</sup> Allbutt and Rolleston, *System of Medicine*, Vol. VIII., p. 750.