

the accursed dress, until, I say, with all respect, pity and regret, that 75 per cent. of our women are a disgrace to the race, because they are victims of would-be fashionable mothers or of ignorant fathers or husbands frequently. This condition has got to be changed or the multiplication of neurasthenia must go on and increase.

Sir, I ask the privilege to urge the plea to the medical profession here and abroad, to exert more influence in combating the primary causes of neurasthenia—this downward tendency to nerve degeneracy of the race—in the ignorance, errors and evils of our educational, business, social and dress customs, and the absence of all adequate education in the rules of diet, hygiene and physical development of our modern times.

What is the definition or common sense meaning of this "neurasthenia"? Unless we obtain a clear understanding of the condition, causes and analyses of the effects, we will not be able to succeed in treatment.

Neurasthenia—asthenia or weakness of the nerve force—is simply a debility, a run-down, tired-out state, so that the organs do not functionate properly, and this very stagnation brings on quickly a thousand other troubles, infinitely more serious and painful than the former, which soon react and increase the primary condition, thus forming a vicious circle.

It is identical with what occurs in other mechanics or machines, like a hot water furnace; fuel and help are scarce, hence the heat is scant, which primary condition is annoying and imprudent, but soon 100-fold greater mechanical complexities arise, the coils freeze and burst, the house, furniture and furnace are damaged, which cause infinitely more trouble and expense than the primary loss of heat, and these, reacting, intensify the primary condition, for the furnace is damaged, and so the capability of producing heat is paralyzed. So in the neurasthenic, debilitated patient, digestion, both in motor and secretory functions, is delayed or paralyzed, and retention, fermentation and putrefaction follow, and through reflex irritation and absorption of poisonous products and ptomaines, severe acute effects are obtained—gastritis, dilatation, enteroptosis, torpidity of liver and intestines, which give us the horrible picture presented in the full-fledged neurasthenic patient.

I would appeal to you, gentlemen, to handle these cases of neurasthenia with all seriousness, thoroughness and patience; for, while we are tempted to always shun and despise, frequently to laugh at, and sometimes to swear at these patients, yet there is no