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## EDITORS:

A. H. WRIGHT, B.A., M.B., M.R.C.S. England.

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### REST IN NEURASTHENIA.

BY A. HOLFORD WALKER, M.D., HAMILTON.

(To have been read at Ontario Medical Association.)

By the term neurasthenia the public and medical profession alike designate a condition protean in its possible forms and manifesting itself, it may be, by disturbances in the functions of any, or even all, of the organs of the body. It is used to indicate certain states of the nervous system, of which the anatomical basis is unknown. In its widest sense the term is used as covering the groups of symptoms usually known by such names as nervous prostration, spinal irritation, neurotic diathesis. Neurasthenia and hysteria must not be confounded as synonymous terms. Hysterical persons invariably, or as a rule, are neurasthenic, but on the other hand, neurasthenic persons are not always hysterical.

The typical neurotic woman is very sensitive, jealous, managing, self-forgetful, wearing herself out for others. Whereas the typical hysteric, whether languid or impulsive, is purposeless, introspective and intensely selfish. In the one is the unwilling defect of endurance. But in the other, defect of the higher gifts, and dominion of mind. The fact, for fact it is, becomes more apparent from day to day, that neurasthenia, with its degenerative ally hysteria, if I may so term it, is alarmingly on the increase, and it behoves us, as the earthly guardians of our fellow-

man, and instruments appointed to look after their bodily welfare, to be earnest in our endeavor to seek the cause, and having discovered it, instruct those in our various localities, how to save the rising generation from a disease that, above all others, brings more continued misery and heartache into any unfortunate family where the viper neurasthenia or the double headed viper neurasthenia with hysteria enters, than any other disease of the present day, with the exception, perhaps, of the life-long drunkard or the insane.

Who among us cannot recall to mind the vivid picture, too often presented to our view, and taxing to the utmost our endeavor to obliterate the dark spot on the canvas, "so to speak," and paint in a new figure to harmonize the whole again.

The anxious father worn down with care and empty purse, from yours and yours, and my long bill. The mother, how shall I describe her sad face—it is too familiar to need description—as also the other figures in the group, save one, the centre figure around which hover the worst traits in our mortal nature, with such an endless variety of symptoms that no two are alike, as Wendell Holmes has truly said, "Is like a vampire sucking slowly the blood of every healthy, helpful creature within reach of her demands." And by the world at large, each member of the group is condemned, on the one hand, the parents and sisters for being too kind and indulgent, and the other, the expression, serve her right, she is only an hysterical, self-