

How far visceral disease may cause it depends, as Weir Mitchell states, "a good deal on the individual, but more on the organ attacked," as we well know, for Pope has said "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and certainly to judge from the psychological peculiarities of pulmonary disease, he was fully justified. On the other hand, the nervousness and depression which accompany disorders of the abdominal viscera are well known, and gave rise to the adage of the Presbyterian divine that "No man dies a triumphant death who dies of disease below the diaphragm."

As to the crucial question, what can we do for the neurotic? Osler's words that "many patients come under our care a generation too late" sound ominous, but much may be done in the way of prophylaxis in the case of children of neuropathic predisposition. "Train up the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." There is no better than the "psychic hardening" referred to by Osler.

It has been said, with truth, that neurasthenic patients are cured, not by physic, but by the physician. Not that the anæmia, which is a most potent cause of general nervousness, must be treated, as well as any other such condition, but nervousness, whatever be its parentage, demands something more, for only too often the symptoms which make up this annoying state, continue after we have amended the blood losses which may have caused them. There is, perhaps, in this fact but another example of the persistency of morbid habits. It is harder to unlearn than to learn—no wonder a famous Grecian flute player charged double fees to those pupils who had been taught by an inferior master.

"The man whose self-confidence has once been rudely shaken does not speedily reacquire hardihood in the face of disturbing impressions, and we have also to deal with the many instances of nervousness which arise out of moral causes or are of unknown birth. We must cut them off their routine lines, if possible, through the help of travel and change of scene, or outdoor sports," and above all means not have him moping by himself, for remember that no man is less fit for his own company than the neurotic. Said a man to Dr. Mitchell, "Colorado in summer, and horseback in winter—these are what cured me of nervousness."

The mental attitude of the nervous man demands of his physician the most careful attention, nor can we afford to disregard anything in his ways of life or his habits of thought and action. We must determine for him how far and how much he shall use his mind; whether or not it is well for him to continue his work whatever it be; what his amusements should be. I would commend Dr. Mitchell's "Rest cure" to your investigation.