

THE NATURE OF "NERVOUSNESS" 19

condition called neurasthenia, although two other diseases, psychasthenia and hysteria, are of importance.

It is interesting that neurasthenia is considered by many physicians as a disease of modern times. Indeed, it was first described in 1869 by the eminent neurologist Beard, who thought it was entirely caused by the stress and strain of American life. That not only America, but every part of the whole civilized world has its neurasthenia is now an accepted fact. Knowing what we do of its causes we infer that it is probably as old as mankind; but there exists no reasonable doubt that modern life, with its hurry, its tensions, its widespread and ever present excitement, has increased the proportion of people involved.

Particularly the increase in the size and number of the cities, as compared with the country, is a great factor in the spread of neurasthenia. Then, too, the introduction of so-called time-saving, *i.e.* distance-annihilating instruments, such as the telephone, telegraph, railroad, etc., have acted not so much to save time as to increase the number of things done, seen, and heard. The busy