

local treatment is not very promising. Local applications or cauterization, thorough reduction, and laxatives are worth trying, especially if reinforced by a few days' rest in bed. If these fail, there is nothing but operation. Last and worst of all are cases of prolapsed hæmorrhoids that refuse to be returned, become gangrenous, inflamed and extremely painful. There is then absolutely nothing to do but rely on the cure and wait for the sloughing to destroy enough tissue to allow retraction and contraction.

The general principles already laid down are to be applied in the many nervous reflexes so common to all rectal diseases: symptoms referred to the bladder, urethra, ovaries, intestinal tract. After successfully quieting one or all of the symptoms of which we have spoken in such detail, there is nothing so useful as a local tonic as cold water applied to the perineum twice a day with a bath sponge; better than any suppository or astringent, used copiously, not inside the rectum, but outside of it. We have omitted all mention of carbolic acid injections, for the reason that this method of treatment is in its true sense a surgical operation devised for the purpose of doing away with venous tumors, and liable to all the dangers and complications of cutting with knife and scissors, such as great pain, infection, abscess, sloughing to any extent, and secondary hæmorrhage. Were we discussing operative measures it would have to take its chance with the ligature, the clamp and the cautery. Summing up in a few words, the non-operative treatment of hæmorrhoids comes down to general medication of some predisposing cause and local applications to relieve individual symptoms.—*Therapeutic Gazette.*

### "THE INCREASING NERVOUSNESS OF OUR TIME."

Under this rather startling title Professor W. Erb at Heidelberg gave an address some time ago which demands more than a passing notice. Professor Erb takes it for granted that there is marked increase of functional nervous disorders, and he believes that the events of the present century have naturally led to this result. The nineteenth century began in disorder and commotion. France had passed through a bloody revolution which was to be followed by the excitement and exhaustion of Napoleonic adventures; restlessness, political and social, was followed by a period of calm, but, with the advancing years, labor-saving inventions rapidly replaced man and increased wealth, and rendered communication easy—as our author says, time and space seemed to be annihilated.

In science, in literature, all were developing, and with it there appeared incapacity for restful

pleasures; rushing from change to change seeming to be the only alternative to work. With overwork there was over-crowding and over-stimulation; alcohol and tobacco were used in greatly-increased quantities; railway travelling and its nerve-jarring motion still further tended to nervousness; and, so Professor Erb convinces himself, that with all this there has been a clear loss of nerve tone to the whole of the highly-civilized nations.

Nothing could have been more brilliantly put than the contrast between the normal reaction to work and worry and the neurasthenic and abnormal reaction to the same conditions, and it will be for us to see whether we agree with all that Professor Erb says. According to him, all this rapid restless movement has left an irritable and slow-recovering nervous system, which must be considered as neurasthenic. The essentials of this disorder, which has not been recognized twenty years, are increased sensitiveness, with weakness, weariness, lack of power of endurance, and defective recuperative power. This disorder is a refinement of hysteria and hypochondriasis, and it is the outcome of the conditions of life. He thinks it ought to be found in all periods of excitement and of luxury, but owns that there is no evidence of its existence in Greece or in Rome.

The disorder is to be recognized and to be met by changing conditions, and nerve hygiene is to be considered as much as sanitation. From school days to professional life the human being is to be tended and brought up, his mental, moral, and physical education is to be regulated, his holidays are to be methodised, his business is to be conducted in healthy surroundings, and his cities are to be made healthy and beautiful, with fresh air and beautiful surroundings. Thus the Professor is a preacher of hygienic socialism. As we said before, we have been charmed with the address, but not convinced.

The old question reappears in another form. Is increased insanity and nervous disorder in necessary correlation to developing complexity of society? It must be recognized that the more complex the rules of society the more frequent will be breaches of these rules, at all events, for a time. In developing civilization, too, we have a very perplexing factor added in the survival and the propagation of the non-fittest, and this doubtless adds to the increasing number of the nervous.

We are inclined to believe that there is some slight increase of nervousness, but that there is a much greater knowledge of the subject, and with knowledge comes sub-division and classification. We remember the time when hysteria, in its present connotation, was looked upon as a new and increasing danger to society. This disorder is now recognized as no longer a defect of will for which the patient is to be blamed, and has been