

Before proceeding to discuss the causes which produce, in a race more ichly endowed than any preceding generation with nervous force, nervous exhaustion in a degree hitherto unheard of, perhaps it might be as well that I rapidly enumerate what advanced physicians now consider signs of neurasthenia, or nervous exhaustion. The varieties of neurasthenia are not organic, but it is found that those who suffer most from neurasthenia are those who are of nervous temperament, that is to say, those in whom there is a predisposition to diseases of the nervous system such as neuralgia, dyspepsia, sick-headache, functional paralysis, insanity, etc. This first sign is called the nervous diathesis, and it has these peculiarities: First, a fine organization, soft hair, delicate skin, well-chiselled feature, fine emotional nature, etc. The second peculiarity is liability to recurring attacks of such nervous diseases as we have instanced from childhood's convulsions to slow paralysis and softening of the brain in old age. A third peculiarity of the nervous diathesis is the comparative immunity from fever and inflammatory disease. Fevers and inflammations are far more fatal among those enjoying rude health than among those who are always feeling sick and do not know what is the matter with them.

Another sign of the failure of nervous force is increased susceptibility to stimulants and narcotics. You have all noticed that the young men of to-day cannot drink as much liquor as in days gone by. It is very common to blame the liquor. It is bad enough in all conscience; but were it of the best, the capacity for carrying liquor like a gentleman, as the old saying is, has greatly decreased. There are no five-bottle men now among the rising generation. Indeed my own observation leads me to believe that the custom of drinking to excess is dying out among young men, and in thirty years will be dead; simply be-

cause each year adds to the delicacy of the nervous organization, and therefore to the suffering attendant upon a disturbance of it. Nature is curing what temperance evangelists never will cure in the educated, though they may terrify the ignorant into abstinence. Some time ago I had the privilege, as such of you as encourage our national magazine, the *CANADIAN MONTHLY*, know, of contributing a paper, upon 'The Drink Question,' in which I contended that a great deal of drunkenness was caused from a hereditary predisposition to indulge in intoxicating liquor. The views laid down in that paper were discussed in some Scotch and American newspapers, and generally accepted; but I was not satisfied that I had more than accounted for one phase of the prevalence of drunkenness. Dr. Beard, the author of 'American Nervousness,' seems to me to compass the sources of this gigantic evil when he demonstrates, or rather asserts, that inebriety is an almost inevitable consequence of nervous exhaustion; and ever since reading that opinion I have been keeping my eyes open to test its truth, and my experience coincides with Dr. Beard's opinions, for I have observed that those of my acquaintances, who have gone on 'a big spree'—and every man has such acquaintances, sometimes he has only to know himself—have done so after a spell of exhausting mental work, or after a period of worry, or at the end of a time in which the constitution had from other causes become enfeebled. Now do not hold up your hands in horror at this, for it is inevitable, if something worse is not to happen. At a certain stage of nervous exhaustion, if work be not stopped, inebriety follows, or if inebriety does not follow, then look out for epilepsy. If epilepsy pass you by, insanity has you as its victim. The temptation is strong to enlarge upon this point, but I must pass on to notice other signs of nervous exhaustion, and among