

Referring to hereditary tendencies, Revington says: "I heard a man say that for eight and twenty years the soul within him had to stand like an un-sleeping sentinel guarding his appetite for strong drink. To be a man under such circumstances, not to mention a saint, is as fine a piece of grace as can well be seen. Old Dr. Mason used to say 'that as much grace as would make John a saint would barely keep Peter from knocking a man down.'"

Referring to a number of the illustrations given by Jonathan Hutchinson, who has formulated the principle of heredity in the general diathesis, he says: "If we follow the argument to its legitimate conclusion we must conclude that the numberless idiosyncrasies as to drugs or foods, the liability to take the contagion of the specific fevers, or to suffer from erysipelas on the smallest provocation, are all examples of diathesis, developed, intensified and specialized, diathesis brought to a point, in which all trace of the original causation has been lost. For the explanation of many of the above facts we must appeal to the nervous system, as it alone seems capable of satisfying all the demands of our ignorance . . . If the heredity of coarse physical characteristics—the Bourbon lip, the Napoleonic nose or supernumerary digits be marked, how terribly potent must be the influence of ancestral taints upon the delicate and intricate organization of the human brain—the acme of the evolution of the vertebrate nervous system. . . . We all feel the tyranny of our organization, we sometimes like what our education would teach us to abhor, and we cannot admire what we know to be admirable, and we can thus realize the mental organization of the neurotic, we understand, that we will inevitably develop in certain grooves. Although we may effect much by judicious education we had better begin earlier and prevent what we cannot cure. . . . The study of the neurotic individual who never transgresses the boundary line of certifiable insanity, has been much neglected and much may yet be learnt here. Here is the illustration given: A. B., a remote history of insanity in the family, an immediate history also, a paternal aunt is insane, and a brother suffers from *petit mal*; father and mother of normal equilibrium. A. B. is of slight build, with delicate irregular features, brilliant eyes, and a sharp, restless manner, and with an extraordinary aptitude for unusual acquirements.

. . . He is hypersensitive, is not muscular, and does not feed on flesh . . . There are many functional and organic diseases of the nervous system which appear to be the result of an ancestral taint, and which interchange in the life-history of the individual or of the race, and we may roughly divide the various affections thus related into the following groups." Here follow eight groups—from group 1: "Forms of neurotic manifestations the heredity of which is well marked but which are not apt to develop unless the individual liabilities are increased. Under it are included irritable, excitable and eccentric temperaments, to group 7: "strong inheritance manifesting itself in infancy, and mental death from birth, or rather the absence (as idiocy) of any intellectual life."

Passing on, Dr. Revington speaks of *acquired* neuroses, or what Jaccoud would call *induced*, and sums up some of the so-called apparent modifications of neuroses. Regarding the induced neurosis, which we trust to see developed in the continuation of this valuable monograph, it is quite clear that for us as physicians the influence which social customs, educational methods, individual habits and economic conditions have in inducing neuroses, must continue to possess an absorbing interest in proportion as we are gaining more exact knowledge of all mental phenomena and neurotic conditions. To illustrate the importance of this from the purely therapeutic standpoint, we are told that "the alcoholic man may, under slight causation, injury to the head, or shock, or worry, develop a sharp attack of insanity, or may break down completely as a general paralytic." In the case where we are called upon to treat the children of such we place ourselves in the position of having to deal with what has become a hereditary neurosis. Such a child inclines to become an imbecile or epileptic, or, later in life, may develop some other definite nerve disorder. Therapeutically we are dealing with alcoholism, it may be in tainted tissues of the child or the imperfectly developed tissues of the young man. But it will very naturally recur to any one to consider what are the influences of home, of education and occupation on such a predisposition in a child? Can we with a child so handicapped fail to realize the conditions under which, as far as we know, with any degree of likelihood, such an individual is likely to grow out of or wear out the neurotic tendency,