

The increase in litigation has increased the number of cases of neurasthenia. The condition does occur apart from litigation. The conditions surrounding railway accidents tend to cause excitement, strain on the back and shock. These factors are sufficient to set up all the nervous symptoms present in neurasthenia, and yet the person may have sustained no injury whatever. On the other hand, injury without the terrifying factors of a railway accident, may produce a well marked attack of neurasthenia.

In some cases the attack is slight, in others very severe, and may render the person unfit for any duty.

The pathology is quite obscure. It has recently been shown that after fatigue there are changes in the ganglion cells. There may be some such condition in neurasthenia, as this symptom is the most prominent one in affection. Hodge, Lugaro, and Bailey are of the opinion that there must be nutritional derangement of the nervous centres to account for such marked perversion of the nervous function. There may also be structural changes.

When the trouble is well developed the person is hypochondriacal, fretful, querulous, and introspective. He tires of any prolonged effort. Trivial things annoy the patient. The slightest noise or a light causes annoyance. Some take to their beds as a mental condition, and without any organic disease. To find fault with everything is a special feature. To introspect is another. Every feeling, change and variation in his condition is a cause of new alarm. Always alert for some deviation from the normal, they usually find what are thought to be serious evidences of ill-health. Mental fatigue is another feature. They are easily wearied. Some could not read the signs on the street, or the large headings of a newspaper, without feeling the most intense brain exhaustion. The lack of will power is prominent. The simplest actions cannot be decided upon. Foolish fears haunt them. They are afraid to go from home, or to travel by rail or water, or to go into a carriage, or there is a fear of some disease, or indefinite suffering. The speech is careless, and articulation bad. This can be greatly corrected by the person. The facies has a tired, anxious and discouraged appearance.

In neurasthenia paralysis does not occur. When such is functional it is the result of hysteria. The vigor of the whole muscular system is much lowered, and fatigues readily. There are no degenerative symptoms. This muscular weakness is only an expression of the condition of the nervous system. The finer movements of the finger are imperfectly performed. Although there is no paralysis, the person may not walk for months. A firm rapid tremor, like that of alcoholism, is frequent. It is intentional in character, becoming pronounced when