

which although it did not amount to actual pain was nevertheless of an unbearable nature.* The scalp in neurasthenia is exceedingly sensitive to the touch so that the use of the comb and brush causes pain. Disorders of the special senses are very common, consisting of flickering before the eyes, *muscæ volutantes*, *asthenopia*, noises in the ears, a perverted smell, and a sour pasty taste in the mouth. Sleep is much disturbed by terrifying dreams. Many patients declare they pass vigilant nights for weeks.

The psychical symptoms of neurasthenia usually partake of a depressing character. Sometimes they amount to utter despondency or melancholia. More frequently the mental irritability shows itself in curt answers, in exhibitions of a morose and peevish temper, and not seldom in a disagreeable selfishness. Probably the desire of subduing or chasing away the moods and vapors, of which the patients themselves are conscious, is one of the causes that frequently leads them to resort to alcoholic stimulants and narcotics. When such patients fall into the habit of reflecting much on their unpleasant feelings they are sure to become confirmed hypochondriacs.

Morbid fears constitute another set of symptoms, which occasionally plague the neurasthenic. Agoraphobia, or the fear of open places is most frequently observed; claustrophobia or the fear of narrow places; anthropophobia, or the fear of meeting crowds of people; mysophobia, or the fear of contamination, come less frequently under notice. A variety of these morbid fears I have observed in one of my patients, which I have not yet seen mentioned. A middle aged gentleman, who had been unfortunate in stock speculations, and had suffered for many years from bleeding piles, kept himself in a constant state of misery from self reproach because he blamed the death of one of his friends to catching cold, which might have been prevented if he had not kept his friend standing for a considerable time in a cold draught of air during an interview. When my neurasthenic patient takes a walk, he constantly looks out for some substances on the pavement that may possibly cause people to slip, and fall. Should he find the end of a nail sticking out in the buildings he passes, he immediately sets about to knock it in. He stops to adjust a loose brick in the sidewalk, and he has been known to give notice to owners of lumber yards to remove a piece of timber that happens to project from the pile. A very strange neurasthenic symptom among patients of education and culture is the brooding over the insolvable problems of the universe, or some puzzling metaphysical question. Such unbidden thoughts incessantly harass them, however much they may

try to banish them from their minds. But the saddest of all the psychical manifestations of the disorder is the tendency to drift into some debasing vice. The low appetites and propensities appear to gain the mastery over the diminished resistance of the moral power.

An enormous array of symptoms is attributed to the spinal form of anaesthesia. This is due to the extent and variety of functional disturbances resulting from an unstable and irritable condition of the spinal nerve centres. There are few neurasthenic patients who do not suffer from excentric neuralgic pains and muscular weakness of the lower extremities. Real paralysis does not occur, but there is a constant feeling of fatigue and a desire for rest. Patients feel weary and exhausted after ordinary exertions. Lumbar or sacral pain seems to be never absent. The general sensibility is heightened. Slight pressure of superficial nerves causes tingling; the contact of gold substances produces pain. There is a sensation of burning in the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. Neurasthenic females complain that their shoes press too tightly, and their dresses make them feel uncomfortable, all of which is provoking to trades-people, who despair to please such customers. The reflex excitability is augmented. Micturition and defecation may in consequence be attended with much discomfort. Muscular hyperaesthesia causes twitching of muscles, and painful movement of the joints. Paræsthetic symptoms are felt everywhere, consisting of numbness and the sensations of pricking and formication. Vasomotor disturbances bring on fitful flushings of the face and partial sweatings. I remember the case of a young shop-girl, who had broken down in health, and became the victim of a large number of neurasthenic symptoms. She had frequent attacks of palpitation of the heart, and constricting pain about the chest. These attacks were ushered in by extreme reddening of the right ear and neighboring part of the cheek. The same side of the face broke out afterwards in a profuse perspiration. The respiratory symptoms are sometimes of an alarming character, consisting of embarrassed breathing and a choking sensation, attended by a tumultuous action of the heart. The gastric disturbance witnessed in neurasthenia constitutes the so-called "nervous dyspepsia," which is common in overworked clerks and seamstresses, and no less also among people in different walks of life, that impose varied hardships and the deprivation of the required rest and sleep. Such a dyspepsia baffles the usual remedies, unless a change of habits and pursuits be adopted.

It is hardly necessary to mention that the diagnosis of neurasthenia should not be lightly made. Chronic and progressive diseases, in their early stages, often give no other intimation of their existence than the evidence of a declining state of the general health. The nervous depression, which is then sure to ensue, is liable to lend a neurotic feature to the ill-defined symptoms, depending on

* Dr. F. Runge published in the *Archiv. fur Psychiatrie*, (vi B.) a series of cases under the caption of *Kopfdruck* (head pressure) which presents in many particulars the clinical features of neurasthenia. In nearly half of the cases the etiology embraced conditions and circumstances which are known to induce nervous exhaustion.