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NOTES ON THERAPEUTICS.

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Every medical man has his share of the worry and annoyance arising from the treatment of hysterical and allied disorders. He who has an hysterical spine in his practice cannot be happy. He is doomed to be supplanted by the hydropathist, the homœopathist or the movement cure man. In Montreal, we are constantly hearing of such cases being cured by faith, and, inasmuch as the miracle is much advertised in the evening papers, we are assured of a fine supply of such cases in the future. What bliss it must be for the hystero-malingero hypochondriac to read of the record of her sufferings in a newspaper, her early history, her devotion, her domestic virtues, how many doctors came, saw, and shook their heads. The Weir Mitchell plan of treatment has come to the rescue though, and will undoubtedly do much to keep the neurasthenic out of the hands of the quack.

The profession in England seem to hold a very high opinion of this line of practice. The "Systematic Treatment of Aggravated Hysteria and Certain Allied Forms of Neurasthenic Disease," was the title of a paper read by Dr. Playfair* to open the discussion upon this subject at the meeting of the British Medical Association at Worcester last August.

* *British Medical Journal*, August 19, 1882.

Dr. Playfair has had 18 months' experience of this treatment, and has not only acquired a daily increasing confidence in the value of Weir Mitchell's method, but has had more satisfactory and surprising results from it than he has ever before witnessed in any branch of his professional experience, and now he more confidently undertakes the care of a well selected case of this kind, than he does that of almost any other malady that comes under his notice.

When he talks of the "useless system of drugging with so-called nerve tonics," one feels inclined to cry "hear, hear." At the same time that we are giving these medicines the psychological causes are all at work, "the injudicious and constant nursing, the craving for sympathy, the fact that the sick-room becomes the centre of interest for the patient and her friends, the constant discussion of feelings and symptoms." At this period of pessaries, of lacerations, of flexions, which has succeeded the "ulcerated os" period, and now, when every pain, every ache, every passing abnormal sensation is pounced upon by the gynæcologist as appertaining to his special field of work, it is highly comforting to read the words of one so eminent in that branch of medicine as Dr. Playfair. "It would be a great mistake, however, to conclude that there is any necessary or constant connection between the two. Indeed, although very frequently the nerve state has originated in connection with uterine disease, in a large proportion of the cases I have seen it has completely