

proaches, and that it will leave the seat of disease with reluctance, under the most favorable circumstances. It is necessary to start out with a large stock of patience in treating such cases.

A close catechising of a number of young persons has led me to believe that this abnormal condition is often brought about, or at least intensified, by worry, the vicious habit of self-abuse, or from syphilis. It is also well to make minute enquiry as to the existence of the mild form of epilepsy, especially of the nocturnal or *larvated* or masked variety, which is often overlooked, yet by its enervating shocks not only does it pull the system down, but also keeps it prostrated when the mischief is done. A rigid enquiry on these points is of paramount importance in diagnosis of many cases. I am inclined to think that the abnormal mental conditions are always secondary, and that the primary trouble is in the sympathetic and spinal systems.

The constant complaints of unusual sensations in one or more of the abdominal organs are evidences of this. The heart's irregularity, the atonic dyspepsia, the obstinate costiveness, the kidney derangement, and the temporary dyspnoea, all point to these great nerve centres as the efficient causes of these derangements.

If we keep in mind that in the neurasthenic we have mostly to do with reflexes of the sympathetic and spinal cord, including all the organs to which nerve stimulation is given from these centres of influence and control, we can understand how varied must be the symptomology of this generic disease. If we add to these disturbing causes a tendency to insanity, or at least find a nervous diathesis predominating, then, of necessity must our prognosis be less favorable. I have found that those who usually complain of pain in the back, show that the spinal nerve function is temporarily deranged. This fact is evident when we find the oxalates, the urates, and uric acid in excess. These are present only as results, and are not pathognomonic, as in oxaluria, because on a return of tonicity in the nervous system these abnormalities disappear. They are at first only signals of distress, which warn us of graver evils should the disease intensify and continue. The pathology of the disease is not yet fully determined. It may be a

change in the *quality* or *quantity* of blood supply to the nervous system, it may be an impoverishment of nerve force, it may be bad nutrition from low power of assimilation, one or all of these causes, or others yet unknown, would account for the exhaustion, the positive pain, the unsteadiness, the fluctuating character of the morbid sensations and phenomena. Whatever may be the *cause* or causes, the result is nerve starvation, the cry is for more food and for more reserve energy.

Let me summarize the treatment :

- 1st. Rest and cheerfulness for the anaemic.
- 2nd. Outdoor exercise and work for the plethoric and sedative.
- 3rd. Fresh air, substantial food and absolute cleanliness for both classes, as a rule.
- 4th. No chloral, no opium, no alcohol; in short, no artificial stimulant, soporific or narcotic, of any kind. Three hours of natural sleep or rest have in them more recuperative power than nine hours of stupor or drugged quietude. Such short cuts to rest only murder natural sleep and strangle the heroic efforts of nature to come back to normal conditions. Even when these stilts are used, it must be after serious and thorough deliberation.
- 5th. Any employment which will have a tendency to divert the mind away from self-contemplation and, in short, seeking relief by the law of substitution.

6th. I find the best remedies are such as the arsenites, cod liver oil, zinci phosphidi, ferri pyrophosphate, nux vomica, bromides with caffeine, zinc oxide with ergot, and such like.

These tonics and calmatives assist nature to seek again the old paths. Allow me to add a word of warning to the younger members of our profession. If sedatives, or narcotics, or stimulants are administered, it is well to mask them as much as possible. We all know their seductive power, and I have been told by dozens of victims to the alcohol, chloral or opium habit, that the first knowledge they had of the pleasurable potency of such drugs was received from the family physicians. After their visits ceased the remedy became a luxury, and the druggist was applied to for the material to inflict infinite injury to many a valuable life. My method has been to use some menstruum