

gists divide the remainder with the gynecologists, or play battledore or shuttlecock with all. The general practitioner alone is counted an invader in this field, and he, wise man that he is, with appreciative philosophy rarely feels himself aggrieved.

My criticism is not of the term etymologically. On the contrary, properly restricted in interpretation, it is an excellent example of word-making. It should stand, however, for either fish, flesh or fowl—for a definite entity or syndrome—if retained in our nosology. If discarded in this field, by all means keep it, but restrict it to the broad, descriptive significance of a generic term alone. I am not yet willing to accept the dictum embodied in the recent paper of an eminent American writer who, with a stroke of the pen, announces the passing of neurasthenia, for which he would substitute a group of pure psychoses, if for no other reason than that he leaves us none the better off for such a begging of the question; and yet one is almost tempted to let it pass away into final oblivion and without a protest on reading a serious thesis by another recent writer upon neurasthenia in babes. If it is to continue a neurological and general medical waste-basket into which we are to dump all forms and degrees of illness associated with irritable, nervous weakness to which we cannot attach a standard label, then it cannot be lost too quickly. It means to-day to the student mind mystery, confusion, chaos and correlated aversion, curiously mixed with a contradictory fascination; to the patient it has become a term full of suspicion; to the medical teacher it is a term of reproach. No observation or experience during my fifteen years of post-graduate teaching has been more emphasized than this attitude or mind of the student body. Year after year and many times a year, the cry has been the same from all my classes: "What is neurasthenia?" I think you will agree with me that something should be done. The solution of the problem to me seems relatively simple. Let us stop running after strange gods and the making of false idols and return to the worship of our fathers and to one faith. There is a nervous affection—the very same which originally inspired Dr. Beard to coin the word, with a broadly constant symptom picture, a more constant etiology, a conjectural pathology, a fairly certain prognosis and a definite plan, in principles at least, of treatment, the chief and essential symptomatic manifestation of which is an irritable, quick exhaustion of nervous function in many or all directions. It has become almost lost, it has suffered degradation, it has fallen from the genus to the species in the literature of the subject, not so much through intrinsic conditions, but because of the confusion and chaos of interpretation. The dignity and importance of this subtype, its rapid and progressive increase, the charm and fascination of its study