

GOOD HEALTH.

NERVOUSNESS.—In a very interesting pamphlet by the late Dr. Beard, published just before his death, he throws considerable doubt upon the generally accepted theory of the increase of American nervousness. He claims that his researches upon this subject have formed the foundation of a large and increasing literature in England and Germany. He argues that far from nervousness being a destructive agent in American life, Americans of the brain-working class live longer than Europeans. He further argues that the nervous temperament is antagonistic to fatal, acute, and inflammatory disease and favorable to long life; that most annoying nervous diseases do not rapidly destroy life, and are consistent with great longevity; that nervousness protects the system against the febrile diseases that are so rapidly fatal to the sanguine and phlegmatic. "In the conflict with fevers and inflammations, strength is often weakness and weakness becomes strength. We are saved through debility." All these facts should afford considerable comfort to those who think that nervousness is wearing their lives away. Negroes are seldom nervous, and yet their mortality through acute diseases is far greater than that of the whites.

POISONOUS EFFECTS OF PETROLEUM SMOKE.—A curious instance of poisoning from the smoke of petroleum is reported in the *Nue Freie Presse*, of Vienna. A workingman's wife brought to a local hospital a child eighteen months old who had been seized early in the morning with violent convulsions, and had subsequently become unconscious. She also stated that her husband, on awakening, had been taken with cramps, and had an uneasy sensation in his upper and lower extremities, accompanied by headache, from which she was also suffering. The singular color of the child, and the result of careful examination, led to the conclusion that there had been acute poisoning from smoke gases. It was then discovered, that in the small and ill-ventilated bed-room occupied by the parties in question, a petroleum lamp was used as a night lamp, the flame being reduced as much as possible. The wick had, however, been left projecting without the protection of a glass cylinder. In this way the flame, of course, emitted smoke. The father (himself a delicate man) was also found to exhibit symptoms of poisoning. By the exertions of the medical men in charge of the cases, both the father and child have progressed so far toward recovery that their restoration to health is confidently expected. —*Lancet*.

SLEEP. It is scarcely possible for the brain-worker, the delicate and nervous to sleep too much. Indeed I do not know what special harm could result to these classes, though the heavy, dull and naturally stupid might become more indolent and inactive, in consequence of an unnecessary amount of sleep. The former classes "work on nerve," or are constantly under the influence of excitement, are running the human machine on the "high pressure" principle, always at a great disadvantage. But the "wear and tear" of life, from whatever causes, find an alleviation in good and refreshing sleep. Indeed, it is the mission of sleep to soothe the excited nerves, to aid

in restoring the jaded body and to resuscitate in general. It is during natural sleep that nature performs her most beneficent work in the removal of disease, while it is as true that the grand work of consolidation then proceeds untrammelled, the solidification of the blood—made from our food and intended for general repairs of the body—into the tissues.

It is utterly impossible to determine the precise time to be spent in sleep, the age, temperament, sex, employment, manner of life and habits of diet being so various. It is said that John Wesley was able to perform an immense amount of mental labor, living very abstemiously, and yet slept but about four or five hours daily, but it is probable that very few would survive ten years of such labors with that amount of sleep, if the usual style of living should be adopted.

Among the animals it is known that a wide difference in the sleeping habits exists. The herbivorous, sleeping at night and living on a bland food, sleep less than the carnivorous. Though the herbivora are more hardy, are longer-lived, stronger or more enduring, they demand less sleep, are less exhausted by active effort, demanding less recuperation than the carnivora.

It follows that those who stimulate, either by food, by the exciting articles of the east or by ardent spirits, implying a corresponding waste of vital energy, demand much sleep as a means of restoring the poise of the system or of regulating its action. The frail female, if nervous, those subject to unusual cares, anxiety, excitement, annoyances, etc., so generally succeeded by depression, with all real brain-workers as clergymen and the like, demand an unusual amount of rest and sleep, and sleep under favorable circumstances. One important condition is that it be secured at night, and, as far as practicable in the early part of the night, when the birds secure theirs, though it may not be strictly true that "one hour before midnight is worth two after." Another is that the sleep shall be undisturbed, implying quiet, darkness, and an empty stomach, or the "periodical suspension of all the functions of external relation." It is a state of rest, rest of the body as a whole, the stomach included, and of the body, a dreamless sleep. The half sleep or dozing in the morning or that disturbed by harassing dreams, either from gluttony or undue excitement, not only can not refresh one really, but must prove more or less depressing. To secure real sleep it is well to take a very light and plain supper, such as will digest before the hour of retiring.

Dr. Hall says that a single slice of bread and butter and a cup of weak black tea are enough for an ordinary person. I should recommend, instead of even weak tea, none, a cup of cocoa, or still better the cocoa shells, a good nervine, are preferable. If the tea aids one in keeping awake while watching, it is evident that it does so by irritation, and that if we would secure the best sleep it may safely be omitted, at least at night. Instead of the bread, a light oatmeal mush, or that made of "granulated coarse wheat," would be an improvement, while all pastry difficult of digestion should be discarded, by those at least needing much sleep.—*Dr. Hannaford, in Golden Rule*.