

women, and from hypochondriasis which chiefly affects men—the former being more common in early, and the latter in later, life, while neurasthenia occurs at every age from five to ninety years. It is known to run in families, just as epilepsy or insanity, or other diseases of the nervous system show strong evidences of heredity. Individuals who come from families of defective nerve organisation become easy victims of neurasthenia; the children who are overstimulated at school, who go to theatres, balls, and evening parties, or who are allowed to take such stimulants as strong coffee or tea, or even alcoholic drinks, are being carefully prepared for this disease. In later life, men and women exhausted with business or domestic cares, with the struggle for life and the anxieties attendant upon the over busy existence in great centres of population are all ready, under the influence of an overstrain, for an outbreak of nerve weakness. With regard to the symptoms of the disease, irritability is the first and chief, for it is excitement and instability of the nervous system rather than depression, which marks the neurasthenic. Then the patient loses his interest in others, and becomes self-concentrated, wrapped up solely with his own internal distress. He is in a state of constant suppressed nerve excitement, which is difficult to describe, but to which the term of "anxiety" is usually given. He is the victim of a thousand fears, he feels as though something dreadful were always impending, and that some unknown danger is threatening him wherever he goes. Then the brain suffers, memory cannot be controlled, the mind cannot be concentrated on any particular work; and all the muscles become weak—a condition first shown in tremblings, and progressing until an absolute difficulty in movement is experienced. Sleeplessness is another and cardinal symptom in neurasthenia, and is one of the most difficult to treat. In fact, through every part of the organism the nerve weakness displays itself, and the patient's whole system suffers from the lack of general controlling power. The great principles of Nursing in these cases are to secure control and rest, to brace the patient up by sympathy, and at the same time by firmness, and to insist on the prescribed rest of mind and body being taken. Of all the single remedies that are employed, none are, perhaps, so valuable as baths. And it is important to remember that these should be quite warm at first and gradually cooled down, so as to brace the patient's tissues, a rough towel then being used to excite the action of the skin, and improve the circulation. For the same reason the warm bath may advantageously be followed by a cold shower bath. Next to this, the use of massage and forced feeding are important.

## Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



IN the report to the Quarterly General Court of Middlesex Hospital of the transactions of the Weekly Board of Governors, we read that at the last Quarterly General Court Miss Conway was recommended for a pension of £23 6s. 8d. on her retirement from the charge of Whitbread Ward. As a fitting recognition of her long service, and the special work rendered by her in the conduct of the cancer wards, the board now recommends that the amount of Miss Conway's pension be increased to £26 per annum.

The Board has appointed the Right Hon. Sir Ralph Thompson, K.C.B., Mr. Griffith Jarrett and Mr. Cavendish-Bentinck, and the Medical Committee have appointed Mr. Henry Morris and Mr. Andrew Clark to constitute the Joint Sub-Committee to consider plans for the new Cancer Wing. A preliminary meeting of the Sub-Committee has been held, at which the architect was instructed to prepare draft designs for a building to include three wards to accommodate thirty female patients' Isolation Wards, and the requisite provision for the Nursing and domestic staff.

At a meeting, held on Monday at the Hotel Victoria, on the initiative of the council of the Charity Organization Society, to consider the question of the care of defective or feeble-minded children, Sir Douglas Galton presided, and addresses on various aspects of the subject were delivered by Dr. F. Warner, Mrs. Burgwyn, superintendent of schools of special instruction, under the London School Board, and Mr. C. S. Lock. The meeting approved of a proposal that a Bill dealing with the subject should be prepared by the Charity Organization Society, and introduced into Parliament.

A quarterly court of the governors of the Consumption Hospital, Brompton, was held last week in the board-room of the Hospital, Mr. T. P. Beckwith in the chair. From the report of the committee of management, read by the secretary (Mr. Theobald), it appeared that many of the wards had been closed during the necessary restoration of the external stonework of the old building, and also on account of the introduction of the electric lighting through the whole of the Hospital, but that it was hoped by the end of the year some, if not all, the wards will be thrown open for the reception of patients. These works will greatly tax the resources of the charity, but the committee expressed the hope that funds will be forthcoming to meet the large outlay. An additional grant of £603 15s. had been received from the Hospital Sunday Fund, and the following legacies had been announced:—James Palmer, Esq., £200, duty free; William C. Burges, Esq., £100; Charles H. Peters, Esq., £250.

The Portsmouth Hospital has received the munificent sum of £1,000 from a donor who insists on preserving a strict anonymity. Some part of this sum will be devoted to the additions and improvements which are being carried out in the accommodation of the Nursing staff.

The annual report of the Royal Hospital for Incurables presented at the annual meeting held recently under the presidency of Mr. Herbert John Allcroft (treasurer) at the Cannon Street Hotel, disclosed a remarkable fact in connection with the finances. While the annual subscriptions showed a falling off of over £300, and there were diminutions on account of donations and collections, the life

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)