

JUST NERVES

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Just Nerves by Austen Fox Riggs

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AUSTEN FOX RIGGS

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not in m. c.

BY
AUSTEN FOX RIGGS, M.D.



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of

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TO
B. C. R.

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NOTE

Acknowledgments are due to the editors of *Mental Hygiene* for permission to reprint those parts of this book which appeared in the April, 1922, number of that journal.

INTRODUCTION

THIS is certainly a good book on a difficult subject — a sane, modest, helpful, and encouraging book — based on a true philosophy of life, verified and corrected on every page by the practical experience of a successful physician to nervous invalids.

Here is the point which Dr. Riggs makes clear in his booklet. Most of these invalids are real, not imaginary, sufferers. But the cause of their suffering is not so much a nervous *disease* as it is a nervous *disorder*. The way to cure that is to re-establish *the right order*; the reasonable rule, the self-control which is the secret of spiritual and physical health.

Of course medicine and hygiene are useful in keeping the organs of the body in good working condition, in counteracting the influence of poisonous germs, in stimulating the action of certain glands which

have gone to sleep and fallen down on their job. The wise physician prescribes his remedies according to his best judgment, taking his patient into his confidence about the effect which he wishes to produce. The sensible patient accepts the judgment of his chosen doctor and takes the prescription hopefully and cheerfully, thereby adding immensely to the efficacy of the medicine which is exhibited.

But back of all this, in nervous disorders, lies the soul —

“Vital spark of heavenly flame” —

and it is there, in that abode of personality, human and divine, that the decision between life and death must be made.

Will you, or won't you, be well?

That is the question which every nervous sufferer must answer. You must answer it for yourself. Your enemies are fear and worry and vanity and laziness and self-indulgence. Your friends are courage and obedience and humility and

patience and the sense of duty and love and God. Live with your friends. Then your doctor can help you.

This, as I understand it, is the meaning of the little book which Dr. Riggs has written out of his experience. It does not need any introduction; but I am glad to write one because I have known him since he was a very little boy, and I am sure that what he says is sound, and that he practices what he preaches — to the good of all his patients.

HENRY VAN DYKE