

**THE BLUES (SPLANCHNIC  
NEURASTHENIA)  
CAUSES AND CURE**

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The Blues (Splanchnic Neurasthenia) Causes and Cure by Albert Abrams

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Fig. 16.—The author's method of palpating the liver. See page 192.

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(SPLANCHNIC NEURASTHENIA)

## CAUSES AND CURE

BY

ALBERT ABRAMS, A.M., M.D. (Heidelberg), F.R.M.S.

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN, DENVER NATIONAL HOSPITAL FOR CONSUMPTIVES, THE MOUNT ZION AND THE FRENCH HOSPITALS, SAN FRANCISCO; PRESIDENT OF THE EMANUEL SISTERHOOD POLYCLINIC; FORMERLY PROFESSOR OF PATHOLOGY AND DIRECTOR OF THE MEDICAL CLINIC, COOPER MEDICAL COLLEGE, SAN FRANCISCO

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PREFACE.

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THE object of this volume is to direct reference to a new and heretofore undescribed variety of nerve exhaustion, which I have designated as, *Splanchnic Neurasthenia*. This special form of nerve weakness is characterized by paroxysms of depression of varying duration, and which are specified popularly as "*the blues*." The recognition of this special form of neurasthenia is of more than theoretic interest. One cannot say of it as did the mathematician, who, having demonstrated a new mathematical theory, thanked God that it could not be of the slightest utility to any living soul. A mere theory may be of interest to members of our profession, but the layman asks science for results. The recognition of splanchnic neurasthenia and the factors involved in its causation, imply our ability to cope with the evil and offer to the sufferers not only amelioration, but cure in many instances. My experience with neurasthenics has extended over a period of many years, and I know of no variety of neurasthenia which is more amenable to treatment than the splanchnic form. Various writers have hinted at an abdominal form of neurasthenia, but to my knowledge they have ignored the true source of origin. A perusal of the subject matter of this volume will show that I have referred the origin of splanchnic neu-



raesthesia, in brief, to a congestion of the intra-abdominal veins. Man is distinguished from all other mammals by his erect posture. "If an intelligent extramundane" says Campbell, "were to see man for the first time in the horizontal posture, it would never occur to him that it is natural for him to be erect. There is something incongruous in an animal built on the longitudinal plan standing and progressing upon one end of its long axis." The erect posture of man places him at a disadvantage in several directions, notably, however, by increasing the height of the blood column with a corresponding increase of gravity on the circulation, thus causing the blood to gravitate into the intra-abdominal veins. Among the many resources of Nature to combat this tendency, the vigor of the abdominal muscles is paramount. The tonicity of the muscles in question is impaired by mal-hygienic clothing, occupation, disease, lack of exercise and a host of other conditions. Even a physiologic condition like pregnancy conduces to relaxation of the abdominal wall and pendulous belly, the so-called *hänge-bauch* of the Germans, and yet no one dreams of restoring the defective musculature after pregnancy by well directed exercises. The sports of the ancient Greeks were specially directed toward development of the abdominal muscles. In the sculptural works of the old masters, the abdominal muscles are reproduced with as much accuracy as the other muscles of the body, and it is reasonable to assume, contrasting the art of the ancients with that of the modern sculptors, that the decadence of the abdominal muscles is a modern heritage; and so are hemorrhoids, constipation, hernia, and a multitude of other evils that may be traced to enfeebled abdominal muscles. It is surprising how little can be

achieved by feeble abdominal muscles, and how much when the latter are developed by exercises. Individuals who would flinch when the slightest abdominal pressure was made, could after a few months' use of the abdominal exerciser, throw heavy individuals seated on their abdomens, up and down, as serenely as though they were rubber balls. This exerciser permits essentially of tractions being made by the abdomen, although the exercises may be made in different directions. The abdominal exerciser is likewise available in developing other muscles of the body. In this connection, the experiments of Prof. W. G. Anderson, of Yale University, may be recalled with profit. The latter succeeded in practically weighing the result of a thought's action. A student was placed on a "muscle-bed," poised on a balance so that the center of gravity of his body was exactly over its center. When the student was directed to solve mathematical problems, the increased weight of blood at his head changed his center of gravitation and caused an immediate dip of the balance to that side. The student was further directed to imagine himself going through leg gymnastics. As the feats were mentally performed, one by one, the blood flamed to the limbs in sufficient quantities to tip the balance, according to the movement thought of. His experiments warrant the conclusion, that the important thing in all exercises is the mental effort put forth: thus, walking is inadequate exercise for brain workers, as it is so purely automatic that it does not call the blood from congested brain centers, which continue solving intellectual problems. A run, a brisk walk, with a definite object necessitating the thought of speed, will send the blood to the legs and build them up. There are a large number of gastric and intestinal affec-

tions with bizarre and protean symptoms, designated respectively as gastric and intestinal neuroses, but which in reality owe their genesis to a congestion of the intra-abdominal veins. Such affections are essentially forms of splanchnic neurasthenia and are specially amenable to the treatment suggested in this book. The affections in question often produce only local symptoms confined to the abdominal sympathetic, and may never extend beyond the abdominal region to implicate the central nervous system. The treatment I have advocated for the cure of splanchnic neurasthenia is based on purely physiological reasoning. My exposition of the subject of general neurasthenia I have purposely treated cursorily, as it was my intention to employ it as a medium only in introducing my special subject—splanchnic neurasthenia.

ALBERT ABRAMS.

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