

**OBSCURE NERVOUS DISEASES POPULARLY
EXPLAINED. THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS
CONDENSED IN A FEW PAGES. BEING SIX
LETTERS, ADDRESSED TO A PHYSICIAN, ON THE
MANY NERVOUS AFFECTIONS RESULTING
FROM DENTAL IRRITATION, AND OTHER
SOURCES OF REFLEX-NERVOUS DISTURBANCE**

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Obscure Nervous Diseases Popularly Explained. The Experience of Years Condensed in a Few Pages. Being Six Letters, Addressed to a Physician, on the Many Nervous Affections Resulting from Dental Irritation, and Other Sources of Reflex-Nervous Disturbance by J. L. Levison

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J. L. LEVISON

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BY

J. L. LEVISON.



Dedicated, by permission, to Dr. Conolly.

LONDON:

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1856.

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Dedication

TO

JOHN CONOLLY, M.D., ETC.,

HANWELL.

MY DEAR SIR,

In addressing the following letters to you, I have not the temerity to suppose that the views propounded in them will present any novel opinions to one who has made the Brain and Nervous System a profound study for so many years.

When, therefore, I requested your permission to dedicate them to you, it was from a consciousness that you would not object to give every encouragement to even the humblest student who had laboured in the same path in which you had obtained so much deserved approbation and respect.

My own wishes have always been to be useful in my day and generation : and under your auspicious aid, I may hope my labours may not be altogether in vain. For it will be obvious to you, that the views propounded are in accordance with the known laws of the Nervous System.

Yet with all the existing knowledge, it must be confessed, there is often an obscurity in deciding on the exact source of irritation, so as to form a correct *diagnosis*; and hence many have to endure the most excruciating agony without obtaining either mitigation or relief.

Impressed with this conviction, I have condensed in these letters many years' experience and patient observation, on a class of Nervous Diseases, which have often baffled the judgment of the most skilful. And may therefore hope that some little advantage may result from my present communication.

Grateful for the readiness and courtesy with which you have acceded to my request.

I am, my dear sir,

With most respectful esteem,

Yours very truly,

J. L. LEVISON.

19, Dorset Place, Dorset Square, London;
November 25th, 1855.

OBSCURE NERVOUS DISEASES.

LETTER I.

What constitutes a normal condition of man.—Observations on exclusive physical training, and extreme culture of the mental faculties.—The results of the latter in a state of civilization.—How it is proposed to treat of the many anomalous kinds of nervous diseases.—Some attempt to explain, popularly, what is understood by reflex nervous action.—Speculation on the exclusive intensity of consciousness in nervous affections.

MY DEAR SIR,—A very natural question is suggested when any attempt is made to treat of the many sources of nervous diseases,—“What constitutes a normal condition of man?” and the reply would seem to be, when there exists a perfect harmony between the functions of the body, including mastication, digestion, respiration, circula-

tion, and assimilation ; and when there exists also a similar harmony in the manifestation of the mental faculties.

Firstly. We find in many of the aboriginal tribes, that physical training is perfect. From infancy the bodily powers are exercised, and the greater portion of time, at the period of the progressive development of the individual, is spent in the open air.

The results are well marked. Such a one has stalwart limbs, a capacious chest, an active circulation, and a constant supply of pure oxygen ; and as a consequence, his digestion is rapid, bringing him perfect repose and increased strength. Thus he treads the earth with a firm step, performs feats of bodily vigour, with the most graceful and agile motion of his limbs, whether in the hunt or on the battle field.

But the neglect of all systematic mental training, with the exception of the external senses and the most simple perceptions, render his mind stunted, and he is, therefore, *incapable of appreciating the purer sources*

of pleasure which are experienced by one whose intellectual and moral powers have been well cultivated.

Secondly. If we take an example from a highly cultivated and refined people, we shall perceive, as a general rule, that this mind-culture is made at the expense of great bodily deterioration. The limbs are enfeebled, the chest contracted, the abdomen enlarged; digestion is deranged, the circulation irregular, and the brain and nervous system are rendered so irritable, from too great susceptibility, that morbid disturbance in protean forms is the necessary consequence.

It is therefore an inevitable inference that a model man must combine physical training and intellectual culture, so that there may exist a harmony between all the respective functions which constitute his being; and then he would derive the exquisite enjoyment of perfect health, and perform his mission as an intelligent and responsible agent. Alas! when we contemplate the vast amount of