

**NERVOUS STATES,  
THEIR NATURE AND  
CAUSES**

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Nervous States, Their Nature and Causes by Paul Dubois

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**NERVOUS STATES**  
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# Nervous States

## THEIR NATURE AND CAUSES

By

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*AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION*

By

**EDWARD G. RICHARDS**



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## CONTENTS

| <i>Chapter</i>   | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| I. THE NEW NAME FOR AN OLD DISEASE . . . . .                   | 7           |
| II. PSYCHONEUROSES . . . . .                                   | 22          |
| III. OVERWORK AND FATIGUE AS CAUSES                            | 32          |
| IV. EDUCATION OF THE MIND NECESSARY . . . . .                  | 48          |
| V. THE LINK BETWEEN MIND AND BODY . . . . .                    | 63          |
| VI. THE MIND THE BEST WEAPON IN THE COMBAT . . . . .           | 76          |
| VII. CONSTANT AUTOSUGGESTIONS AS CAUSES AND REMEDIES . . . . . | 95          |

# Nervous States, Their Nature and Causes'

## I

### THE NEW NAME FOR AN OLD DISEASE

**N**EURASTHENIA is not a new disease entirely created by the conditions of modern life. The *Neurasthenic States* have always existed; they have been observed and described since the time of Hippocrates and Galen. Moreover, they must have been frequent, since Plato excluded from his *Republic* "those men, always occupied in dreaming of imaginary sufferings, having lost all aptitude for the arts and the sciences, incapable of understand-

<sup>1</sup> Communication presented at the Tenth French Congress of Medicine, Geneva, September, 1908.

## NERVOUS STATES

ing and meditating." It is certainly not the insane hypochondriac, the actual alien, that these words describe; it is just our "neurasthenic" keeping his place in the world while at the same time being more or less incapable of fulfilling his task. Observe how well Plato saw the "hypochondriac" nature of the preoccupations of these subjects, and the "psychasthenia" which prevents them from understanding and meditating, which creates their inability to adapt themselves to life.

If the new drawer, opened and labeled "neurasthenia" by the American neurologist, Beard, has been filled so quickly and overflows, it is because at first the badly-classed contents of many pigeon-holes have been put into it, and also that, like children urged to keep order, we have crammed into it everything that we did not understand.

Beard gave this name "neurasthenia,"