

trams, all the little sum of all the days, added up and then smudged out by the everlasting nothingness.

"I dunno, Nicky, I'm sure I dunno," sighed Miss Beckham.

"What, Auntie Beck, is your poor lace all broke?"

"Nothing as serious as that, Nicky... not my lace, but my sense of the ultimate value of the importance of things. Um, yes, the going round in 73, or getting the limit bag, or beating the opposition for a big order."

"It's not very nice having sand between your toes," frowned Nicky.

THEY were walking home, slowly, in the sun, with Nicky touching fences with the thoughtful fingers that respected property. He stopped to peer into open gates and sometimes took a few daring steps up a garden path, but nobody cared. He and Miss Beckham were caught up in a unique moment. They alone sensed the transience of all things and knew that, beneath this seeming state of permanency, there lurked only the nothingness that took a man's cheque book, his pipe, his club, his all. They could still walk in the sun and Sandy could shovel coal on to his kitchen range, and to-morrow the telephone would ring again and "this office would remain." But to-day they took stock.

Advice on Health (No. 252)

THOSE NERVES OF YOURS

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, Health Department)

"MY nerves are all on edge!"—how often do you hear that from a friend or acquaintance, and how often do you see in others that condition known as being "highly-strung" or described as "living on one's nerves"?

The nervous system consists of brain, spinal cord, and nerves carrying messages to and from the brain and all parts of the body. Some nerves convey messages that originate actions, others carry sensations felt inside the body. Some nerves carry messages to blood-vessels, telling them to contract or relax and so supply less or more blood; others tell the heart to pump faster, the internal glands to pour out their secretions into the blood-stream, or the stomach and intestines to cease digesting food. Whenever you are thoroughly angry or upset, your appetite fails and you do not feel like food. Your nerves have warned

your stomach you are emotionally upset and it is not much use eating, for the stomach is not properly conditioned for its task. The same anger or worry messages are borne by nerves to heart and blood-vessels, and their normal routine is upset. Your nervous system ties your physical and mental make-up together. A normal healthy body will not make you fatigued and nervy, but a wrongly used and fed or diseased body will colour your whole outlook. Similarly, worry and mental overstrain, emotional upsets—these things can, and do, react on your physical health.

When you feel yourself getting restless and on edge, when you come up against some emotional crisis that leaves you jumpy and highly-strung, it is a good idea to get rid of the nervous strain by some positive action that helps you to relax. If you can relax, the battle is won—the worry gets itself into proper perspective and you achieve calmness and judgment again. This applies also to the restlessness that develops from spells of overwork, or periods of inadequate sleep.

Still put your all into your daily work. But cut away from it sharply. Perhaps the worry or the crises occur in that

daily work. Fly immediately to the particular thing you love doing best. If it should be gardening, get out into the garden, and you will find as you handle the soil, and turn it over, that you will gradually lose yourself in the mechanical work, and a healing quiet gradually settles over the overwrought nervous system. If you are a musician, go to the piano, the violin, or other instrument, and let the act of evoking music slowly soothe the restlessness. Arrange a game of cards or join actively in some sport, if these be your favourite recreations. If you deliberately fly to the consolation of the off-duty occupation you enjoy most, every time you feel yourself restless, out-of-tune with life, under a sense of grievance, or depressed, then relaxation will come quicker each time.

During the day's work, relax at every legitimate opportunity. Make a real rest of any rest-pause, let muscles go limp and deliberately rest. Close your eyes and doze off in bus, or tram, or train. Just a few minutes relaxing this way works wonders. The more restless you feel, the more you need this relaxation. The more sleep you need, too. A warm drink, a hot bath, a deliberate loosening of muscles in bed, these things may help you to get off to that sleep which is the best treatment of nerves and restlessness.



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