

While The Kettle Boils

Dear Friends,

Every big war carries with it what we have come to know as "war-neurosis." The constant anxiety and strain on highly-strung people result in war nerves.

This can be more readily understood in this present war, where the horror and uncertainty of aerial attack are added to the ordinary shocks. In Britain a new word has been coined over the past few months—the term "blast." In London it is the leading topic of conversation—whether the "blast" of the bomb will carry off the steeple of that church, or how many windows in a district have been smashed by it. As yet, it has not been related to nerves—but the effect is there.

We, who are fortunate enough to live far from the theatre of war can but realise dimly the constant strain and terror of the aerial war on that gallant little island of Britain. Yet, we do not go scot free. Some portion of it must also become our burden. Mothers, wives, sweethearts—with their men gone from them to distant battlefields . . .

When one mentions nerves, one speaks of something vague, intangible, yet terrifying. You can't see nerves as you can a swelling or a bruise, and the menace is the more threatening because it works secretly—and without early signs.

Yet, of all complaints, nerves are probably the most widely proclaimed. If a woman is feeling off colour, she will say—"Oh, it's my nerves." The explanation covers everything. Which is not to say that the real nerve sufferer is not to be pitied. Hers is a wretched lot, and more often than not the cure lies, not with the doctor or within the chemist's shop—but within herself.

General debility is just another name for bad nerves. Many people suffer from this unknowingly; unconsciously doing those very things that bring this condition about. Worry and fretting are the two chief destructive factors. We all know that life cannot progress without its problems and its anxieties, but it is the way we meet these troubles and dispose of them that determine our spiritual stature and our physical well-being. It is not a difficult or involved matter. It is just a case of right thinking. So many people worry without ever analysing their anxiety. They fret over trifles and allow themselves to become easily irritated. And constant irritation is like a drip of water wearing away a stone.

There are many ways to counteract the menace of nerves. One of the best is to compare your lot with that of someone less fortunate. Things seem much more trivial in comparison. One

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woman I know, when she felt dispirited, would write down all her disadvantages and anxieties—and opposite set all her advantages and happy moments. When she compared the two, the worry ledger had dwindled off to nothing.

To a woman frayed nerves, unfortunately, mean the loss of her chief charm—vitality; which means energy and the

will to live. Right habits of living can go a long way in helping nervy people. Plenty of sleep, sunlight, fresh air, water, sensible diet and sufficient exercise. This sounds a formidable list, yet in reality it is only the routine of our daily life—as it should be lived. The trouble is we don't bother to set about it in the right way. Any doctor will tell

you the vital importance of learning to relax. It is one of the secrets of storing energy and prolonging life.

Yours cordially,

Cynthia



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