

## Chapter 8 — Crystallized Fear and Definite Dreads

of *Worry and Nervousness: Or, The Science of Self-Mastery* (1914)

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### Source for Chapter 8

- (1) James J. **Walsh**, M.D., Ph.D., *Psychotherapy* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912)

### Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (other than Sadler) first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Pink** indicates passages where the Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the *Urantia Book*, or which allude to the *Urantia* phenomenon.
- (g) **Red** indicates either an obvious error on the Sadler's part, brought about, in some cases, by miscopying or misinterpreting his source, or an obvious inconsistency brought about by Sadler's use of an earlier Sadler text.

## VIII — CRYSTALIZED FEAR AND DEFINITE DREADS

8:0.1 IN A general way we have dealt with the long established fears and other obsessions in the preceding chapter. In this chapter we will treat of those special crystalized fears and certain definite phobias or dreads.

XVIII, III: DREADS (Walsh 612)

### DEFINITE DREADS (Walsh 612)

[Preamble.] (Walsh 612)

Phobia means only “fear” in Greek,

but the term is much more satisfying to nervous people than the shorter but too definite English term, dread, or fear (W 612).

[Compare *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 359.]

There is aerophobia, dread of the air, a symptom sometimes mentioned in connection with hydrophobia; [contd 8:1.3] (W 612)

[The fear of night air has acquired the dignity of a popular superstition, and it is erroneously supposed to favor taking cold (William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Cause and Cure of Colds* [1910]).]

Phobia is the Greek word meaning fear,

and many nervous invalids had rather have their crystalized fears called “phobias” than to have them designated in plain English as definite dreads.

### SPECIALIZED PHOBIAS

8:1.1 It would surprise those who are unfamiliar with the fears of nervous patients, to know how many otherwise sanely appearing individuals are afflicted with these forms of specialized fear or phobias.

There is aerophobia—the dread of air.

Some patients are particularly afraid of night air,

SOURCE

[H]ydrophobia ...

is, of course, a misnomer for an infectious disease—rabies—which develops as the consequence of a bite of a rabid animal, and the principal symptom of which is not fear of water, but the impossibility of swallowing any liquid because of spasm of the esophageal muscles (W 613).

**Dreads Connected with Water.** (Walsh 621)

[contd] Strange as it may seem, water constitutes a source of dread for some people (W 621).

[Preamble.] (Walsh 612)

[contd from 8:1.1] aichmophobia, the dread of pointed tools; ...

kenophobia or the dread of emptiness; ...

8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

just as if after sunset there was any other sort of air to be had.

8:1.2 Hydrophobia means literally the dread of water,

but in these days it has come to be applied to a well defined disease acquired from the bite of a mad dog—rabies;

although it would seem there are still to be found

certain strata of society who may be said to possess more or less of a well defined dread of water

as regards both its internal use and external application.

8:1.3 Then we have aichmophobia—the dread of pointed tools or instruments.

I have a patient at the present time who says that when she gets a glimpse of any sharp or pointed instrument such as a pair of scissors, she is seized with a desire to stab herself or else is tormented with the fear that she will harm some one else.

8:1.4 Kenophobia stands for the dread of emptiness,

and there are those victims of chronic fear who could not possibly be dragged into an empty house or vacant building.

## SOURCE

sitophobia or the dread of food ... (W 612).

[The refusal of food is almost the rule of conduct in all forms of melancholia (Archibald Church, M.D., and Frederick Peterson, M.D., *Nervous and Mental Disorders* [1911], p. 800).]

[Compare *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 359.]

Neuropsychologists seem to take a special pleasure in inventing some new phobia or at least giving us a fine long Greek name for a set of symptoms by no means new and that might well be explained in simpler terms. The most familiar examples are: the fear of lightning, which is more frequently brontophobia, the fear of thunder. [Etc.] (W 613)

[Compare *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 375-76.]

### Dreads Connected with Water. (Walsh 621)

Dropping water is a source of disturbance for most people (W 621).

Robert Boyle, the great father of chemistry and a very sensible man in many ways, is said to have been thrown into convulsions by the sound of water dropping from a faucet (W 621).

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

I have just received a letter from a patient who says her life has been ruined by the constant dread of “going away from home.”

8:1.5 Sitophobia is the dread of food

and is often found in well marked melancholia,

while a specialized form of this fear—a dread of some particular article of food—is not uncommon in neurasthenics.

Brontophobia, or the fear of thunder

is a dread commonly met with,

and one that is greatly aggravated by the manner in which nervous adults exhibit their fears during an electrical storm in the presence of young children.

8:1.6 Some people are greatly disturbed by regularly-dropping water—

as from an eavestrough or faucet.

## SOURCE

The Chinese are said to put people to death in horrible torture by having a drop of water fall at regular intervals on their heads (W 621).

[Preamble.] (Walsh 612)

[contd from 8:1.5] ... and even phobophobia, the dread of dreading (W 612-13).

These names [for phobias] are long and mouth-filling and consequently satisfying, and most people who are suffering from a particular phobia are almost sure to think that they have a very special affliction (W 613).

Most psychiatrists feel that it is better not to give the long Greek term, but to state in simple short Saxon words just what is the matter with the patient.

They are suffering from the dread of a height, or the dread of a narrow street, or the dread of open spaces, or the dread of dirt, or of cats, or of whatever else it may be (W 613).

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

The Chinese are said to put their enemies to death by having a drop of water fall at regular intervals upon the top of the head.

8:1.7 Phobophobia is nothing more nor less than the dread of dreading,

and some chronic worriers, it would seem, when they have nothing more definite to be afraid of, are easily able to work up a case of phobophobia.

8:1.8 In dealing with nervous sufferers, it is my practice not to make use of these high sounding terms in discussing the patient's fears and dreads.

It is disconcerting and tends unduly to frighten these nervous sufferers to be told they are suffering from this phobia or that phobia.

I much prefer to use a plain English word,

telling my patients they are victims of this fear and that dread,

and let it go at that.

SOURCE

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ALTITUDE AND SPACE  
DREADS

**Dread of Heights.** (Walsh 614)

[contd] Almost without exception men have a sort of instinctive dread of looking down from a height.

In most people this can be conquered ... (W 614).

[There is **acrophobia**, or the fear of looking down from a height ... (W 613).]

To see pictures of men standing on the iron frames of skyscrapers **twenty or thirty stories up in the air** looking down 300 to 500 feet below them

gives one a series of **little chilly feelings in the back** and in many people a goneness or sense of constriction around the abdomen that is almost a girdle feeling (W 614).

*Mental Discipline.*— ... It is no more difficult for the sensitive clergyman to learn by practice and discipline to walk with confidence on a reasonably high altar or platform, than it is for the workman to learn to walk a beam on the top of a twenty-story building without a thought of the dangers of his position ...

8:2.1 **It has been my observation that**

**practically everybody has a sort of instinctive dread or fear of looking down from great heights.**

The majority of people are able largely to conquer this fear of great heights—

otherwise known as **acrophobia.**

Structural iron workers employed in erecting our modern steel skyscrapers are able, little by little, to master this inherent dread of great heights to such an extent that almost any day

one may see these workers standing or walking on steel beams **twenty-five or thirty stories up in the air.**

It makes most of us feel a **little chilly up and down the spine**

when we see a steeple-jack perched high up on some lofty smokestack.

8:2.2 **Workmen have told me that they had gradually to accustom themselves to these great heights,**

## SOURCE

At the beginning he cannot do it, but he disciplines himself to form a habit that makes it easy (W 615-16).

After an accident on a high building,

as a rule, men have to be sent home for the day

to get their nerves settled by the night's sleep before they can work with sufficient confidence, and yet accomplish their usual amount of work (W 616).

*Physical Basis.*—There is a physical basis in many of these cases that constitutes the underlying occasion, at least, for the development of the psychic dread.

Our eyes have grown accustomed to being fixed on near objects.

Whenever they are not so fixed

we get a feeling of trepidation (W 614).

*Dread of Small Heights.*—It is often thought that acrophobia, or the fear of a height, concerns only great heights and that ordinary elevations produce no discomfort.

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and that at first they were in constant danger of losing their balance if they permitted themselves to look too steadfastly at the ground;

and it is a well-known fact that

in case of an accidental fall on the part of a workman employed on one of these high buildings,

the rest of the force usually quit work for that day.

It requires a night's sleep to restore their nerve. (Fig. 4.)

8:2.3 The physical basis of this form of fear

is probably to be found in the fact that

we have habitually trained our eyes to look upon objects near at hand,

and, therefore, when we are suddenly and unexpectedly compelled to look out upon objects at an unaccustomed distance from our position,

the novelty of the situation is found to be more or less disconcerting to one's mental and nervous equilibrium.

8:2.4 It is not always great heights that produce this fear or dread.

## SOURCE

I have had patients, however, who, when compelled by circumstances over which they had no control or at least by social obligations that were hard to break, to sit on the front row of even a low balcony, have been extremely uncomfortable (W 615).

I have had a curiously interesting series of cases in clergymen who found it trying to say Mass or conduct services or to preach from the step of a high altar (W 615).

The same thing is true of agoraphobia in some people.

To go alone across an open place or square is agony,

but even the company of a little child is sufficient to relieve them to a great degree (W 615).

[Preamble.] (Walsh 612)

There is ... claustrophobia, or the fear of narrow places,

as the dread of walking through a narrow street because of the sense of oppression that comes with the shut-inness of it (W 612).

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We know of patients who are exquisitely tortured if they are compelled to sit in the front row of the balcony in some place of public amusement;

while not long since we were consulted by a clergyman whose very success and usefulness were jeopardized by the definite dread that he would some time jump from or fall off the pulpit.

This fear never ceased to tantalize him throughout every discourse he delivered.

8:2.5 Akin to this fear of altitude is the fear of going alone across open spaces—agoraphobia.

This is a form of fear that some nervous people suffer from throughout a lifetime.

Many of these persons who could not possibly be persuaded to traverse a large open space alone

are entirely content to make the journey when accompanied by even a small child.

8:2.6 Another fear pertaining to space is that of claustrophobia—the fear of closed spaces.

Some people are very nervous when they are compelled to walk through a narrow street, having high buildings on either side.



## SOURCE

[Compare W 616-17, re a man who had a severe claustrophobic attack in a railroad carriage on the way up to London.]

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Others become nervous, fidgety, and sometimes pale with fear, when an elevator door closes and they find themselves actually shut up in a steel cage. They are almost overwhelmed with a desire to try to make their escape even while the elevator is in motion.

A milder form of this same dread is observed in those travelers who horribly dislike to be forced to sit in the same seat with another passenger. They have an unnatural fear of being crowded.

When in other tight places, they find breathing difficult, cold perspiration breaks out on the face, and they are seized with an almost uncontrollable desire to tear themselves away, to jump out, etc., etc.

## THE DREAD OF DISEASE, DIRT AND DEATH

[Preamble.] (Walsh 612)

8:3.1 It is a well known fact that

Almost any function of the body may become the subject of a dread or phobia that may interfere even seriously with it.... The French have described the **basophobia**, which makes the patients suffering from beginning tabes dread so much walking

that it becomes a much greater effort than it would otherwise be and often interferes with walking rather seriously (W 613).

patients suffering from locomotor ataxia entertain such definite fears of being unable to walk (**basophobia**)

as greatly to aggravate their malady and still further decrease their powers of locomotion.

I have no doubt that

## SOURCE

Many of the hysterical palsies are really due to dreads, consequent upon some incident, motor or sensory, which produced a profound effect upon the patient's mind.

A patient who has been surprised by a digestive vertigo when descending a stairs ... will sometimes develop a fear of vertigo that will actually make it difficult for him to go down stairs without such an effort of will as is very exhausting (W 613).

Pitres and Regis described some ten years ago what they called the obsession of blushing, or erythrophobia, the fear of turning red. Patients make themselves extremely miserable in this way (W 613).

**So-called Misophobia—Dread of Dirt.**  
(Walsh 616)

[contd] Misophobia, or the fear of dirt, has grown much more common in recent years, and the spread of the knowledge of the wide diffusion of bacteria has added to the unreasoning dread that possesses these people.

[... microphobia or bacillophobia ... (W 612)]

Some of them wash their hands forty to fifty times a day ... (W 616).

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many of the hysterical palsies are in reality due to these same definite dreads.

Some authorities even claim that

vertigo

and blushing (erythrophobia)

may result in this same manner when the fear of them has come to possess the patient.

8:3.2 The dread of dirt (misophobia) has grown vastly in recent years,

and is closely related to microphobia (the fear of microbes or germs).

Some of these unfortunate sufferers will wash their hands no less than fifty times a day.

## SOURCE

These people make themselves supremely miserable. They do not care to shake hands ... and they invent all sorts of excuses so as to wait outside of doors till someone else opens them so as to avoid touching the knob or door pull ... (W 616).

[Compare: [O]ne young man who was brought to me with the worst looking hands, because of irritation from soap and water, that I have ever seen, seemed to be always either just plunging his hands into water or wiping them dry (W 616).]

[The normal man is mightier than the microbe (O. S. Runnels, A.M., M.D., "The Personal Equation in Tuberculosis," in *North American Journal of Homœopathy*, May 1909.) [See also *Good Health*, Vol. 42 (1907)]

[ ... pathophobia or the fear of disease ... (W 612)]

[Nowhere is the adage so much to the point as here: "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." [Etc.] (Elwood Worcester, D.D., Ph.D., Samuel McComb, M.A., D.D., et al., *Religion and Medicine: The Moral Control of Nervous Disorders* [1908]), p. 97.]

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They are afraid to shake hands with their neighbors

and, as one might easily imagine, afraid to greet a long absent friend with an affectionate kiss.

We knew of a young man who would never go anywhere alone, for fear he would be compelled to touch a door knob.

We recently had a patient who had made herself a semi-nervous invalid, trying to disinfect the house and otherwise fight the myriads of microbes which all the while lurked near her. She was only helped by persistent training along those lines which served to show her that

the normal healthy man was mightier than the microbe.

8:3.3 Pathophobia is the dread of disease,

and many indeed are its specialized forms—far too many to receive consideration here.

It is an old proverb that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," and this is certainly true in matters of personal health and hygiene.

SOURCE

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Unless we can teach the individual a sufficient amount of truth to deliver him from groundless fears and baseless dreads, it would otherwise seem, that all our half-way efforts to enlighten him had only increased his worries and further multiplied his ungrounded fears of disease.

[ ... phthisiophobia or the dread of consumption ... (W 612)]

8:3.4 Phthisiophobia—the fear of tuberculosis,

is one which the average person, at least in some measure, is beginning to recover from.

**Dread of Insanity.** (Walsh 623)

[contd] People who have relatives who are already sufferers from such severe forms of insanity as require asylum treatment are often likely to be much disturbed over the possibility that they themselves should become insane (W 623).

8:3.5 The dread of insanity constantly hovers over some nervous patients who may have been so unfortunate as to have had an insane relative or ancestor.

Such patients are terribly depressed by even hearing the term mentioned,

Occasionally the thought of the insane asylum or the sight of an institution of this kind passed even at a distance in the train

while the sight of an insane asylum, even from a passing train,

is enough to give some people a fit of depression that may last for some time (W 623).

is enough to disturb them for weeks afterwards.

**Dread of Death.** (Walsh 622)

8:3.6 Metchnikoff looks upon even the dread of death as an unnatural form of fear.

## SOURCE

[Metchnikoff thinks that there is evidence enough at least to suggest that when death comes in its natural place at the end of the normal cycle of life, it would be robbed of its terrors and be accepted as gratefully as any other part of the cycle of life (Élie Metchnikoff, *The Prolongation of Life* [1908], p. vii (Editor's Introduction).]

**Dread of Cats.** (Walsh 617)

[T]he **handling of dead bodies** so familiar to physicians brings with it an aversion that we never quite get over ..., but that can be overcome to such an extent as to make pathological work produce very little aversion (W 618).

[Preamble.] (Walsh 612)

[... **zoophobia** or the **dread of animals** ... (W 612)]

[Compare *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 362, re mad dogs.]

[See W 624, re certain great men's fear of dogs and spiders, among other animals.]

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He thinks that all persons that have lived anything like the normal life should come to look upon death without the least thought of fear.

And it would certainly seem that men and women who entertain the Christian hope of the life beyond, should come to look upon death without dread and without fear.

Much less is there excuse for the extraordinary dread some people entertain of

viewing, touching or **handling the dead body**.

## ANIMALS AND THE DARK

8:4.1 **Zoophobia** (the **fear of animals**)

is a form of ever present dread, which tortures countless thousands of otherwise brave and normal people.

And one hardly feels like trying utterly to eradicate this fear of animals as long as mad dogs are allowed to prowl about the streets of our cities and villages.

But when this fear of animals becomes a veritable obsession as in the case of some persons in their fear of snakes, mice, or spiders, it certainly needs to be combated,

## SOURCE

**Dread of Cats.** (Walsh 617)

[contd] One of the most interesting of dreads, very frequently seen and producing much more discomfort than could possibly be imagined by anyone who had not seen striking cases of it, is the **dread of cats**

which has been dignified and rendered more suggestively significant by the Greek designation **ailurophobia** (W 617).

One of the most striking cases of this dread of which I know personally occurs in a large, rather masculine-looking woman, who cannot abide being in a room with a cat ...

Yet she is not at all what would be called timorous and she has more manly than womanly characteristics in every way (W 617).

*Cat Fear and Furs.*—This dread of cats is sometimes exhibited to a surprising degree under rather unexpected circumstances. For instance, it is not unusual ... to find that some of these patients cannot **wear** certain supposedly elegant **furs**, since they are really dyed catskin (W 618).

*Recognition of Presence.*— ... There seems no doubt but that it is an odor or a sensation allied to an odor ... that enables [some] people to **detect the presence of a cat.**

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even as it also does in

those cases of the silly and ridiculous **fear of cats**

(**ailurophobia**).

**We recently had a patient who was almost certain to have a hysterical fit if left alone in a room with a cat, even but for a few brief moments.**

**And I am bound to confess that this woman was by no means neurasthenic—**

**it was simply a case of crystalized fear—definite dread.**

8:4.2 The fear of cats is so great with some persons as to preclude their **wearing furs** derived from any member of the cat family;

while others are so sensitive on this point, that

they are able to **detect the presence of a cat** in the room or even in the house by the sense of smell.

## SOURCE

Dr. Weir Mitchell in his article on “Ailurophobia and The Power to Be Conscious of the Cat as Near While Unseen and Unheard,” in the *Transactions of the Association of American Physicians*, 1905, discusses odor as follows:

... I have seen a woman, well known to me, who can distinguish by mere odor the gloves worn by relatives or friends. This lady, who likes cats at pets, is able to detect by its odor the presence of a cat when I and others cannot (W 619).

In his “Thinking, Feeling, Doing,” Prof. Scripture says: “I have a case—reported by a perfectly competent witness who lived for years with the person mentioned—

of a woman in charge of a boarding school who always sorted the boys’ linen after the wash by the odor alone” (W 620).

### Dread of the Dark. (Walsh 620)

Sometimes, indeed, people have a dread of the dark that seems to be inborn and that apparently cannot be overcome, that, like the fear of cats or of lightning, may be quite beyond rational control.

Hobbes, the English philosopher, was so perturbed by darkness that he kept a light in his bedroom all night (W 620-21).

Nearly everyone who is unaccustomed to sleeping in a dark house alone has dreads that come over him when he first tries to do it.

Every noise is exaggerated in significance

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Weir Mitchell, in his essay on this subject,

cited numerous cases which showed beyond question that certain nervous women are possessed of an extraordinarily acute sense of smell as regards the detection of these special odors;

while Scripture reports the case

“of a woman in charge of a boarding school who always sorted the boys’ linen after the wash by the odor alone.”

8:4.3 From earliest infancy some otherwise normally healthy persons have grown up possessed of an absurd dread of the dark.

Many of them will positively refuse to sleep in a room at night without some form of low-burning light.

If such persons attempt to sleep in a dark room,

they are made inordinately nervous by every form of sound, both real and imaginary.

## SOURCE

and the creaking of stairs and rattling windows and doors and the wind through the trees are all made significant of something quite other than what they are (W 620).

Associated with dread of darkness is the fear of finding some one in a dark room whose presence may startle us. Sir Samuel Romilly, famous for his labors for the reform of the English criminal law ... had this dread to an acute degree.

It went so far that whenever he slept in a strange place he ... never failed to look under the bed. He did this even when he was in his own house (W 621).

The dread of darkness that so many people have is usually supposed to be cowardice. It is not, however, in most cases, but is due to idiosyncrasy or to certain special physical factors in the environment (W 620).

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The wind, the doors, the windows, the creaking of the floor and what-not,

all serve to alarm them as effectually to prevent rest and sleep.

8:4.4 We all know of nervous women as well as men, who live in constant fear of finding some one in a dark room.

Before retiring at night they never fail to look under the bed.

8:4.5 Now this fear of the dark is regarded by many as cowardice,

but, in my opinion, it has its origin back in the early childhood days when parents and nurses thoughtlessly frightened the little ones when they said "Boo, Dark" or when they threatened them with the "boogie man," "hobgoblins," and "the bad man."



## DREAMS AND MEMORY DREADS

### FORGOTTEN FRIGHTS AND DREADS (Walsh 625)

[contd] Dreads founded on terrifying or seriously disturbing incidents of the past, the details of which at times have gone out of the patient's mind, are not infrequent (W 625).

Frights in children may for a time be forgotten and yet the memory of them may come back, or a dread connected with them develop, that will make the patient profoundly miserable....

... Such incomplete memories are sometimes spoken of as **subconscious** (W 625).

8:5.1 It not infrequently happens that some definitely experienced dread has its origin, maybe unconsciously, away back in the individual's life, in the form of some alarming experience or some tragic accident.

**Subconsciously**, as it were, this memory fear is passed on down through the experience of subsequent years and is ever present, always ready to alarm and demoralize the individual in a most bewildering manner—

and all this it does, while the fear-ridden sufferer is quite unable to explain either the origin or basis of his unnatural fears and abnormal dreads.

8:5.2 Likewise are the unremembered dreams of the night season able to extend over their fears and dreads into the working hours, and are able thus unconsciously to torment and torture the innocent and susceptible nervous sufferer.

SOURCE

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There is no doubt in my mind but that the unremembered experiences of a frightful nightmare are perfectly able to render the patient so nervous and uneasy as almost entirely to unfit him for the performance of his customary duties the following day.

PREMONITIONS

XVIII, V: PREMONITIONS (Walsh 634)

8:6.1 The belief in premonitions is based upon superstition, suggestion, and fear.

[Preamble.] (Walsh 634)

[contd] A state of mind that disturbs many people seriously ... is that in which attention is paid to premonitions of evil. There are two of these general conditions to be considered. In the one there is a definite feeling that some special evil, occasionally very particularly outlined in the mind,

Some people are subject to definite premonitions,

as a railroad accident, fire, or a street accident of some kind, is to occur.

such as the dread of a fire, a train wreck, or a street accident.

In another mental condition there is a generic premonition of evil,

Others suffer from a generalized premonitory state of mind—

as if the worst were sure to happen and the patients must be constantly preparing for it.

the vague and depressing fear that something awful is going to happen.

Occasionally this takes on some such form as an assurance of early breakdown in health, or of death at an untimely age, or of some crippling infirmity.

A common premonition is that of a loss of health or early death.

This represents, of course, only one form of lack of control over the mind, but it is surprising how much physical suffering it may occasion (W 634-35).

8:6.2 Premonitions are indicative of lax mental discipline,

## SOURCE

[contd] Every now and then newspapers tell the story of someone who had an impending sense of danger,

perhaps of a particular form of accident or misfortune, which he could not shake off

and which finally came true (W 635).

[ ... many of the stories are merely sensational inventions ... (W 640)]

Nothing is said of the times when premonitions failed, nor of the disappointments of such dreads (W 635).

### **Etiology.** (Walsh 635)

[contd] As to the origin of these premonitions it is hard to say. They occur more frequently on dark days than in bright weather

and are complained of much more in spring and fall than during the cold brisk winter or during the summer time (W 635).

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and serve to show that the mind is permeated with fear and dominated by dread.

It is my opinion that the popular belief in premonitions is originated and fostered by

the newspaper publication of stories about persons who were possessed of an impending sense of danger or doom—

or who had a definite premonition that some accident was about to happen—

and then something really did happen.

While the larger part of these stories which appear in the papers may not be true,

nevertheless, their influence is such as to further foster this lingering superstition in the reliability of premonitions.

The newspapers do not bother themselves to publish the accounts of those untold thousands of cases where premonitions failed—

neither do we take the trouble to remember these cases.

8:6.3 People are more subject to premonitions on dark and dismal days.

They are also more common in the spring and the fall.

## SOURCE

How large a rôle **suggestion** plays in the matter can be realized from the fact that

after some particularly serious railroad accident many people ... put themselves to considerable inconvenience in choosing the car in which they will sit, if the last serious preceding accident of which they have heard happens to have brought death mainly in a particular car of a train (W 635).

The soil and the seed for suggestion are both needed to produce premonitions (W 635).

[contd] Royce suggests that many of the supposedly fulfilled premonitions are really only pseudo-presentiments

and represent an instantaneous and irresistible **hallucination of memory**,

which may give rise to the impression that there has been a previous dream or other warning presaging the facts, though no such phenomenon actually took place (W 635).

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This particular form of dread is also greatly increased by **suggestion**.

I well recall a case of a suburban wreck a few years ago, in which the front coach was badly demolished, and I noticed that

for months and even years after this accident, that the passengers studiously avoided that front coach.

There was an immediate decrease in the number of people who would allow themselves to ride in that car.

The soil and the seed for suggestion are both needed to produce premonitions.

## MEMORY DECEPTIONS

8:7.1 Royce thinks that many supposedly fulfilled premonitions are really pseudo-presentiments—

a sort of **hallucination of memory**

that twists and deceives us into believing, after the thing has happened—that we had either dreamed of it previously or had a premonition.

This is in harmony with

## SOURCE

Podmore suggests an illusion of memory magnifying or rearranging the details of a recent dream or premonitory impression,

so as to make it fit into the happenings (W 636).

Certainly no reliance can be placed on a story of a dream fulfilled unless the dream was told before the happening (W 636).

**Premonitions and Telepathy.** (Walsh 640)

All the world dreams

and there would be a serious violation of the theory of probabilities if some dreams did not come true (W 640).

If some of them did not come true then the mathematics of coincidences as based on the theory of probabilities would prove false (W 640-41).

**Publication of Fulfilled Premonitions.**  
(Walsh 637)

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

Podmore's suggestion of how a tricky memory may instantaneously rearrange the details of a dream or premonition

to make it fit into the actual occurrences.

It is certain that no reliance can be placed on stories of dream fulfillment unless the dream was told or written out beforehand.

8:7.2 Since the vast majority of people are having premonitions every day, and dreaming dreams every night,

it is not to be wondered at that now and then one or two should appear to come true or be fulfilled.

These rare cases are then published broadcast and ten thousand more nervous invalids begin to hatch out a new brood of foolish worries and silly dreads.

That a premonition will occasionally come true, may be accepted as a reasonable guess as shown by

the mathematics of coincidences as based upon the theory of probabilities.

## ORIGIN OF PREMONITIONS

8:8.1 The further origin of premonition is discovered in the prostitution of reasonable forethought and care.

## SOURCE

I do not suppose that one out of ten people who sleep in a **strange hotel** fail to [think of the hotel catching fire]; they do not consider it a premonition, however, but only a suggestion for the taking of proper **precautions** so as to know where **exits** and **fire escapes** and other means of escape are situated ... This sort of premonition, if we call it by that name, has a definite useful purpose (W 637).

The other [sort of premonition] makes its possessor toss sleepless a portion of the night, does no good and much **harm** (W 637).

### **Rôle of Coincidence.** (Walsh 638)

Literally millions of people have gone to bed in recent years without any premonition of earthquake,

yet have been wakened before morning with their houses tumbling around them (W 638).

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

There is certainly nothing abnormal but everything commendatory in

a stranger's careful examination of the **exits, fire escapes**, etc., connected with his sleeping apartments in a **strange hotel**;

but when **precautionary** instinct is allowed to degenerate into a definite dread of the hotel's burning up on that particular night,

it is then that the patient has become a victim of this **harmful** sort of fear called premonition.

Think of all San Francisco's inhabitants, who for years may have had earthquake premonitions which were never realized,

and then how innocently they all retired the evening before the great shake, wholly free from premonitions of what was about to occur;

but on being shaken out of bed early the next morning

were able immediately to conjure up the memory of some former earthquake premonition and actually to deceive themselves into believing that they had had such a presentiment the evening before.

## UNFULFILLED PRESENTIMENTS

**An Unfulfilled Premonition.** (Walsh 637)

[contd] There is an excellent story of a strong but unfulfilled premonition told by Carl Schurz in his “Recollections,” which seems to me such a good antidote to the influence of supposed premonitions, that every physician should know its details for their psychotherapeutic value with patients prone to be troubled in this way (W 637).

On the morning of the battle of Chancellorsville General Schurz awoke with the absolute persuasion

that at last his time had come and he was to be killed that day.

He had never had such a premonition before.

He had heard of many cases in which such premonitions proved the forerunner of death.

He realized how ridiculous was the idea that he should know anything about what the future held for him, even vaguely, and he tried to shake it off.

He found it impossible to do so.

8:9.1 I have found it helpful in dealing with my patients who torture themselves with premonitions, to emphasize cases in my own experience which have not been fulfilled.

I have often used in this connection the story of Carl Schurz as told in his “recollections.”

General Schurz describes how,

on the morning of the battle of Chancellorsville, he awoke with the profound conviction—a veritable premonition—

that his time had come, that he would be killed in that day’s battle.

He had never had such a premonition before.

He had heard of other cases where such presentiments were the forerunner of death.

He tried to shake off this fear,

but it gripped him; he was unable to free himself from it.

## SOURCE

He thought that after he took up the routine work of the day the force of the premonition would be lost. It was not, but, on the contrary, seemed to increase in power over him.

Finally the idea became so imperative that he sat down and wrote letters of farewell to his wife and friends, telling them that he had been tempted to do so because of this premonition of danger.

When he went into battle—and it may be recalled that the Eleventh Corps did some fighting at Chancellorsville that day—he was sure that now the end was not far off.

It did not take away his courage, however, and though he was well in the zone of danger, he issued his orders and kept his troops well in hand as we know from the history of the battle (W 638).

[contd] Finally his aide-de-camp, riding toward the front of the line beside him, was killed by a cannon ball (W 638).

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

As the day went on the conviction grew,

and finally he sat down and wrote farewell letters to his family,

and then he went forth into the battle.

And when his corps was summoned onto the firing line, he then knew that his premonition was genuine

and he plunged into the fight with the full conviction that the end was nigh;

but he was a sturdy German and a well trained soldier,

and history shows how well he kept his courage and how splendidly he managed his troops;

but his deadly premonition did not leave him until,

while riding to the front, his aide-de-camp was cut down by a cannon ball.



## SOURCE

The burden of premonition lifted from him as if the fact that a friend had been killed beside him gave him an assurance that he himself was not to be taken. There was absolutely **no reason** for his thinking so, but his feelings of solicitude with regard to himself and his fate faded completely and at once.

He continued in the **thick of the fight** and of danger and was **untouched** (W 638).

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

Upon seeing his aid shot down,

the fear of death departed from the general's mind, in the same **unreasoning** manner in which it had come.

His fear was gone,

he plunged into the **thickest of the fight**, and came out—**untouched**.

8:9.2 And this story splendidly illustrates two points: first, even a strong-minded, well-trained soldier, may have premonitions of fear; and, second, that all of us live to have many, many, premonitions, most of which never happen.

## THE TREATMENT OF DREADS

8:10.1 While the details of the treatment of these various nervous states is reserved for consideration in later chapters, it will not be out of place to offer brief remedial suggestions here.

XVIII, III: DREADS (Walsh 612)

TREATMENT (Walsh 626)

8:10.2 The one thing essential in overcoming chronic dreads is simple, methodic,

## SOURCE

[P]atients are encouraged not only to take up, but, above all, to continue, the practice of that **mental discipline** and self-control which will enable them to lessen their natural aversion, if not to remove it entirely (W 626).

### DEFINITE DREADS (Walsh 612)

#### Dread of Heights. (Walsh 614)

It is not difficult for us to walk across a plank raised **a foot** or two from the ground, ...

and there is no reason in the world why, if the plank is amply wide for us at two feet from the ground, it should not be just as wide and safe at **30 or 50 or even 100 feet**.

This is what the men who have learned to work on skyscrapers have disciplined themselves to (W 614).

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

**mental discipline.**

If you can walk without fear along a wooden beam ten inches wide when elevated **one foot** above the ground,

common sense goes to show that it is only a matter of confidence, practice and experience—mental discipline—until you can walk on an iron beam, ten inches wide

**two hundred feet** above the ground if necessary.

This is exactly the way the builder effectually overcomes this inherent fear of great heights.

And it serves the purpose of a practical illustration, showing just how all crystalized fears and definite dreads may be successfully mastered.

8:10.3 Like a horse that shies, the victim of dreads should deliberately, methodically and persistently drive himself right up face to face with his hoodoo and bravely assault the psychological enemy.

SOURCE

XVIII, V: PREMONITIONS (Walsh 634)

**Premonitions and Superstitions—Thirteen.**  
(Walsh 639)

How many people, for instance, feel quite uncomfortable if they sit down thirteen at a table (W 639).

XVIII, III: DREADS (Walsh 612)

TREATMENT (Walsh 626)

[contd] The most important psychotherapeutic factor for the relief of the discomfort due to dreads is the knowledge that there are so many and such different varieties of them and that so many people suffer from them (W 626).

To have [those afflicted] know that there are all forms and phases of these curious aversions is to make them laugh a little at their own because they laugh so readily at others, and it gives them new courage for the attempt to conquer them (W 626).

Many of those afflicted are inclined to think that their cases are almost unique (W 626).

8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

He should attack these peculiar forms of fear just as he would the more silly and superstitious hoodoos of “Friday the thirteenth,”

or the supposed unluckiness of sitting down with thirteen at the table.

8:10.4 I help many of my patients over these dreads by telling them that they are practically universal;

that is, that practically everybody has or has had at some time or other, one or more of these petty fears.

As they laugh at other people’s fears, it helps them to laugh at their own.

They are altogether too likely to regard their fears as unusual and unique

and it rather helps them to find out that they are little different from other people, except for the fact that they take their fears and dreads too seriously.

## SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

8:11.1 1. Victims of so-called “phobias” are suffering from common everyday dreads—only they have come to dread their dreads.

8:11.2 2. Common among these crystallized fears and definite dreads may be mentioned aerophobia—the dread of air.

8:11.3 3. Other dreads are hydrophobia—fear of water; aichmophobia—dread of pointed tools; kenophobia—the dread of emptiness; sitophobia—the dread of food; brontophobia—the fear of thunder; and phobophobia—the dread of dreading.

8:11.4 4. In dealing with nervous patients it is best not to use these **mouth-filling** Greek words to describe their fears. Use a simple English word and call them dreads.

8:11.5 5. Acrophobia—the instinctive fear of heights—is a well-nigh universal dread. But reason, practice, and perseverance are able practically to cure it.

8:11.6 6. This fear of heights—small and great—rests on a physical basis. It results from the fact that our eyes are trained to view objects near at hand, so that a sudden view from a high point disconcerts the nervous equilibrium.

8:11.7 7. The dread of small heights is also common. Women fear to sit in the front row of the balcony at the theater and clergymen fear they will fall off their pulpits.

8:11.8 8. Agoraphobia is the dread of open spaces; while claustrophobia is the fear of closed spaces—the dread of entering elevators, sitting in tight places, etc.

[These names are long and **mouth-filling** ... (W 615).] [*See 8:1.8, above, left column.*]

## SOURCE

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

8:11.9 9. Certain people live in constant dread of dirt—misophobia; while others are kept miserable by the fear of germs—microphobia. They are engaged constantly in washing their hands and otherwise trying to avoid contamination.

8:11.10 10. Pathophobia is the dread of disease, and thousands live in constant fear of bodily disorders which are in no danger of overtaking them.

8:11.11 11. Some nervous patients who have had an insane relative or ancestor live all their lives tormented by the fear that they may go crazy.

8:11.12 12. The fear of death is regarded by Metchnikoff as an unnatural dread. At least it would seem that a Christian's hope would rob death of all dread.

8:11.13 13. Zoophobia—the fear of animals—is variously manifested as a dread of snakes, spiders, mice, and mad dogs, experienced by so many otherwise brave and normal people.

8:11.14 14. One of the most silly of all animal dreads is the preposterous fear of cats (ailurophobia) which certain individuals so persistently entertain.

8:11.15 15. From earliest infancy some people have grown up possessed of an absurd dread of the dark. They think they cannot sleep in a room without a light and are tremendously annoyed by sounds of all descriptions.

8:11.16 16. Much of this fear of the dark probably has its origin in hobgoblin stories and the bogey man threats of early childhood.

8:11.17 17. Definite dreads may have their origin in some long forgotten alarming experience, tragic accident, or in some vivid dream. It persists as a sort of unconscious memory dread.

## SOURCE

## 8: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

8:11.18 18. Premonitions are based on superstition, suggestion, and fear. They may be definite—as dread of an accident—or general—as the presentiment that something awful is going to happen.

8:11.19 19. Newspaper stories of fulfilled premonitions tend to keep alive this silly superstition. People are more subject to these fears on dismal days, and in the spring and fall.

8:11.20 20. Tricks of memory sometimes deceive us into believing we have had a dream or premonition after things have happened.

8:11.21 21. Premonitions may originate in the prostitution of ordinary forethought and reasonable precaution—as in locating fire escapes in a strange hotel.

8:11.22 22. Study unfulfilled premonitions and remember that we are all more or less subject to these silly fears, and that we all live to have many, many premonitions—the vast majority of which never happen.

8:11.23 23. The essential thing in the treatment of these common dreads is simple, methodic, mental discipline. Treat yourself like a shying horse—drive right up face to face with your fears—and teach yourself how to laugh at your own fears—just as merrily as you laugh at other people’s silly dreads.