

drudge of the family. She had not only to provide for her father's comfort, but sometimes to make charitable allowance for his irritation, when he uttered peevish complaints which were not very complimentary to his little housekeeper, who prided herself on her "management." She had to keep her temper when "notable housewives," who only helped her in that way, called her "poor child," and found fault with her arrangements. Her occasional paid female helps were of the Mrs. Mc'Carthy type; her regular ones, when she had any, scarcely more useful, and not half so kindly. She had to humour old Paddy, and do her poor best to keep him out of mischief. She made clothes, mended them, altered them; calculated, contrived, cooked, washed, baked, brewed, ordered things from the store and the butcher's, looked after the butter and the bees, the pigs and the poultry, sick-nursed, and in addition had to "teach" her brothers and sisters until they went to school. Her mother had taught her; but, owing to the state of the poor lady's health, it was a very scrambling "education," so far as *instruction* goes, that Mary had received; and she could not help thinking it rather hard when her sisters, on their return home in the full

bloom of Sydney graces and accomplishments, half looked down on their homely oracle of old, and got married one after another, whilst she continued single—not because she had been altogether unsought, but because there was no one to take her place as family manager.

Her brothers, too, after the manner of boys, had a knack of getting into scrapes, both at school and after they had left—scrapes out of which no one could pull them but sister Mary.

And when she was beginning to get her "own children" off her hands, their children—the children of the first-married among them—put in, somehow or other, imperative demands for similar care. And so the game went on until Mary was a confirmed old maid.

Last of all, when he was an old man, her father took unto himself a young wife; and the daughter who had kept his home together for him found but a chilly welcome in it.

Amongst her brothers and sisters, her brothers-in-law and her sisters-in-law, her nephews and her nieces, however, she circulated as much-beloved, though still much-bedrugged, Aunt Mary.

RICHARD ROWE.

HOW TO GET TO SLEEP AT NIGHT.

BY A PHYSICIAN.



INSOMNIA has come to be one of the diseases of the day. It is Nature's protest against that abnormal spirit of go-aheadism, which is characteristic of the busy age in which we live. In the struggle for fame, wealth, or even bare existence, which is for ever raging around us, it is not invariably the weakest who go to the wall. The race is not always to the swift here, any more than it is in a steeple-chase, and insomnia is the fence at which so many of the best and brightest careers terminate—fall never again to rise.

Every one, especially in towns, knows what the term "breaking up" means, as applied to hard-working literary men, professional men, some men in business, and people in general, who use their brains to make their bread.

"Poor So-and-so is breaking up," we say, and shake our heads. The fact is, poor So-and-so has become prematurely aged, in little over three months.

There can be no greater or more fatal mistake made, than that of overworking one's brains. It is infinitely better and wiser to do a smaller portion of work, and do it well, than to force the brain against its will and power. Shortening of life is the inevitable result of such a course.

A certain proportion of brain excitement, or mental labour, is actually necessary to maintain the health of any one, and especially of authors, play-wrights, and poets, who are almost invariably of the nervous tem-

perament, as distinguished from the lymphatic; but this should never be over-done, and should in every case be followed by a due proportion, first of healthful exercise, and secondly of natural sleep.

The very first symptom of this state of "breaking up," or nervous *ramollissement*, is some degree of unnatural lassitude and weariness, after or during work. He is a wise man who does not disregard this; but the fool flies to stimulants, and instead of a long walk in the park, or a run up the river, or a few miles by train into the country, he drinks brown sherry, or brandy and water, or, by way of a little relaxation (?), shuts himself up in a close theatre, and breathes carbonic acid and exhalations. No wonder if he commences work the next morning with tired frame and burning eyeballs.

The next symptom of "breaking up," and a far more serious one, is sleeplessness. This comes on very gradually and insidiously. Some very temperate men will tell you that they allow themselves just one glass of "grog," and a pipe, before turning in, and they "sleep all the better for it." I don't mind about the pipe, but I tell you that any man who has to depend upon spirits to procure him sleep, has already one foot on the Avernian ladder—is diseased, in fact, in the first degree. The first symptoms are invariably disregarded. Although the patient—he would not care to be called a patient, by-the-by—feels that he is not altogether right, still he writes on, and fights on, and promises himself a little change, some day soon. Alas! how seldom that "some day" comes, and how little do most people imagine how quickly absolute

breaking up of the constitution sometimes follows on its primary symptoms! Perhaps he thinks that by using stimulants, and taking tonics—stimulants in another form—he will soon put himself all right again. Well, if your horse is tired before he reaches the end of his journey, there are two ways of making him go on—you may use whip and spur, or you may dismount and give him a rest and a feed. Stimulants and tonics may be likened to the whip and spur, they may do to good on a poor writer for a time, but, verily, the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Would you know the pathology of insomnia? It is very simple. The state of sound, healthy sleep, such as few but children or the lower animals enjoy, is characterised by a bloodless condition of the brain, and probably the whole nervous system. The pressure of the net-work of capillary blood-vessels, which everywhere surrounds the brain-matter, has been removed, the stimulus to thought and action is absent, and the body sinks into insensibility, and the mind into forgetfulness. In the waking state, matters are simply reversed. Here the capillaries are re-filled with blood, and thought and action are the results. Now, from long-continued over-thinking, over-work, or over-excitement, these capillaries in the brain become abnormally distended, and, just as by over-stretching any elastic substance you destroy to a certain extent its elasticity, so with these minute blood-vessels, under such conditions, they do not contract sufficiently towards night to expel the blood from the brain; consequently, imperfect sleep, with dreaming, or perfect insomnia, takes the place of healthy slumber.

The constant pressure by day and night on the brain-matter by its capillaries, can but be productive of the most direful results, one of which—softening of the brain—is not the least. Sad it is for the literary man when this begins to take place. Even in its earliest stage there will be some loss of intellectual power; his writings will lose most of their pith and polish, he will find it hard to concentrate his ideas on any one subject for a length of time, he will feel unhappy, weary, listless, nervous, and emotional, with slight attacks of vertigo, or swimming in the head, if no actual pain; in a word, both body and mind will suffer, and his life may have the same sad ending as that of poor Marryat, or the unhappy Thomas Moore.

Sleeplessness is one of the earliest symptoms of insanity, and nearly always present, in a very marked degree, in the worst forms of mania.

The habit of taking any of the various narcotic or sleep-producing medicines is a most pernicious one, and never fails to weaken the general health, and increase the very evil it is meant to relieve.

Alcohol, opium, camphor, bromide of potassium, extracts of hemlock, henbane, hops, and Indian hemp, are all used in their turn to calm our sensitive nervous systems, and invoke the drowsy god. They are each and all to be condemned, more especially the last-mentioned. If any man wishes to feel a bigger fool than usual, on any particular day, let him go to sleep on the previous night under the influence of Indian

hemp. He will awake with a head—judged by his own feelings—as large as a kettle-drum, and just as empty.

But of all narcotics, hydrate of chloral, now so much in use, is the worst. This dangerous drug, first introduced into the pharmacopœia about four or five years ago, is now in daily use among a large section of the public, not only as a narcotic, but in smaller doses as an intoxicant. The sensations produced by its use are somewhat similar to those from a dose of "hascheesh"—a mixture of Indian hemp and opium. The dose must be steadily increased, and in every case, after a few months, the new disease called *chloralism* is induced. This is characterised by an entire collapse of nervous energy; the power of volition is lost, the patient becomes emaciated, suffers from extreme restlessness, burning pains in the head and eyeballs, and pains resembling those of rheumatism in the limbs and along the course of the larger veins; he gets weaker and weaker, and finally dies from failure of the heart's action.

Medicinal narcotics should never be taken or administered to produce sleep, unless that sleep has been banished by great pain or intense bodily fatigue. How, then, is sleeplessness to be cured? Only by removing the cause, and *afterwards* endeavouring to improve the general health. Most men attempt to doctor themselves now-a-days, and it is a pity the laws of health are not better understood, and taught in our public schools. When, therefore, a man finds his health failing from overwork and want of good sleep, this is the treatment which he usually adopts:—He regulates his habits as to drinking and smoking, takes daily "constitutionals"—which mean long walks with his eyes on the ground, and thinking, thinking all the while—"goes in," as he calls it, for a course of quinine and iron, or cod-liver oil, with a little bromide of potassium to induce sleep at night, and he wonders that he does not get well.

Now, with the exception of the bromide, his treatment is rational enough, and would probably cure him IF he had removed the cause by leaving off work for a time. Nature insists upon our taking an occasional holiday; and by so doing one not only benefits his health and prolongs his life, but even finds it a good speculation in a pecuniary point of view; for on his return to town, his literary wares or his capacity for business will be of triple value. But if a man thinks he cannot afford to rest, he had better hire himself to Farmer Hodge, or work on the line for a month: even that would be preferable to "breaking up."

The best natural narcotic, and the only medicine for the cure of sleeplessness, is *ozone*. Inhale it; seek it on the mountain's brow; seek it along the sea-shore, far from town and turmoil, far from care and trouble. How the mountain air re-juvenates the system; how the breezes that blow from off the blue water calm and soothe the nerves!

"It is a delicious moment," says an old book, "that of being well nestled in bed, and feeling that you will drop gently to sleep. The limbs have been just tired enough to render the remaining in one posture delight-

ful. The labour of the day is over. A gentle failure of the perceptions comes creeping over one; the spirit of consciousness disengages itself more and more with slow degrees, like a mother detaching her hand from a sleeping infant. The mind seems to have a balmy lid closing over it like the eye. 'Tis closing—'tis closed; and the mysterious spirit has gone to take its airy rounds."

I don't know, however, about the spirit's "airy rounds." I rather suspect the spirit remains between the sheets; but during this gentle slumber the brain has renewed its power, the capillaries their contractility, and the body at length awakes refreshed, buoyant, and happy, and ready to resume the labours of the day with pleasure, just as you used to awake, reader, when a boy.

Contrast this with the condition of a man suffering from insomnia. He needs rest, oh! so much. His mind needs it; his weary frame needs it; but his over-stretched brain-capillaries fail to contract; so he tosses about on his bed in vain. Hour after hour goes by, and still he sleeps not; while troublesome, tiring thoughts chase each other through his burning brain, until—perhaps towards morning—nature exhausted at last, his busy thoughts resolve themselves into harassing dreams, and he sinks for awhile into insensibility (we cannot call it sleep), to rise from his couch more tired and unrefreshed than when he lay down.

Sleep is oftentimes banished by persons going to bed with an empty stomach; and if one has been lying awake for half the night, sleep can in most cases be induced by eating a small sandwich, and drinking a dessert-spoonful of brandy in a small quantity of water.

Having a hot-water bottle in bed is a bad practice, and often incites instead of calming the nerves; but bathing the feet in hot water, and sponging the body with tepid or cold, has generally a very good effect. So has a rag dipped in cold water, and placed on the forehead and eyes.

A bottle of soda-water, with fifteen grains of carbonate of soda dissolved in it, is a good narcotic. So is a hard mattress, with a sparing amount of bed-clothes.

If you are sleeplessly inclined when you lie down, as most people are at times, you may try with success some of the following plans of dropping off:—Imagine yourself starting for a walk, along some once familiar, but now half-forgotten road—say, for instance, the path that used to lead you to school. Go over in imagination every bit of the way, and endeavour to call to mind all the landmarks, such as houses, woods, &c. You will not have gone very far before slumber overtakes you. Or, string a row of nouns together, the first that come into your head—the names, say, of people, professions, or animals—and first repeat them several times singly, and in the same order, as dog, donkey, parson, judge, &c.; then to each word attach some definition, as, the dog that barks and bites, the donkey with long ears, the parson in the pulpit, the judge in a wig. Repeat this over and over again; you will be able to retain the right definition to each noun for some time. Presently, however, you will waver and make mistakes. The dog will have the judge's wig, the judge will bark and bite, and in the full assurance that there is nothing ludicrous or out of place in the confusion, you will drop calmly off to sleep.

TWO WHOM THE GODS LOVED.

A STORY OF THE SINGING-FISH.



IN the account of Ceylon by Sir James Emerson Tennent occurs the following passage: "On the occasion of a visit which I made to Batticalon in 1848, I made some inquiries

relative to a story which had reached me of musical sounds said to be often heard issuing from the bottom of the lake, and which the natives suppose to proceed

from some fish in the locality. . . . In the evening, when the moon rose, I took a boat, accompanied by some fishermen proceeded to the spot. On coming to the point mentioned, I distinctly heard the sounds in question. They came up from the water like the gentle thrills of a musical chord, or the faint vibrations of a wine-glass when its rim is rubbed by a moistened finger."

In connection with this notice of the singing-fish of Batticalon, there is a tradition current along that coast which, though replete with the fiction peculiar to Oriental peoples, is so prettily conceived and fashioned as to be worth rescuing from the oblivion too often the fate of unwritten legends. The ancient literature of the East, preserved through many centuries in books of dried palm-leaves, deals copiously with the larger events of early times, when native kings were numerous, powerful, and wealthy. In these well-preserved records of bygone ages are recitals of battles fought, of cities founded, of palaces and temples built, of public works executed; but they contain no trace of domestic life, and but few memorials of family incidents. Tradition has taken much of these matters