

"Quite early the next morning I was awoke by the doctor touching me on the shoulder.

"'Balmat,' said he, 'is this not odd? The birds are singing.'

"'Not so odd, neither,' replied I, 'considering it is broad daylight.'

"He groaned and fell back, saying, 'Broad daylight, and I can see nothing! It seems I cannot open my eyes.'

"I looked at him: his eyes were wide open. He was stone-blind.

"I got him to the foot of the hill, and there we were met by the villagers, and my Martha—yes, my Martha now, for I had won fame and her, and I knew that nothing would ever part us again in this world. Her eyes were red and swollen with tears, and as she looked at me and her father they gushed out and wetted her cheeks. Indeed, many of the villagers wept also; but I thought it was with joy at seeing us safe down among them again: when I looked in the glass I discovered that they were moved by compassion

for me, my face being quite terrible to look on. I could hardly believe it was my own face I saw. My eyes were bloodshot, my lips were blue, my cheeks were quite black, save for the blood that trickled down from the cracks in my face and lips. For a long while I could not open my eyes fully in the daylight, and had to sit in darkened rooms.

"But that was all nothing. I had ascended Mont Blanc, and done what no other man in all the world from the beginning of time had done, and I had won my wife, my dear Martha. She came every day to me, bringing me newspapers from all parts of the world, and England and America as well, telling how I, Jacques Balmat, had ascended Mont Blanc. That was enough to make me forget all my troubles.

"Dr. Paccard recovered his sight in about seven weeks; but he was never tempted to ascend again, nor did he ever make fun of me as he had. In fact, I think every one was proud of me, as indeed they should be. And I married my own Martha, and her father was pleased."

FRANK BARRETT.

A HEALTHY HEART.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



NEED I say anything of the vast importance of the subject I have chosen for this month's paper? It is one of vital interest to us all. It will be more my purpose, however, to give my readers such advice as, if followed, will tend to the maintenance of a healthy heart, and consequently to long life, than to enter with any degree of minuteness into the various diseases to which the organ is subject. To do so, indeed, would occupy ten times more space than I have at my

command, and probably be more productive of evil than good; for common as, I am sorry to say, heart disease is now-a-days, being generally the result of the whirligig life which we live, and the earnest struggle for existence which we see everywhere around us, many, very many people imagine they are labouring under this complaint, who are entirely in the wrong.

It might be well then, before going any further, to say a word or two on what medical men term functional* derangement of the heart. Out of the many causes of this complaint, I shall only mention a few of the most frequent: eating or drinking to excess, indigestion, a lowered tone of the nervous system, which may have been brought on from worry, care, over-work, or over-excitement, even although the excitement may have

been pleasurable, such as the gaieties of the London season. The commonest symptoms are some feelings of distress about the region of the heart; this may be simply a fluttering, a distressed, weary dragging, palpitation, or positive pain. There may also be, especially in those subject to gout or rheumatism, dyspepsia of an acid character, with painful eructations.

And now as to the remedy for functional derangement of the heart. That must lie very much with the patient himself, for I cannot tell the habits of my readers' lives. I can only give general advice. The sufferer must try to find out the cause, and he should lose no time in doing so, for the functions of the heart cannot long be interfered with, without causing illnesses, which will assuredly lead to death—illnesses either in the heart itself or in some distant organ. Is he leading an irregular life? Is he eating or drinking to excess? I have had men come to me over and over again and say, "Doctor, I have such distressing sensations all about my heart, and at times I have painful cramps all over. What can it be?"

And knowing well the over-fast lives they led, I have answered bluntly but quietly—

"Chronic alcoholic blood-poisoning. If more stimulant than the body can 'consume' or 'work off'—take whatever verb suits your belief—is imbibed, the over-plus affects the quality of the blood—*i.e.*, poisons it. Well then, although the heart is an organ which supplies blood to the whole body, it also partakes of what it gives; it supplies itself, and if then the muscular walls of this vital organ be nourished with inferior blood, can you wonder that it grieves, and that you feel strange and painful sensations in and around it? And as to the cramps, they proceed from the nerves supplied to the different muscles under their

* Called functional to distinguish it from organic or real disease of the heart.

command. They are merely complaining very loudly, that it is impossible to do their duty properly on the inferior blood supplied them.

Cramp is, I believe, usually caused by a deficiency in the supply of blood, but I have seen many marked and most painful cases of what I might term "drunkard's cramp," in tall, muscular, full-blooded men. But, oh! if this cramp should attack the heart and *angina pectoris* should occur without a moment's warning, with its fearful suffocating agony of pain, and its terrible sense of impending death, how the patient is to be pitied!

But from almost whatever cause functional cardiac derangement be brought on, I am happy to be able to give the patient the blessed medicine, *hope*, and I say to him, "From all this suffering and uneasiness in the region of your heart, you think you have real organic heart disease?" The answer is generally, "I feel sure I have;" on which I retaliate, "Then I'm just as sure you haven't; for, strange as it may seem, those that have the real complaint very often know nothing about it, neither they nor their friends, till the fatal moment."

Thus, then, I give my patient hope, I let him know that he is not doomed to an early and sudden death—I mean my patient on paper, yourself for instance, reader, for the stethoscope would be the quickest way of getting at the truth.

The treatment consists in not only allaying the painful symptoms, but in removing the cause, and endeavouring by special tonics to restore strength to the system. Some such cordial as the following may be given: of the tincture of *assafœtida*, one ounce; spirits of chloroform, half an ounce; carbonate of ammonia, a dram and a half, in as much camphor-water as will make sixteen ounces. The dose is one or two tablespoonfuls twice or thrice a day. A good warm cordial this, too, for hysterical or nervous people to have in the house, to take a little of when feeling tired and languid. I do not approve by any means of promiscuous medicine-taking, but a cordial like the above is less pernicious to the health than brandy is. As an application to the chest, when the pain is great or the palpitation distressing, have a belladonna plaister, which any chemist can make you. When an aperient is wanted, take a draught of tincture of rhubarb, with some compound tincture of gentian in it, and a little sal volatile to warm it.

You cannot begin taking tonics until the bowels are regular, and the secretions right (the warm aperient taken occasionally will do that), nor if any irritability of the stomach be present. This may be subdued by doses of five grains thrice a day of the trisnitrate of bismuth and a little laurel-water, the dose of which is 5 to 30 drops; but this is a poison, so ought to be diluted by a chemist, and the doses labelled. The best tonic is perhaps the nitro-hydrochloric acid, with tincture of nux vomica and some warm flavouring. This mixture should also be compounded by a chemist, and may be taken three times a day, and persevered in for a time. But all the medicines in the world will not remove functional derangement of the heart unless combined with regular living, good exercise in the open air,

a mind as free from care and worry as possible, and temperance *in all things*. The diet should be generous but easily digested, with milk, cream, eggs, fish, game, &c., a due allowance of stale bread, but little vegetables, and no pastry or cheese, unless of the latter a morsel half the size of a walnut. Pepsine is invaluable where the digestion is weak, and if any stimulant be needed, use it as you would water a tender plant, very little at a time, and take it only with meals.

The exercise should be moderate, and not on hilly ground. Over-exercise and too much athleticism often induce hypertrophy, or enlargement of the heart; the organ, being supplied during training with quantities of pure blood, increases in size, as does the arm of a blacksmith. If it continues in this condition it will propel more blood to distant organs of the body than can be consumed; we should then expect vertigo, or giddiness, difficulty of breathing, headache, &c., and even in some cases dropsy itself. He who would maintain a healthy heart, then, ought to choose such exercise as brings into play almost every muscle instead of any one class of muscles in the body, and in the use of this he must be temperate and avoid what are called spurts.

There is no greater enjoyment than that of climbing high mountains and gazing at beautiful landscapes, and perhaps rolling clouds, and even thunderstorms, far beneath you. It is healthy exercise too, and the sense of exhilaration one feels on a breezy hill-top is exceedingly pleasant. Climbing mountains, too, gives a certain moral training, teaching us how to overcome the difficulties that, whether high or low, we all meet in life. But let the weakly beware. It is almost madness, it is folly at least, for a man to rush right away from the desk, where he has been drudging away for perhaps a year, and attempt scaling the lofty hills of Scotland or Switzerland. He may manage to get through such a holiday fairly, it is true, but on the other hand, he may so stretch the right side of the heart as to make himself an incurable invalid for life. Climbing hills requires practice and training like everything else. The breathlessness felt on going up a steep hill or mountain-side is but the complaining of an over-burdened heart.

People who fancy they have weak hearts should try never to give way to emotional feelings. I know a lady who for this very reason avoids reading any of the horrors we find in our daily newspapers.

It is a terribly busy world we live in, and a terribly worrying one, and both hurry and worry weaken the heart. No one—but especially do I address this warning to the weakly—should hurry to catch his train. How many times during the year do we not hear of people dropping down dead shortly after entering railway carriages? As to worry, there is always care in business, but the cultivation of regular habits in every branch thereof would tend to ward off long seasons of anxiety of mind, very prejudicial to the heart. As an illustration of hurry causing death in those with weakly hearts, I may cite the case of my poor friend, Dr. P. W. A man had entered his house to call him to a case of some importance a short distance off, where his services

were required immediately. He was speedily in the street and hurrying rapidly along. My friend was even talking and laughing when he suddenly reeled and fell. He had been apparently a healthy man; the only

thing he ever complained about was an occasional slightly intermittent pulse. There is a lesson to be learned from his case, and also from some others, about which I hope to say a few words in a future paper.



"THE GALLANT LUGGER NOW HAS PREST BEFORE THE FRESH'NING WIND."

THE FISHER-BARK.

LOOK, baby, look ! at daddy's bark
 Now gliding out to sea ;
 She sails in sunshine and in dark
 For love of you and me.
 For love of you and me, my dear,
 She ploughs the stormy wave ;
 Then, baby, clap your hands, and cheer
 For father good and brave.

With every rope and spar astrain,
 As if she felt a joy
 In getting off to work again
 For you and me, sweet boy,
 The gallant lugger now has prest
 Before the fresh'ning wind
 With outspread wings, and does her best
 To leave the land behind.

Swift as the sea-bird makes its track,
 Towards the western sky
 She flies ; but, ah ! she'll soon be back
 To her old nest hard by :
 A nook in that rough rocky bay
 That saw her earliest hours,
 And sent her on her ocean way,
 Wreathed, like a bride, in flowers.

She may not look so gay and trim
 As when she left the slips,
 But very dear to me and him
 Hath grown that best of ships,
 Now speeding to the daring task
 That brings the bread, my love,
 Which day by day we humbly ask
 Of Him who rules above.

JOHN GEO. WATTS.