



ON GETTING UP IN THE MORNING.

HERE is no doubt that if an instrument could be invented to indicate the various degrees of difficulty people experience in getting out of bed in the morning, it would have to be graduated from zero up to a very high figure indeed. Many persons know absolutely nothing of any difficulty of the sort ; they turn out of bed with the alacrity of a bird, glad even that it is time to get up ; while others have to fight a battle more or less severe the moment they open their eyes every morning.

We purposely describe the difficulty as that of *getting out of bed*, because it is to a very great extent a mechanical difficulty. When a man was once rallying another on his weakness in this respect, he said, "Why don't you make up your mind to it?" The reply was, "Make up my mind to it! oh, that is easy enough ; I have done that a hundred times ; but what I can't manage is to make up my *body* to it." It was a facetious way of putting the matter, but it really did exactly describe the main difficulty.

A person goes to bed with his mind fully made up to rise in the morning at the proper time, whenever that may be. He knows very well he ought to do it, and that it will be better for him in every way if he does do it. Entrenched in this virtuous resolution he falls asleep : but when he awakes a dull sense of inertness weighs him down, and if he stops to *think* about getting up he finds that inclination has usurped the place of reason, and that if there is one thing under the sun more ridiculous than another, it is the idea of getting out of bed just then. The contrast between resolution at night and impotence in the morning is not always so vivid as this, for some are not very much in earnest in their resolution, and others are not so heavily weighted with incapacity ; but the very extremity of the case may serve to bring out the better the force of the distinction drawn by the lazy man, that the real difficulty is to make up your *body* to it—in fact, to get out of bed. Resolution is like the powder in the loaded cannon : it will propel the ball if only it take fire, but if the powder become damp the ball will never move an inch. And there is something in the mists of night that seems to damp the resolution of a good many, so that it hangs fire, and they remain in bed when they really intended to get up. So powerless often is resolution at the waking hour, that we have heard of a man whose determination to get up was so decided, that he contrived a machine to pull the clothes off him at a certain hour, actually getting out of bed only to put them back and get in again.

The hour of rising has not so much to do with the difficulty as is commonly thought. No doubt when the mornings are dark, and cold, and dreary, the difficulty is increased, and to some people it is inex-

pressibly disagreeable to turn out of a warm bed into the chill of a wintry atmosphere. But nevertheless we are very much disposed to think that where there is any difficulty of the kind, it is in the main the same whether we get up at six o'clock or nine. There is a plunge to be made at last even by the most inveterate lie-abed, and the only reason why he gets up at all is because he feels he *must* make the plunge. Early rising is indispensable to some, and even when not absolutely necessary is healthful and in many ways advantageous, but not to all. Some may get up all their life at a later hour than others, and be just as healthy and fulfil their duties quite as well as if they got up earlier. Every one must judge for himself when it would be best for him to rise. We cannot lay down any particular hour, and say that all without exception are bound to get up then. Nor must it be forgotten that the hour of rising must be compared with the hour of going to bed. Many do a longer day's work than others who are out of bed before them : whether they would do a better one if they both rose and went to bed earlier, is a question that cannot be answered with authority. So that we will leave undetermined the hour when we ought to get up, and simply take for granted—what is undeniable—that there *is* a time for each of us ; and what we say is, that whatever that time be, whether earlier or later, if we experience any difficulty in the matter, the best way to overcome it is, not to give oneself time to think about it, but instantly and mechanically to get out of bed.

This may seem a truism, and it would indeed be nothing better if we meant to speak of it as an infallible specific for the difficulty in question. What we mean rather is to point out that, in trying to overcome the difficulty, the nearer we *approximate* to a mechanical act the more likely we shall be to succeed. There must of course be an effort of the will, but it should be an instantaneous effort, there should be no deliberation on the subject, no time given to meditate on the propriety or otherwise of getting up, no going over in our mind the pros and cons of the question. Directly we begin to think we are almost sure to lie abed, but when we refuse to think we are much more *likely* to get up.

The weakness of resolution which some experience in their waking moments, is not unfrequently to be accounted for by the fact that they are then almost incapable of thinking except in a distorted way. It may appear ridiculous to those healthy bird-like risers who invariably awake with mind and body alike completely invigorated ; but it is certain that a good many people awake with a sense of weariness, a beclouded mind, a feeling of being only half alive, which, although their sleep may have been sound and have really done them good, and although they lose these feelings as soon as they are fairly astir, yet on first opening their eyes render them unfit to think at all. Any motion to rise is sure to be negatived if *put to the vote* ; the only way in which resolution can help them

is by being concentrated in an immediate *unthinking* effort of will.

This mental phenomenon of the waking moments of not a few who are really not lazy, nor even indolent, is no doubt owing in great measure, if not altogether, to sluggishness of system, which may be either constitutional or the result of temporary indisposition. It may cause a life-long difficulty in regular rising, or only one that troubles us for a season, and which a judicious *alterative* might entirely do away with. The infirmity of the body acts like a weight upon the mind, so that a person is not quite himself, as if under the influence of a narcotic, and he can no more reason himself out of it than he can reason himself out of a head-ache; the only thing to be done is to act in spite of it and get out of bed.

It is a way of overcoming the difficulty that is more practicable than it may at first seem, and amounts to this, that it is far easier for some to get out of bed without a moment's delay than it is to do so deliberately, just as it may be more easy to take a fort by sudden assault than by regular siege. And so the advice we give to every one who finds it hard work to get up in the morning, but wants to master the weakness, is—make up your *body* to it, and turn out *instantly* without a moment's parley.

Only the strike for freedom, if it is really to emancipate us from the bondage of uncertain rising, must be invariably persisted in till it is formed into a habit. The regularity of rising is much more important than the hour when we rise, for he who has so far mastered the matter as to get up punctually can get up at whatever hour he thinks right. Spasmodic rising, however early, followed by lie-abed mornings is an irregular beating of the pendulum that will never make the clock of business go as it might or ought. It is of little use to get up by fits and starts, like the French marshal, who used to display superhuman activity for a season, and then lie in bed for a week together. What we want rather is to imitate the great duke, his master, who rose with machine-like regularity, and who said, when some one remarked of his narrow iron bedstead that there was no room to turn round on it: "When it's time to turn round it is time to turn *out*."

Those who have been accustomed from their earliest days thus to "turn out" think nothing of it; the only

difficulty to them would be to keep in bed when their time for getting up has come. Habit reverses difficulties; and so the miller, whose ear is used to the noise of the water-wheel close by, that would keep any one else awake half the night, only wakes when the wheel happens to stop. And this habit of regularity in rising is so much more easily acquired in early life, that young people cannot be too earnestly persuaded to keep it up—as regards, at least, the regularity—when they leave home to go forth into the world, and not imagine, as too many do, that it is freedom then to be unpunctual in the morning. But though this, like every other good habit, is more difficult to be acquired the older we get, because then we have to unlearn as well as learn, it is never too late to acquire it. Habit, however, it must become, or the attempt will only be an uncomfortable struggle of little real advantage. But let the resolution be come to, never once, under any consideration, to fail in the mechanical impulse to rise at the hour fixed on. Let no allowance be made, except under special circumstances (and the rarer these the better), for later hours at night. Let this be adhered to as the broad, honest, matter-of-fact rule of our waking life, and it will be found that, though not by any means easy, it is the easiest and the surest way to master the difficulty, if difficulty there be, and to attain the liberty of those who are free to get out of bed when they know they ought.

Such liberty is no inconsiderable gain to any one. It is hard to say that any one is the man he might be without it. Granted that we may do well in life in spite of weakness and infirmity of purpose on this particular point, it yet remains more than probable that we should do better still if we had it not. The folding of the hands in sleep for just one half-hour every morning makes up, as we may easily calculate, a loss of fifteen days of twelve hours each in the year. Besides, who can tell what depreciation in sterling worth of character is secretly and continuously worked by not acting up to what conscience says is right? With all allowance for human frailty, and with full consciousness that none are perfect, the truth must be admitted that it is not good, nor sensible, nor thoroughly manly to be hurried in duty, and have precious time shortened, and begin the day by being beaten, because we cannot *get out of bed!*

