

"Although this report be true, it is nevertheless possible that the mine may recover its former prosperity. You remember I explained how it had once before been discarded because of its seeming exhaustion. We cannot judge truly the state of the case until we have received the engineer's report and the opinion of scientific men."

But Major Godfroy heard nothing. All was lost; and from the grave his dear friend seemed to say to

him, "I trusted my wife, my child, and my fortune to your care, and you have suffered my wife to be murdered; you have thrown away my money; and nothing now remains for you to lose but my child."

"No," he answered aloud, in a voice terrible in its intensity, "Doris is not lost, and my trust shall not be wholly betrayed!"

END OF CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

LONG LIFE: HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



"CUI BONO?" is the question which will rise readily enough to the lips of many of my readers, as soon as they glance at the heading which I have chosen for my present paper. "*Cui bono?*" Why should we endeavour to prolong our lives? Death will come sooner or later, and what matters it whether it be a hundred days or a hundred years hence? Will it not be all the same in the long run? "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." "Give us a short life and a merry." This is the song of some, but such a way of reasoning is, to say the least of it, a very thoughtless one.

A reckless method of living is a suicidal one, ay, and it tends to suicide of the very cruellest kind. We term it madness in a man to lay violent hands on himself, and *suddenly* to crush out the life that God implanted in his breast. Shall we designate as anything less than folly, then, the living in a manner likely not only to shorten our lives, but to bring about premature or early old age, decrepitude, slow but sure decay, and death?

"'Twas thought," says one, "by ancient sages,
That love of life increased with years
So much, that in our latter stages,
When pains wax sharp and sickness rages,
The greatest love of life appears."

The poet is right, or rather, I should say, the ancient sages were right, if they referred to people who lived careless, reckless lives; for, as a rule, the very persons who have belonged to the "short life and merry" school of thought are the least willing at last to succumb to the inevitable. Such people, to use a homely illustration, seem to me to draw a bill on their existence, payable at a certain date, for value received; but when the time is up, and Nature presents the bill for settlement, they are precious unwilling to meet it, and begin to think that after all they would have been far better off if they had not drawn the bill at all.

I can put the lesson I want to convey before the reader in another shape. Imagine, then, a magician, whom we may call Remorse, taking a walk along a highway—or a by-way, for that matter—with the intention of finding and conversing with some one well up in years, who, in the days of his prime, lived as if

life were a thing that could never be spent. He does not go far before he finds one, you may be sure. See, yonder he comes, crawling on a crutch.

"Good morning," says the magician.

"Ah! good morning to you," says Some One, glad, with the garrulity of advancing infirmity, to have anybody to speak to.

"You seem to be very old," says the magician.

"Well, sir—no, sir, I'm not so very old by any means. I—"

"Oh, I see," says Remorse, interrupting him, "you lived a bit fast in your younger days, did you?"

"No, sir, not so very fast either."

"Somewhat carelessly, though?"

"Well, sir, the truth is, I just took life very much as I found it. I never did have much thought for the morrow."

"And that accounts for your present condition—for your debility, and that crutch," says Remorse, "doesn't it?"

"I'd be slow to believe that, sir," says Some One.

"Anyhow," says the magician Remorse, "you had a good time of it, hadn't you?"

"Well," replies Some One, with a laugh, "I dare say I had my fling, sir."

"And the recollection," says Remorse, "makes you smile."

"Ah!" says Some One, "I don't know that it is a very pleasant one, sir; only people must get old, and it is, maybe, just as well as it is."

"But people have no right," says Remorse, "to get old before their time. Now if I could roll back the scroll of years, if I could give you youth again, and could then induce you to live rationally and thoughtfully, here is what you would be at your present age, instead of what you now are. Look into this magic crystal, and tell me what you see. I'll hold your stick."

"Why, I see myself, sir, and still it isn't myself."

"Are you leaning on a crutch?"

"That I'm not. I'm walking straight and briskly enough."

"Seems there to be care on your brow?"

"Never a shadow of it, sir, I'm looking as bright and happy as a lark; but so is everything around me, even the grass and the flowers look more pleasant, and the sky bluer in the crystal than out of it."

"Ah! but," says the magician, "the crystal only represents yourself and all your surroundings as they might have been. Had you taken care of yourself while yet young or in your prime, your life would have been a more solid and happy one, the time gone by more pleasant to look back upon; you could have done much good in life, and made more people happy, the very thoughts of having done so would have blessed and cheered you now, your old age would be calm and tranquil, and your death in all probability painless. But there, I cannot give you back your youth, so take your crutch and crawl along."

Now, reader, here is something worth knowing and remembering: the average duration of the life of the people in the British Islands has of late years greatly increased, in the direct ratio of the spread of science and enlightenment, especially as regards the laws of hygiene and sanitation. This fact concerns both you and me individually; we have not only the power of death within our reach, but we have, to a great extent, the power of prolonging our lives. Living by rule, and obeying nature's simple laws, may seem very irksome to people at first, but doing so soon becomes a habit, and a blessed habit, and one that tends to happiness, to comfort, and to length of days.

A great deal might be said about the benefits of regularity in our modes and ways of living. As a proof of the beneficiality of regular living, I may instance the fact that old people who have once settled down in a kind of groove of life, if I may so call it, cannot be unsettled therefrom even for a few days without danger to health and life itself. They may have, perhaps, their regular time for getting up in the morning, certain methods of ablution, certain kinds and qualities of food and drink, certain hours for taking these, certain times for rest, exercise, and recreation, and a hundred other things, which, taken separately, may seem but trifles, but taken in the aggregate make up their lives, and they know and feel that they must not be unsettled. The wheels of life will run long in grooves, but soon run out over rough irregular roads. Habits, whether good or bad, are easily formed when one is young, but when one gets up in years it is terribly difficult and oftentimes dangerous to set them aside. Therefore, I say to the young—*ay*, and to the middle-aged—*study*, if you would live long, to be regular in your habits of life in every way, and let your regularity have a good tendency.

Be regular in your hours of getting up in the morning and going to rest at night, but you cannot easily be so unless you are regular in your light-of-day life. The simple fact that you lie down for so many hours out of the twenty-four, does not prove that you have secured that necessity of life, a good night's rest. A little preparation of both body and mind is needed to enable us to enjoy sound and refreshing sleep, and so be fortified by morning to struggle successfully with the events of another day. Do not forget that during sleep the brain is in a comparatively bloodless condition; but excitement causes a flow of blood to the capillaries of that vital organ, and if you retire to

rest before it be toned down, you will be little likely to fall into a refreshing slumber. Indeed, it will in all probability be just the reverse; the very endeavour to sleep will banish it effectually for hours, if not for the whole night; there will be war between mind and body, and the latter will assuredly come off second-best. They sleep best who have neither worry nor care to annoy them; but one should try to get into a habit of being able to lay off care with one's office coat, and devoting the evening to reading or any kind of calm enjoyment. But what are termed "night-caps," or soothing drinks, should never be had recourse to. They are generally of a spirituous nature and composition, and therefore they are narcotics, and should not be needed for healthful sleep. They never did and never could tend to longevity.

There is a great and intimate connection between brain and stomach, chiefly through the medium of the pneumogastric nerve, hence heavy suppers are not conducive to healthful sleep. I do not believe, of course, in going supperless to bed, but the last meal should be a light one, and certainly an easily-digested one; a man is not in actual health if he needs a heavy supper to cause him to sleep. I would not advise such a person to purchase an annuity, for obvious reasons. A hearty supper will no doubt induce sleep, but it is not sound, blissful, child-sleep. It is turgid, brain-puffing, bloated sleep. A sow eats a hearty supper, and heavy slumber follows; a boa-constrictor swallows an ox, and goes to sleep for a fortnight. Neither animal is much to be admired. However, what I wish to impress upon you is the fact that want of good refreshing sleep is incompatible with longevity. One *must* learn to sleep well who would live long, and refreshing slumber is not to be obtained through the narcotism of night-caps or enormous suppers.

Regularity in meal-times is another thing one should study, if health would be retained and long life hoped for. I need hardly say that the food should be partaken of slowly, and that all excess or intemperance in either eating or drinking should be studiously avoided. It is very injurious to the health to stimulate the appetite at table by wines and piquant sauces. One should find one's appetite by legitimate means, before sitting down; it should be brought to the table, not manufactured there, or taken up as you do your table napkin.

As regards food some people—*ay*, but I may say very many people—oftentimes commit a grave error in this way: they sit down to table and eat whether they be hungry or not. Sit down to table by all means, but if you have little appetite, if the stomach tells you it needs rest, let it have it, and eat but very sparingly indeed.

Foods of all kinds are now-a-days shamefully and often dangerously adulterated; well, this fact, in my opinion, points the way to simplicity in diet. Constantly swallowing quantities of various kinds of animal, mineral, or vegetable impurities, must tend to shorten life in exactly the same way that breathing polluted air or drinking impure water does. The poor

suffer less perhaps from adulteration, in country places at all events, than do the rich ; in the country good bread, milk, and butter are still to be had, and scientific rascality has not yet found out the means of adulterating ox-beef, nor of manufacturing spurious new-laid eggs.

The air of large towns is, as a rule, injurious to the health, and I oftentimes wonder why so many people sleep in them. Travelling is very cheap and very rapid ; a brisk walk or a lift in an omnibus takes a business man to a railway station in a few minutes ; half an hour in a train takes him far from the harassing din and turmoil of the town, to quiet and peace, and into purity of air.

No one who cares to live long, or be healthy and happy in the years that are granted him, can afford to forget the many atmospheric causes of disease, such as sudden changes of temperature, extremes of heat and cold, wet and damp, &c. One should be always prepared for these ; to be so one must in some measure make clothing a study. Light woollen clothing should nearly always be worn ; it can seldom in this climate be safely dispensed with. If possible, the dress worn by day in summer should be changed for warmer garments before the chills of evening set in, more especially if one has to be abroad.

Regularity and prudence in taking exercise I have always enjoined. It should not be laborious, nor monotonous, certainly never fatiguing or a penance. Exercise that feels a penance is positively injurious, and I never penned a truer remark than that. Both the mind and the body should be benefited by exercise : that cannot be unless the exercise is pleasurable.

But a person not only desires to live long, but to retain his faculties and senses ; how, then, are we to do this ? why, by exercising them regularly, but never to the verge of fatigue. Take the eye-sight for instance. Would you preserve it ? Well, do not forget that to a great extent that beautiful optical instrument, the eye, is presided over by muscles which not only alter its direction, but even its focus ; the eye, then, that is used not only to read small print, but to discern objects at a distance, is the one that, apart from the dimness incidental to old age, is likely to last the longest. And the same may be said of the ear ; acuteness of hearing may be cultivated in youth by civilised beings just as it is by savages ; and where it is so, it is seldom lost till advanced old age. This species of aural exercise, however, is out of the question in towns ; but wherever one lives the organ of voice can be cultivated and exercised. Music of all kinds, and the practice of

singing especially, are great aids to health, happiness, and longevity.

Mental exercise is favourable to long life, and even under adverse circumstances a man with a well-trained mind will live longer than a lout : the former has something to fall back upon, the latter depends entirely on external impressions. I think that Euclid and algebra should be (within bounds) as much studied by girls as by boys ; even the puzzling out of anagrams, riddles, enigmas, &c., should be encouraged, and above all original composition and the writing of verses. In this latter respect English children would do well to take a lesson from the Scotch, for in Scotland one might almost say with safety that there is a "poet" in every large family. Mnemonics, as a branch of study, is greatly neglected at schools ; in fact it is a science of which, as a rule, teachers know very little.

Thousands of people annually ruin their constitutions by simply swallowing too much medicine. It may seem a strange thing for a medical man to say, but it is nevertheless a fact. It is a dangerous thing to fly with every little ailment to the medicine chest. The use of tonics, unless under medical advice, should be discountenanced ; a tonic is sharper than a two-edged sword, it is a tool that needs to be used with caution. There are now, I am sorry to see, some aerated waters coming into use which contain the strongest mineral tonics, that are apt to accumulate in the system with the most disastrous results. They should therefore not be drunk *ad libitum* as to quantity, or without guidance as to quality.

Rest should be taken with great regularity. I have already spoken of nocturnal rest, but one day in seven should be set apart for the complete rest of both body and mind. Independent of this, all who can afford it should take an annual holiday. Travelling is cheap, and two weeks or a month's relaxation from care and business cannot make a big hole in the purse of one who works well all the rest of the year and knows how to economise time. Innocent pleasure and wholesome recreation conduce to longevity. All work and no play sends Jack to an early grave. Recreation is to the mind and nervous system what sunshine is to the blood.

As a physician, I must be allowed to say just one word about the quieting, calming effect of religion upon the mind. The truly religious make by far and away the best patients, their chances of recovery from serious sickness are greater, and so is their chance of long life, simply owing to the power they have of submitting themselves quietly, yet humbly and *hopefully*, to whatsoever may be before them.

