

"Oh, Kate!" cried Alice, as the two girls left the dining-room together, "is not Roger good? Fancy taking us to London! It is actually four years since we saw the dear, dirty, dusty place. What a treat to find ourselves in a cab again!"

"My dear, I thought you liked being buried. I must talk to Roger about this scheme, for if three of us are to go to London, and spend a week in lodgings in the season, it will be very expensive."

Alice's face fell. "I wish you were not quite so dreadfully practical, Kate," she said. "You might at least have let me dream about it all to-night."

But Kate did not heed this plaintive remark.

"I am very glad, I am sure," she continued, "that Roger should have some new clothes. I was quite ashamed of his dress-coat this evening before Mr. Hathersage."

"Then you were very silly," retorted her sister; "for if Roger's clothes were perfectly threadbare, and made by the village tailor, he would always look ten times better than Mr. Hathersage."

No sooner had she made this speech than she repented of it, when she saw the smile that curled Kate's lip.

"You are a foolish child, Ally," she said patronisingly; "there is no necessity to compare the two. Roger is a big man, and Mr. Hathersage is the contrary; but both look the better for being well dressed." And Kate turned to her recipe book to continue the

engrossing occupation of copying out the Castle Courlay dishes, not vouchsafing any further rejoinder to Alice's ill-timed remark. The latter, feeling very penitent and ashamed of herself, sank down on the hearth-rug to caress Roger's dog, and thus occupied the two men found them when they shortly afterwards entered the drawing-room. Mr. Hathersage placed himself at once by Kate's side, while Roger crossed over to Alice.

"Second post letters and *Times*, Ally," he said. "John has just brought them, and reports that it is quite fine."

"Give me the births, deaths, and marriages, Roger, and you may keep the rest," responded his sister, and immediately buried herself in that interesting register of the three great events of life.

A sudden exclamation roused her brother from the perusal of his letters, and made Kate and Mr. Hathersage look up from their low-toned conversation.

"Oh, Roger! Kate! do you know Mrs. Everard is dead? Listen: 'On the 3rd instant, at Tranmere Castle, Emily Anne, the wife of Colonel Everard, aged 43.' Is it not sad?"

Roger had looked up from a black-bordered letter he held in his hand. He was very grave. "I, too, have heard of a death," he said. "Henry Champneys, our cousin, has been drowned while bathing."

END OF CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

## LIFE AT HIGH PRESSURE.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



SIX hundred years of age! Six hundred!" I could not help repeating this to myself as I sat on the trunk of this fallen monarch of the forest. It was a giant oak that had succumbed at last to the force of circumstances, in the shape of weeks on weeks of wet, succeeded by a gale of wind from the north-east. Six hundred years of age! Here

was food for thought. When this mighty tree was but a sapling in the now almost forgotten past, Edward I. was on the throne; what wars and revolutions have raged and passed since then! What generations of human beings have been born, lived and loved, grown old and died in that period of time! But these things affected not the sturdy old tree; secure in its strength, it heeded nothing—nor summer's heat nor winter's cold, nor the wildest blasts that could rage around it. Ah! it had one foe though—time, to which every

created thing must succumb at last. And so it had fallen.

Might there not, I mused, or may there not be some analogy betwixt the life of forest trees and that of human beings? This particular tree I found, somewhat to my surprise, had stood not on level ground, but on a little eminence or knoll; but at no great distance was another hill very much higher. This latter, no doubt, gave it friendly shelter in the days of its youth, until its stem got so strong and its roots so fast in the ground, that even the branches it now extended skywards, higher even than the sheltering hill, had not in their leverage the power to bring about the destruction it seemed to court and yet defy.

The soil on which this great tree had grown and flourished was stony and hard, but this had been rather in its favour than otherwise. Figuratively speaking, it had to work for its living; it had to send its roots spreading out in every direction to seek for the sustenance it did not find close at hand, and those roots had been its chief support mechanically as well as vitally. So nourished and so upheld, with fibres as tough and hard as hammered steel, no wonder it had existed so long. Why could it not live thus for



ever? one might ask. But there is no "for ever" for anything in this world. Regular though the mode of living of this giant tree had been, with its winter's sleep and its summer's life of activity, its very size and weight had become in the end a burden to it, and its branches waxed brittle, and some of them snapped before the wind. Then damp or wet found its way into the heart of its stem, its woody skeleton began to decay and wax fragile, a decay that ended in canker at the roots, and now destruction was a mere matter of time, and could not long be delayed. Decay at the roots of a tree is equivalent to dyspepsia in a human being, it means loss of power of nutrition. Little marvel then that gangrene of its mighty branches attacked this oak-tree, and that, enfeebled in stem and weakened at root, the soddened soil withholding its former support, it failed to withstand the shock of that wintry gale—failed once and for aye.

But this tree had lived to a goodly old age, and when we consider everything we cannot be surprised that it did. It certainly was not nurtured in the lap of luxury, as we have seen, but it received shelter in the years of its youth, and it seemed to have found out early the advantages of contributing to its own support. Indeed in every way the life of this fallen tree had been allegorical of that of some human being who has lived long and wisely, and has passed at last peacefully away.

But it may be said that the very longest life is but a short and troubled dream. Short, I grant you, but troubled it need seldom be, if one would only live more in accordance with nature's laws. There is a philosophy of living which the wise do well to study. To what end? To the end that our lives may be long? By no means; but to the end that we may live healthfully while we do live; that we may live and at the same time feel that we are living. Why should life be the exciting game it is to thousands of us? Why should the days and weeks and years fly so swiftly over our heads, while absorbed in this game of life? Why should we in the excitement of it almost forget what we are playing for, or at all events give ourselves no time to pause and consider whether what we are aiming at be worth the precious time and health we are losing in trying to gain it? Do not thousands of us throw away the very best years of our lives in trying to win for ourselves wealth to support us in an old age that seldom comes, an old age the very possibility of which has been precluded by the high-pressure mode of life we have lived?

The ambition to become wealthy, or to gain honour and glory, cannot be said to be objectionable or hurtful, so long as it does not take entire possession of a man's mind to the exclusion of other and probably better feelings: when it does so it simply becomes a disease, a mental ailment, that reacts upon the body and shortens life itself. The ambition, on the other hand, to gain for ourselves an honourable competency and the power to give a fair start in life to those who shall live after us, and in whose veins our own blood runs, is a most desirable one, and one too that really tends to length of days by keeping the mind health-

fully occupied. The over-ambitious man, however, is just as much a mono-maniac as the miser, and if madness and folly can be combined in the same individual, he is also a fool, for he is ruining his health and shortening his days for the sake of others. He will depart this life most likely at a comparatively early age, and departing, leave behind him never a footstep in the sands of time, and probably those that spend and scatter the wealth that he has made will be the very first to forget him.

The life that most of our business men lead in towns is one of high pressure in the truest sense of the term, and it may reasonably be doubted whether two out of every ten of them are in good, *i.e.*, enjoyable health. They have little time to think about such a thing as present health. They "worry through one way or another," and some of these days, most of those I speak to tell me, they mean to go in for "a good spell of rest and enjoyment." Now, they are not trying to deceive themselves when they speak thus, but there is one thing they forget, namely, that even if they could afford the time they would hardly get their brains to accommodate themselves to the long-dreamt-of spell of rest and enjoyment. It is as impossible for a hard-working man of business to settle his mind to rest to order, as it is for a person to settle himself to sleep immediately after he has undergone a period of excitement, whether pleasurable or the reverse. And I have known, and no doubt the reader has known, men to whom the annual holiday was a mere drag and a weariness, and who were not above confessing, if asked, that they really would not be happy until back in town again. Now I do not scruple to affirm that this incapability of enjoying rest is in itself a symptom of an unnatural condition of brain, which, though medical men out of mere politeness do not designate by the name of disease, is nevertheless very near akin to it. It is not every one who makes a fortune in business, large enough for him to retire contentedly upon while still comparatively young, and there are very few of those who do that retire with any capacity for enjoyment beyond the chimerical pleasure of money-making.

Constant work at high pressure soon wears out the best machinery that ever was made or invented, but some people seem to forget the analogy betwixt the human body and a piece of machinery. Yet it exists nevertheless. Continual hard work will wear out either man or machinery. Yes, repair is not impossible, but will either be as good again as it might have been? Putting new cloth into an old garment is not the best policy.

"I am going to retire from business," I heard a man say not long since, "in about five years more; I shall have by that time made enough for me, and I'll not be an old man then; fifty-five isn't old."

No, a person who is only fifty-five cannot be said to be old in years, but if he has lived a life of high pressure he may be very old in reality, for age is never to be computed by the number of years a man has lived, but by the strength of his constitution.

Now, however much hard manual labour may tell



upon the health and constitution, it has not half the wearing, ageing power that brain-work has. A manual labourer when his day's toil is finished is a king in many ways compared with the brain-worker—when the tools of the former are laid aside for the day, care and trouble as a rule lie down beside them; but the phantom of his toils follows the latter home, and seats itself on the pillow on which he tries to rest his hot and weary head.

Well, here I am, a medical man, railing and caviling against the evils of life at high pressure, that I see going on everywhere around me, and the very fact of my doing so gives my readers the right to ask me if I have any remedy to suggest for the mischief I deplore. Labour, I reply, is the common lot of all, and more often a blessing than anything else; and ambition, unless carried to the border-land of mania, is a thing to be encouraged rather than condemned; and I have but one word of advice to sound in the ears of those who do not wish to throw away their lives, but to live comfortably and rationally for a reasonable length of time, and that word is "Conserve." Conserve health while we have it, conserve the constitution nature has given us, and we can only do this by obeying nature's laws.

Railways have done an immeasurable amount of good, and they do not a little harm as well. Many business people take advantage of their speed to live in the suburbs, or even the country itself. If they have some twenty or thirty miles, or say a journey of an hour and a half—for the time occupied in going to and from the stations must be considered—every morning and evening, and this for five days of the

week, I doubt whether their country life is very advantageous to the health. At all events, it would be much more so if they had not so often to hurry to catch the train. This hurry entails a considerable degree of anxiety almost every morning, it prevents the discussion of a comfortable breakfast, it would prevent the comfortable assimilation or digestion of that meal, even should it be partaken of. Then there is more hurry at the journey's end, and a man who hurries is never fresh. But if a good substantial meal were enjoyed about midday, the evil effects of a light and hasty breakfast would hardly be felt. Yet business people have seldom time for any such luxury, and so the customary snack of luncheon is swallowed. Indeed their lives are hurry all day long, in order, they will tell you, to keep abreast of the times. Stomach, brain, heart, and liver all suffer from such a method of life. Some few may make up for the wear and tear and toil of the day by rest in the evening and a good dinner, followed by refreshing sleep. It is to be hoped that these men awake in the morning feeling fresh and well-slept, quite ready for the bath and ready for breakfast, and eager to begin the day's work again; if they do not feel so, the "good dinner" of the evening before had something about it of the nature of a delusion.

Too many people now-a-days complain of a feeling of almost constant tiredness. They ought to take this as a warning; if they do not, but pooh-pooh such a symptom and think it only natural, they must not be surprised if a break-up of the system comes before it was expected, and there is no cure for this.

## A VISIT TO THE WORCESTER PORCELAIN WORKS.



WHEREVER habits of taste and refinement have found their way, Worcester china has followed in the train. Yet it may be that even some with whom the collection of English porcelain is a passion, are im-

perfectly acquainted with the whole process of its manufacture. It is competent, however, for any visitor to Worcester, who may be interested in the matter, to present himself at the works and inspect them personally. In return for the sum of sixpence he will be provided with a small hand-book, and conducted over the principal workshops by an intelligent guide.

But it is not everybody who can visit the old city, and some may be willing to make the inspection by proxy through the medium of this paper.

In the short walk down from the railway station to the works, we may as well recall one or two facts in connection with the making of porcelain.

The Worcester Works were established in the year 1751, when the productions of Bow and Chelsea had already earned a reputation. At the latter place, porcelain has been made even prior to the year 1698; at Bow its manufacture commenced a few years later. Thus Worcester started chronologically a little way behind its English rivals, and some fifty years after the first European pottery had been turned out at Dresden. At Sèvres, however, another of its great rivals, the work had not yet commenced, for the manufactory was only removed thither from St. Cloud in the year 1756.

Dr. Wall, an accomplished physician of the city, gave Worcester its new industry. To the usual acquirements of his profession he added those of an excellent artist and a skilful chemist. It was no small triumph at that time for him to produce a porcelain of the remarkable beauty he did, for neither soap-rock nor china-clay was then known to lurk within the rocks of Cornwall. By his care and skill he laid the foundation of an enterprise which has become in some measure national in its character.

And now we are at the gates of the extensive works.