TALKS WITH MY PATIENTS. 1884

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

I.—MY NERVOUS PATIENT.

LEFT my carriage at the lodge gate, instead of going in and right up to the hall door, as usual. I told my man to drive slowly up to Mrs. Smith's, deliver a message which I gave him, then return, and wait for me.

This done, I entered the grounds, and walked somewhat wearily up the long winding avenue, for I was going to see a case that I had very little pleasure in, and that I had never derived much comfort from attending. Had I been in a mood to enjoy the beauties of nature and art, I had an excellent opportunity, for both were here combined to render all the surroundings of Thibet House as pleasant and delightful as a poet's dream.

Thibet House is in the country, though not very far removed from the City, and I could very easily appropriate a column or two of the Magazine to a cursory description of its gardens, shrubberies, its lawns and rockeries and roseries. This is not my purpose, however. Suffice it to say that inside and out there is everything about the old place calculated to make one happy and contented with the world.

Alas! though, happiness cometh not from without, but from within. I had this truth to learn on that particular day, if I had never learned it before.

Mr. Montgomery was hardly a patient to my liking. [N.B.—It may be as well to mention here that in this series I shall give the real names of neither places nor persons. To do so would be obviously unfair. The reader may rely upon facts, however.] No, Mr. Montgomery was not a patient to my liking. He was not what one might call a satisfactory patient, and I was getting tired of him. I do not think it was through any fault of my own that he was not progressing favourably. I did all I could for him in the way of advice and medicine, but now, at the end of six months, I felt that, though he could well enough afford to pay my bills, I was taking his money for nothing.

I had another cause for being somewhat weary and discontented to-day: I had been up most of the night, and late hours are not conducive to serenity of temper during the day that succeeds them. Mr. Montgomery's private sitting-room was in a corner of the house, with a large French window overlooking the lawn and shrubbery. He was at the window, and saw me coming along and making my way towards the hall door. Perhaps he had been watching for me, for he opened the casement and ran down the steps to welcome me.

"Goodness, doctor!" he exclaimed, as we shook hands; "you are not walking, are you? you are surely never walking!" I assured him I was, but admitted that my brougham was not a very long way off.

"Come in, anyhow," he said. "Come in, come in."

"It is a lovely spring morning," I remarked, lingering on the lawn and gazing around me. Some parts of the lawn were all ablaze with snowdrops and crocuses, and it was quite a treat to see the dewy primroses peeping out from under the sheltering rhododendrons and laurels.

"Yes, it is a fine day; but come in," he said. "It is raw and cold."

"On the contrary," I replied—for I just felt in the mood to contradict him—"it is deliciously mild and balmy, and if you feel cold, it is because your blood is thin, and not sufficiently aërated. If you went out every day and kept yourself out for hours, as I wish you to do, you would not find it cold, I can assure you."

"And that is precisely what I mean to do," he said, "as soon as the weather gets a little more settled, and these terrible spring winds cease to blow. Come in."

We entered. He was about to close the window when I said—

"No, my friend; don't let us banish the ozone. You and I both need it, for I've been up all night with a bothering case."

"Yes," he said; "and you look pale."

"And you: how do you feel?"

"Just a little return of my old foe the ague last evening, but I think I banished that by taking a good night-cap, putting my feet in hot mustard and water, and having an extra covering on the bed. Feel flying pains all over me to-day—rheumatism, I suppose—some slight fulness in the head too, hands hot, and eyeballs tender to the light. I hear that fever is about. I sincerely hope I'm not in for anything of that kind, doctor."

"Put out your tongue. Thanks. Let me feel your arm."

"Am I worse?" he asked. "No fever—eh?"

"Night-cap fever," I replied bluntly. "The flying pains you talk about have no existence except in your own imagination. That's so, I assure you."

"Well, I dare say I shouldn't have taken the night-cap."

"No, I am sure you shouldn't have. Far better had you gone to bed a couple of hours after the slight but solid supper I ordered you, simply taking a bottle of seltzer water, with ten or fifteen grains of the bicarbonate of soda in it. You would have slept then without tossing about."

My patient had not, to outward appearance, the diathesis of a nervous man, but he was really so. He was not strong-looking, being somewhat pale, but he seldom looked anxious, and he was in fairly good condition: height about five feet eight, age nearly forty.

"That is the worst of it," he had more than once told me confidentially; "none of my friends will give me credit for being ill."

He had enjoyed the pleasures of the world to some considerable extent when a younger man, and had travelled a good deal abroad, but had never been really

intemperate, either in eating or drinking. I know that he would have told me of it had he been so, for he kept no secrets from his medical adviser. But idleness was his besetting sin. I do not know that for the six months previous to the day on which we had the serious talk which forms the subject of this paper he had done anything else but read. He reads the newspapers all the forenoon, and books, books, books all the remainder of the day, and often, I believe, late into the night.

"Well, doctor," my patient said to-day, "I've taken all your medicine, and I don't feel one whit the better."

"Yes," I replied; "you've taken all my medicine—you are very good at taking physic—but had you taken my advice as well in other and hygienic matters, I would not have been sorry had you thrown the medicine to the dogs."

"Do you say so?" he exclaimed. "Now, I'll tell you exactly how I feel——"

I certainly do not mean to plague my readers with a detail of my patient's symptoms, real and imaginary. I *had* to listen to them, and did so most patiently, although probably a great deal of what he said went in at one ear and out at the other. I sat silent for some time after he had finished.

He looked at me somewhat anxiously, then got up, and walked about the room for a few minutes, and finally re-seated himself.

"You are unusually quiet, doctor," he said at last, in an earnest tone of voice. "You don't think there is anything *very* serious the matter with me to-day?"

"I think the very worst," I said solemnly, and probably some might say mischievously, but I had only the good intention of thoroughly rousing him; even if it caused him to call in another medical man, I felt I should not be sorry.

"Your heart is affected!"

This was no exaggerated statement, for it is always the case in nervousness or in nervous debility that the heart's tone is lowered. We physicians call it functional disorder, to distinguish it from actual organic disease. It should be remembered that the heart is a muscular organ, and as liable to be below or above par as the other muscles of the body; nor, on the other hand, should it be forgotten that if nervousness becomes chronic in any patient, the heart itself is liable to become permanently affected, and life necessarily much shortened. This only shows us that a strenuous effort towards restoration of health should be at once made by any one suffering from the complaint we are now considering—a complaint which, owing to the struggle for existence going on in our midst, is every day becoming more common. A cure, as may be gleaned from the conversation that follows, is not to be looked for from medicine alone, although tonics and alteratives are of great use, but from strict adherence to the rules of hygiene, *physical* and *mental*.

"You cannot mean it!"

"It is my duty to tell you so, and I *do* mean it."

"Oh, doctor!" he gasped, seizing me by the arm above the wrist, with a grip that spoke volumes for the strength of his voluntary muscles, at all events—"Oh, doctor!—you—do not mean to say I am—going to—to—to die?"

"We must all die."

"Oh! this is awful! this is terrible!" he cried.

He gazed around him in a semi-dazed, bewildered way, as if beseeching the very chairs and sofas, and the pictures on the walls, to step in and save him from the inevitable.

"I have often," he said slowly, at last—and there were sweat-drops on his brow—"I have often said I wished to die and be done with it all, to die and be at peace, but I did not think it would come so soon, and come thus. Say, say you are but joking, doctor."

"I never joke," I replied, "on so serious a matter as disease. But I have not said you were soon to die. That you are in danger—in real danger—I cannot conceal from you. Hope I can, or could, give you, if you would but follow my advice. If you do not do so, I would infinitely prefer your calling in another physician, for I can do no more to save you."

"Do not *you* give me up, doctor. Your advice has always seemed to me so different from that of any one else. You make things so plain to me."

"Do I? Thanks. But what of it if that advice is not taken? Might I not as well talk to the cat there on the hearth-rug? You have every advantage in life; your existence might be a very happy one, if you had—excuse me—any method in your madness, if you were not entirely a slave to your own feelings, whether real or imaginary—and they are more often the latter than the former. There are tens of thousands in these islands suffering from nervousness, with functional disease of the heart, that have not half the chances of getting well that you have, although there is really no case that ever I met with that cannot be either cured or alleviated by attention to diet, avoidance of stimulants, the daily use of bath and friction with rough towels and flesh-brush, unlimited exercise in the open air, whether the weather be wet or dry, cold or hot, and *pleasant society*. Mixing with pleasant society is one of the very best means for the cure of nervousness. It takes one for the time being quite out of one's self, quite away from one's troubles and aches. It must, however, never be *exciting* society, for this sends the blood to the head, and injures the very foundation of nerve-power. What do you tell me? You never take stimulants to excess? I doubt it; for *tea*, if too much indulged in, is a dangerous stimulant, and so is coffee. A cup of milk that has been boiled and allowed to cool would often do far more good than tea. Tea-drinking grows on one, and assuredly, when it does so, it shatters the nerves as irremediably as does wine, or even spirits."

Reader, a week after I had the above talk with my nervous patient, I had the satisfaction of seeing him out of doors working in his garden; a month after this he was in every way a new man; and a still greater treat was in store for me, for in less than six months more I had the extreme satisfaction of being a kindly-welcomed guest at his WEDDING.

a student is much congratulated and envied when the governess gives her leave to draw in the Life room two days a week. Not that she will attempt the model for a long time, but to be permitted to pass freely in and out of those swinging doors without a feeling of alarm lest she should be caught; to be able to give the latest information regarding the black man with the leopard-skin round his shoulders, or the pale young woman with violet eyes, about whose beauty the *élite* rave, though the "common herd," as far as they dare express an opinion, think her rather plain, is in itself delightful.

There is a window in the staircase that overlooks this room, and much amusement used to be got from it by the passers up and down the stairs. But the authorities, finding orders that no one was to look through the window ineffectual, have so arranged a high screen that the model is only visible to persons within.

But we are lingering behind. Let us hasten after the students whose voices tell us they are down-stairs. In an apartment adjoining the dressing-room are gathered a large number seated at long tables, eating the lunch they have either brought with them or obtained from the kitchen. Round the fire is a crowd of girls eagerly watching various saucepans and kettles of a Lilliputian type, in which their own particular cookery is going on, while a second row is scarcely less anxious that room may be made for their culinary apparatus.

In the dressing-room, the girls who cannot find space in the lunch room are seated on boxes, while a few are straining their paper by the window.

One thing strikes us, and that is the great prevalence of eye-glasses and spectacles among the students. Either drawing must be bad for the sight, or the rising generation must have indifferent eyes; perhaps both these causes have something to do with it.

At the sound of a gong at one o'clock there is a general bustle, and as the students stream up-stairs to work again till three o'clock, we must take our leave of the School of Art.

TALKS WITH MY PATIENTS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

MY RECKLESS PATIENT.

IT may be said that, though intended to convey many useful lessons, and strike not a few warning notes against the folly of abjuring all allegiance to the ordinary laws of health, the case I have chosen with these ends in view is rather an extreme one. I do not deny it. It has the merit, however, of having been painted from the life, and, I am sorry to add, from the death, and it is one that has made a deep and lasting impression on my own mind, accustomed though I am to view sickness and misery in every form, and death in every phase. Moreover, the patient, long before he really was a patient, was a personal friend of my own, one at whose house I was always a welcome guest when I paid a visit to the Highlands of Scotland, on a shooting or fishing, or merely a reading excursion.

It is almost needless to say that I shall give neither the correct name of my patient nor the name of his residence. Let me call the former McBride, and his home the House o' Dunroon.

You should have seen him as I saw him first, when his feet were brushing the dew from his native heather, and you would have admitted that a better specimen of the genus Scot was seldom to be met with. Tall, brawny, bold, and handsome, his face open and manly, his figure firm and elastic, light in tread and soldierly in carriage, he looked like a man who might—bar accident—live to ninety and over. His age was about forty, although his immense beard was already tinged with grey, doubtless from exposure in the hills to all kinds of weather.

It was an early summer morning, the tops of all the mountains were still buried in cloudland, though by-and-by the mist would lift and we might then have more sun than we wanted, for we were bent upon a fishing expedition to Loch E——.

McBride came of a long line of good men and true, men who had made their mark in the proud history of their country, men who had been always soldiers and never anything else when they had the chance, and who had distinguished themselves on every well-fought battle-field in their day and generation. As for McBride himself, soldiering had not been his profession, for the simple reason that the estate had devolved on him, and he had stayed at home to attend to it. But he was first in the country at all field and athletic sports; there was not a child within a radius of fifty miles that had not heard of McBride of Dunroon; and both old men and young in the district had many wonderful tales to tell you, had you chosen to listen, of the exploits and doings of this scion of chieftains.

We had a seven-mile walk before us on this particular morning, but as interesting conversation lightens the road when people are walking, I had only to draw McBride out a little to make the time pass quickly enough. I got him—though he was no man to boast—to talk about his ancestors, and of their relations with neighbouring clans and other great Highland families, and so the loch hove in sight ere I could have averred we had walked a couple of miles.

Donald, his piper, bore on his back a goodly basket of provisions, while he hugged the pipes beneath his left arm. Donald listened to his chief's stories with as keen an interest as I did, though very likely he had heard them all before ; but in his eyes his master was indeed a hero, proving that though a man may never be a hero to his valet, he may stand in that relation to his piper.

We had a glorious day's sport, and succeeded in getting a couple of baskets of excellent trout. All went well, in fact, till nearly evening, when, while hanging on a cliff-edge, fishing-rod in hand, an immense piece of rock gave way, and McBride was precipitated into the lake beneath. The rock sank, McBride did not, or if he did he soon rose to the surface again, and after putting on his Highland bonnet, which had been floated off, he swam away round the rock, the rod between his teeth, and landed in a little bay. He had one look into his basket to see if the fish were all right, then gave himself a shake as a dog might. I got him, however, to undress and wring his clothes, which I am sure he only did out of compliment to my wishes. Then, "Donald, the quaigh!" he cried.

The "quaigh" was a little two-legged silver drinking utensil, which, he told me, he revered because it had belonged to a great-grandfather. Perhaps that was the reason he emptied it so often now, before returning it to the piper.

"Now, doctor, you'll shake your foot a bit. You'll dance. Play up, Donald."

But I positively refused. The idea of a staid respectable English physician "shaking his foot" by the side of a Highland loch, to the sound of the bagpipes! What would his patients think? But McBride had no compunctions. He danced and "flung" until the perspiration positively tumbled off his brow in big drops. Then we started for home.

Mrs. McBride was as fragile and fair a little body as her husband was manly and strong, There were two in the family, a boy and girl, these were all ; the boy took after the father in every way, the girl after the mother, and that is saying enough.

During his absence for half an hour that evening, his wife and I naturally enough got talking about McBride.

She evidently was not happy, wholly and solely because she could not get her husband to take any kind of care of himself.

"I'm sure," she said sadly, "that he will kill himself. He is very hardy and strong, but not quite so much so as he used to be. How could he be? Often and often he gets wet through and through, and he never will change his clothes. And many a time when he happens to get belated on some fishing excursion, he sleeps on the heather all night long."

"And he never suffers in any way from these indiscretions?" I inquired.

"Ah! he does, I know," she replied, "though he is far too proud to complain or admit there is anything wrong. He has the greatest respect for you, however ; perhaps a word or two of advice might be taken in good part."

I promised I would give him this word or two ; and I knew well enough they would be listened to—but be entirely unheeded.

I began my attack next day, by asking my friend and host if he felt any ill effects from his immersion in the loch.

He laughed at the idea.

But, I said, it was not always at the time that the evil effects of an accident like that were felt.

"I am sound, wind and limb," he replied; "if I hadn't had the constitution of a horse I would have been dead long ago."

"Still," I insisted, "a married man with a family ought to be careful of himself, for the sake of those who love him and depend upon him."

"What!" he laughed, "would you have me begin to coddle myself? Let me remind you, doctor, what you yourself have said before now about hot-house plants *versus* heather stems."

I was amused at this turn in the conversation, but endeavoured to explain that there was a deal of difference betwixt ordinary care of health and coddling; that every one in this world was endowed with a certain amount of *vis naturæ*, that this force gets less elastic after the prime of life, that at any time it was just as easily squandered as money was, and that being so squandered it was impossible to effect its renewal.

"You are talking in parables, doctor," he replied; "I don't understand them, and I don't want to. I'm more brawn than brain, perhaps; but look at that leg, feel that arm. No, I'm not old, nor likely to get old in a hurry."

"You are sound, wind and limb," I said quietly, "muscle and heart; but there never was a man that yet lived but had some one of the more delicate organs of life weaker than the others ; it is this particular organ that is liable to suffer from any indiscretion ; and if it once begins to give way, be it liver, spleen, or kidney, it goes very fast indeed. It is so easy, too," I added, "to acquire healthful long-life-giving habits. People ought to diet themselves regularly ; food ought to be nutritious but not over-abundant."

"I often go all day without a bite," put in McBride.

"Worse for you," I said. "Exercise, not excessive, should be taken ; the bath should not be neglected—"

"A dip in the river suits me nicely," said my host.

"Or in the lake," I laughed. "Pure water is as essential as pure air."

"I sometimes add a little whiskey," McBride said, "to kill the creepies—*bacteria*, I think you call them."

"Yes, I have observed so. Your great-grandfather's 'quaigh' would make a pretty addition to your mantel-piece cupboard. Pity you don't keep it there."

"Ah!" said McBride, "regularity and temperance are fine things, I know, doctor ; but you musn't try to make an old-wife of me. When McBride takes to sticking to the house whenever he has a bad cold, to sleeping on a feather bed, changing his stockings

when damp, and having his pocket-handkerchiefs aired, then it will be high time for him to be buried. Going fishing to-day, doctor? I know where there is the sauciest old bull-trout in all the stream. He has defied me fifty times. Will you come and try a cast?"

Five years after this I was called to see McBride in town. What a change a few years had wrought upon him! The man who used to defy the wildest winter storm that ever blew across the hills of Badenoch, had come to spend the winter in London because the weather there, he had heard, was mild, and still by no means enervating.

He was only the ghost of his former self. Wind and limb were good enough yet, but the liver was wrong, and that still more delicate organ, the kidney, was not wholly intact. To add to this, the nerves of organic life were greatly shattered.

In these nerves, reader, or in their ganglionic centres, reside a life and power which are in a manner beyond our control. These ganglia and their efferent nerves preside over vital internal motions, as the beating of the heart, for instance, that goes on whether we will it or not, whether we are asleep or awake. Youth and strength may be said to reside in them, and when they begin to fail, vital capacity itself is reduced, and in many cases a complete break-up is inevitable.

McBride was a man who would have everything explained to him. He was afraid, he said, of nothing but that which he did not understand.

Had medicine no power, he asked, over those nerves of organic life? Ah! yes, I answered; but he must be quiet and steady. Medicine and diet both had power over them, by improving the quality of the blood supplied, but he must live now by rule if ever he would be anything like his old self.

That he now saw the folly of his former reckless habits I do not doubt. But this same recklessness now took a new form. I could not get him to follow out my plan of treatment for two days running. He had lost steadiness; he delighted in reading about and sending for every new remedy he heard of. Of course, these were tried, against my wishes, but only for a day or two, and then thrown aside or forgotten.

Had he followed my advice simply and steadily he might yet have got well. He put me in mind of a nervous man in a boat among breakers, who wants to stand up and gaze wildly about him, although his only chance of safety lies in keeping still.

In summer McBride was seized with an irresistible longing to return to Dunroon; and by easy stages so he did. I went with him, and was with him to the end. The most painful part of the concluding scene was the eager desire he evinced to live, and this never deserted him to the last breath. Truly his was a good life thrown away for the want of ordinary precaution; and comment on this short but true history is needless.

WAVERLEY ABBEY.

THE topic with which the town of Farnham in Surrey seems most intimately connected is that of hops, for on the successful cultivation of that graceful climber hinges the prosperity of the wide district of which it may be called the centre. Many are familiar with the old castle towering above the irregular buildings of the town proper, and the archæologist is probably aware that traces of the Romans having not only camped but built their villas in this vicinity are frequently unearthed; but our mission is to tempt all who love nature in her fairest aspects to quit the beaten track of the tourist, and inspect with us what remains of one of the most ancient of our ruined abbeys—Waverley.

Approach its site from which direction you will, its surroundings are charming, the lanes leading to it winding along under steep banks of sandstone, riddled with the holes of the sand-martin, or at the foot of slopes crowned with fir-trees. The little stream of the Wey babbles through its meadows, or rushes over the weir beside the mill where the Cistercians once ground the corn that fed the brethren and the poor at their gates. Secluded it must always have been, yet how changed in all else since on a Christmas morning in the twelfth century a Bishop of Winchester laid the foundation, in a bend of the river, of the now vanished monastery!

Whether the site was well chosen must often have proved a vexed question, for the Wey, like other rivers fed from the hills, has a trick of overflowing its banks, and from those records of Waverley which Sir Walter Scott discovered, we believe, while making researches in the State Paper Office, we learn that the very existence of the Abbey was often imperilled by these floods.

But in spite of this disadvantage the inmates had a lovely home—green, and peaceful, and fertile. The hand of the spoiler has had as much to do with the disappearance of the monks' gardens and orchards as time, but nothing can destroy the quiet beauty of the locality.

The gate-house of the convent must have been razed to the ground many long years ago, and on the slope on the north side of an artificial canal or lake is erected the more modern house of the present owners of the estate. By their courtesy admission is freely given to all comers, and a path on the south side of the lake leads to the ruins of the ancient edifice.

TALKS WITH MY PATIENTS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

MY IMPATIENT PATIENT.

"ABOUT the same, I think," his daughter said, in answer to a query of mine regarding my patient's condition. "My father is much about the same — no better, and I don't think any worse. He wanted to get up, but I wouldn't let him stir till you saw him."

"Quite right, my dear; and I assure you he is doing very well indeed under your care. All he wants is to have a little patience."

"Ah, sir!" said my nursie, shaking her solemn little head very significantly. Then I went on to my patient's chamber.

My patient, it may be as well to mention here, was, and is, a friend of mine. If he had not been so I should have got tired of his case very soon, and handed it over to some one else. Mr. Boyd—we will suppose that his name—is well and strong now. He will read this paper with interest, I know, and when he has finished, he will hand it back to me with a smile, and say, "I really wonder you could have been bothered with me, doctor."

I walked into Mr. Boyd's room briskly and cheerfully: briskly, because I wished him to understand that I hadn't a whole day to spend talking about his case; cheerfully, because I wanted him to see I didn't take the gloomy view of his ailments that he himself did.

"What ailed him?" did you ask. Why, a very irritable form of dyspepsia and general derangement of the digestive canal. He had appetite—sometimes almost a ravenous one—for his meals, but no sooner had he finished than he felt anything but comfortable —"felt sorry," he often said, "that he had eaten at all." Sometimes there was sickness about an hour after eating, but this only gave relief. When there was no sickness, great acidity was produced—an acidity that the swallowing of antacids only tended to increase, though they might give temporary relief.

Solid food was far better borne than semi-fluid, bread than puddings, and—somewhat strange as it may appear—a mutton chop was more easily digested than white fish of any kind. Cheese, again, could be eaten, and that too with relish, and really seemed to do good; and even, while suffering from acidity, an orange could be eaten, or at all events sucked. So you see the case was not without some little peculiarities.

Bottled lime-juice my patient could have taken. I did not permit him to do so, however, without first testing it, well knowing that a deal of this shop-bought juice of the lime is fortified by the very vilest of raw-grain whiskey — a fact which cannot be too widely known. I had reasons of my own why Mr. B. should not take alcoholic stimulants.

But his troubles did not end with dyspepsia. He had some months before received fracture and dislocation of the right ankle-joint. As Mr. Boyd can walk to-day as well as I can, I give myself credit for having done my best for him.

"Come along, doctor," he said, as I entered the room. "I was beginning to think you were never going to appear."

I looked at my watch, and glanced at the clock.

"True, true," he continued, "you are only ten minutes behind your usual time. But that seems long to a fellow nailed down on his back in bed."

"You're not nailed down yet," I replied, smiling; "and if I can help it we won't have any nailing down in this case. Show me the leg.

"Why, it is harder, firmer, and less swollen. It will be all right soon."

"Now, doctor, don't tell me that Rome wasn't built in a day. I know you meant to. Bother the building of Rome! I hate to hear of it."

I put my hand on his forehead. It was hot. "You haven't slept over-well?"

"Over-well, doctor. That is a mild way of putting it. I haven't slept at all."

"Why? How is that?"

"Sit down, and I'll tell you. I hate to see a great tall man towering alongside my bed."

"Well, now?" I said, drawing a chair close to him.

"Well, then," he went on, "to begin with: there was my everlasting ankle giving a twinge now and a twinge again, just when I might have gone off. Even when not aching, it behaved in a preposterous and most annoying way. Sometimes it was too cold, and I had to sit up to see if it was covered. The next minute it would be too hot, and I would have to sit up again to uncover it."

"Well?"

"Then there were the effects of that mustard-leaf you would clap on my stomach yesterday morning."

"Well, was that all?"

"All? I should think it was enough. But, to cap all, there was the cow."

"Oh! was the cow at it again?"

"Yes, at it all night long: 'low, low,' and 'moan, moan,' enough to drive a fellow mad; and when she fell asleep—for I suppose she did fall asleep—it was fully three o'clock, and then the cocks commenced. I wish somebody would shoot that cow and do away with those cocks."

"I fear nobody will," I said; "and if they did there would be something else: the pillows would be all awry, or something would tickle your nose, or the ticking clock would take to talking. No; it is here, my good friend—here in your brow, here in your frontal lobes—that the mischief lies."

"Couldn't you give me some more of those chloral draughts? They sent me off."

"I will not, I assure you. When you were suffering excruciating pain I gave you a little chloral; but the

sleep it produces has no refreshment in it. There is no more dangerous drug in all the Pharmacopœia."

"Bromide of potassium, then, doctor; that is harmless. Don't you think it is?"

"Harmless? No! A chemist's assistant might tell you so. It is a useful drug in many cases; but its continued use never fails to produce irritation of the brain, caused by some degree of congestion. But I'm not going to talk physiology to you."

"You'd better not."

"Your daughter is most attentive."

"Little Ada is very well in her way."

"Well, all you want is a little patience."

"Doctor, don't!"

"Don't what?"

"Don't set harping on that patience string again. A man can't manufacture patience to will, and he has no earthly business to act it."

"Nonsense, my friend! You've got a tongue, I know, and you have teeth."

"Good ones, doctor; and I wish I could use them with more satisfaction to my poor digestion."

"Well, if I were you, I would make my teeth bite through my tongue before I should utter a cross, peevish, or impatient word to those who were doing everything they could to please me."

My patient was silent.

"How many thousands—ay, millions—are far worse off than you: in greater pain and suffering, with few, if any, comforts, and maybe no one to care for or tend them! Will you promise me to think of that? Remember, you have a great deal to be grateful for."

"I know, I know," he said, rolling his head from side to side on the pillow. "I'm a peevish old fellow. I don't deserve to live."

"Oh, yes, you do, and I'm going to make you well; only, I repeat, have patience."

"It is a hard thing to cultivate, doctor."

"I grant you it is, and especially for a busy commercial man like yourself, whose whole life has been one of ceaseless activity. But I assure you, friend, that patience in illness is worth cultivating. The healing powers of patience are wonderful. It is nearly as good as sleep to the brain; while, on the other hand, impatience acts as a brain irritant: it sends the blood dancing away up to the head, there to produce congestion, to use or eat up nervous power, and in that way retard recovery. I repeat that you and every one else who happens to be sick or ill—and none of us are exempt from occasional sicknesses—ought to endeavour to cultivate patience, for patience is the parent of hope; and if a sick person is without hope, why, he has a poorer chance—to put the matter mildly—of recovery than he would have with it."

"But do you know, doctor, that I hardly believe in the power of mind over matter?"

"Then you haven't lived. There is a greater power than matter in this world: call it Will, if you like. Man possesses it in a higher degree than any other animal; and Will simply laughs at the one-sided dark and dismal dogmas of the mere materialist. Now, my friend, I'll give you an example of the power of mind over matter."

Here I opened the window wide; then I seized a box of pills which my quick eye had caught sight of behind a vase on the mantelpiece, and before my impatient patient could say a word, I had emptied them into my hand and flung them out of the window, and the box followed.

"Doctor!" he cried; "doctor, what are you doing? Those are Pamperfool's patent pills; cost no end of money. They cure everything."

"Ha! ha! ha!" I really couldn't help laughing. "Cure everything, do they? They can be used for diametrically opposite ailments? My dear sir, do beware of what you swallow. But now," I added, taking up my hat, "are you going to trust your case with me, or with Pamperfool?"

"Oh! you, most certainly."

I sat down again. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you," I said. "In a couple of weeks' time, if you are able to bear the journey, I'm going to send you abroad. You can take my medicines just the same, you know."

"I'm so glad," he answered. "This climate is killing me, with its slate-grey skies and sunless days."

Mr. Boyd got better rapidly now. He had hope and something to think about. I postponed his going for one other week, well knowing that the anticipation of pleasure is often far more beneficial than the reality.

It was so in my friend's case. My patient was back again in six weeks.

"Why, it is new life to me coming back," he said, "to dear old England. Oh! the vile soups I had to swallow, doctor, and the viler 'made dishes'! What they were made of I shudder to think. But I'm not going to try any more foreign travel until—my stomach can bear it."

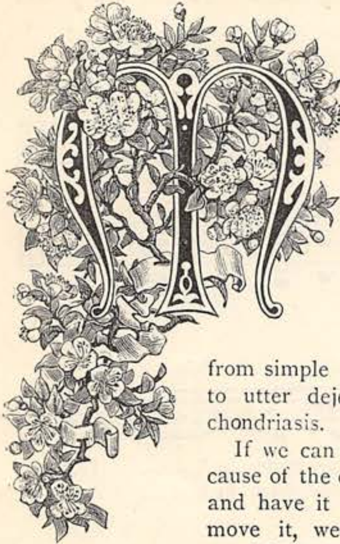
I laughed. It was evident he had learned patience in his slight experience of foreign travel. He told me he would just let things take their course now, and would do all I told him.

This was certainly going the right way to work. Mr. Boyd was strong and well in three months' time.

Ah! reader mine, there is a wonderful healing power in patience; and when one is ill, to be patient is not only to benefit oneself materially, but to perform a duty to those around him.

TALKS WITH MY PATIENTS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



MY DESPONDING PATIENT.

MEDICAL men, in general practice, very frequently meet with the desponding patient. Indeed a practitioner invariably has in his *clientèle* cases of lowness of spirits of every grade, ranging from simple *ennui*, or weariness, to utter dejectedness, or hypochondriasis.

If we can once determine the cause of the depression of spirits, and have it in our power to remove it, we are generally successful in the treatment of such cases. They are very often, however, complicated with some functional or obscure ailment of the heart. Nor can the symptoms of hypochondria remain unremoved for a length of time, without interfering with the blood-making process in a very material way. So we find concomitantly dyspepsia, constipation, sluggishness of the liver, and general scantiness of the secretions, with often a hot, not to say feverish, condition of both mind and body.

The sufferer is not always in the same frame of mind. The dejectedness ebbs and flows like the tide. There are times when he is bright and joyful, though it is a very emotional, almost hysterical, kind of joyfulness, and this may give place very quickly to fits of irritability and quickness of temper, during which the patient often says or does things that there is no one more truly sorry for than he is himself a short time afterwards.

Hard study, too close attention to business, worldly cares and worldly worry, are all causes of hypochondria. So too are neglect of personal ablution, want of exercise, slothful habits, indulgence in the pleasures of the table, and the use of drugs. I ought to have said the *abuse* of drugs, but when I wrote the word "use" I was thinking of those narcotics called night-draughts, or night-caps, which too many people in this country indulge in by way of coaxing the goddess Somna to smooth their pillows. For sleeplessness is one symptom, and a painful and distressing one it is, of hypochondria. There is often an actual dread of night, the patients well knowing that while others are sleeping as soundly as the traditional middy on the maintop, slumber will not visit their eyelids till the small hours in the morning, and that even then it will be a half-wakeful, and often dream-perturbed, sleep.

Cases of this kind require special treatment, in accordance with the causes that have given rise to the mischief; but this much may be said about all of them: narcotics never fail to increase the hypochondria, tonics may or may not do good, and aperients do harm, as a rule.

It is astonishing how small an excuse will often lead people to commence the use of night or sleeping draughts. Extra fatigue, pain, a day or two of mental anxiety, grief from the death of a relative, anxiety of any kind—any of these will banish sleep from the pillow, but if the temporary inconvenience is borne with sleep will return, and with it happiness and health. On the other hand, if sleeping draughts be taken, congestion of the brain and its membranes is certain to follow to a greater or less extent, and after a time the sleep that is obtained is so far from being refreshing, that the patient next day is tired, jaded, cold, and weary, brightening up—through natural reaction — only towards evening, at the very time the nerves ought to be calming down, preparatory to a night of wholesome rest.

Mr. Finland's case was one of hypochondria and functional disease of the heart, which was brought on by the use of one of the most dangerous and deadly narcotics in the modern pharmacopœia, viz., hydrate of chloral.

I am not sorry to have to mention it, because I have reason to know that such cases are by no means very isolated; in point of fact they are far too common, and probably getting more so every day. They nearly always end in death, although seldom if ever is the real cause of demise inserted in the medical certificate.

I knew Mr. Finland by sight long before he became a patient of mine. I used to see him driving past my house on his way to business almost every morning. It was probably the horse he drove that I first took notice of—a very beautiful high-stepping chestnut. Mr. Finland was a man about forty, or something over, fresh-complexioned, healthy, and withal hardy-looking.

I was returning on foot one day from visiting a case, and was just passing the church, when the slow and solemn tones of a good organ attracted my attention. It was a Wednesday evening, and not then having anything pressing to attend to, I sauntered in and took a seat, with all due reverence to the sanctity of the place. I was much impressed by the music and by my surroundings. I could not see who was playing that evening; the organist was a gentleman, that was all I could make out; but next Wednesday found me there again, and now I found the musician was Mr. Finland. It was by going to hear him play that I first made his acquaintance. For, meeting him casually one evening, I thought it but right for me, as a stranger, to apologise for my intrusion, on the pleas of my great love of music and his excellent execution.

His reply had the words "right welcome" in it, and ever after that we were on bowing terms with each other when we met.

My summer holiday came round, and after I returned I missed Mr. Finland.

I naturally supposed he had gone away, perhaps abroad, and was not a little surprised, six months after, to receive a message requesting me to visit him.

"A decided case of phthisis," I said to myself as soon as I entered the room, and saw my patient lying on his back in bed. "Advanced stage, too."

"Sit down, doctor," he said.

I did not sit down, because the bed was a very high one, and I wanted to see him well.

"Do you cough very much?" I asked.

"I don't cough at all," he replied. "But I am dying by inches for all that. I don't know that I shall ever leave this bed alive, and it is perhaps for the best, for I suffer fearfully. You do not see me at my worst now, but at my best. It is towards evening my dreadful distress begins—the restlessness, the indescribable gnawing, tearing, and dragging at my heart. And this continues till nine o'clock, when I take my draught, then it is all over; I sink into a sleep, and I am as dead as a stone until morning."

"Your draught?" I said, feeling the pulse, which was soft, feeble, and slow. "What draught?"

He merely motioned with his head to a table that stood handy to the bed.

I took a bottle up. It contained some white crystalline substance in large scales. I smelt it.

"Why," I said, "this is chloral. You surely don't take much of this? It will kill you."

He smiled faintly and sadly. "It has already done its work. I take two drachms a night (!) If I have a ray of hope, doctor, it is centred in you. I've heard you are a practical man. Do with me as you will."

"I *am* a practical man," I replied, "*very*."

I put the bottle of chloral into my pocket as I spoke, and buttoned my coat.

I shall never forget the despairing look he gave me.

"I must not give it up all at once. Surely, doctor, you do not know what I shall suffer! Pain will be no name for it; torture, torment, no name."

"Yes, all at *once*," I insisted. "It is your *only* chance. Choose that or death."

"It seems to me," he murmured, "it *is* life or death."

"It *is*, indeed, life or death," I replied. "Do as I wish you to, submit yourself entirely to me, and, with God's help, I will raise you again, and soon, from that bed of sickness, and you will be once more a man."

From that very moment I had hopes of the case. For if a chloralist can once give up the habit, he has no desire to resume it.

All that night I sat up with my unhappy patient. His sufferings were dreadful to witness. It was the tearing and gnawing at the heart that he complained of most. It was like an immense crab eating his very vitals, he said. How he tossed and moaned and raved, sometimes hanging with head down out of the bed for a little relief, pitifully moaning all the night!

He slept a little during next day, and took a little nourishment. A salutary diarrhœa took place, and he was reduced in every way to a mere shadow.

On the fifth evening I offered him a dose of chloral.

"Not if I were to be made a prince of the realm," he said, "would I swallow one grain of the dreadful poison."

"What made you commence the habit?" I asked one day.

"I had a bad tooth," was the answer.

The reply only shows the truth of what I have already said, that the most trifling excuse is often sufficient to induce people to meddle with death-dealing narcotics.

Do not imagine, reader, that my patient got better all at once after giving up the use of the chloral. No, nor did he soon. During the first few weeks, the state of his mind was one of what I might term morbid joyfulness. He had escaped out of the jaws of death, and there was mental elatedness in consequence. But this soon gave place to fits of the greatest and darkest despondency. They did not last very long, seldom more than a day, and in this lay my hope of being able to thoroughly restore him to at least a fair state of healthfulness. This condition of mind lasted for months, but, although weak in body, he was able to take a considerable amount of exercise in the open air, and he was able to read at home. During the latter stages of the chloralism, he could neither read nor write without the greatest suffering. His exercise was walking, and I took pains to see that he always went somewhere with some special object in view, for I do not believe in what I call circular walking exercise, simply going out a certain distance and coming back again; paying a visit of ceremony to a distant milestone does not constitute a healthful walk!

The first real sign of returning health in my desponding patient was his ability to sleep tolerably well; the second, the desire he began to evince to be once more engaged in active pursuits.

This desire he evinced in a singular way. He supplied himself with a box of mysteriously small tools, and I often found him, day after day, working at the table, with a magnifying-glass stuck in one eye.

He was making a kind of fairy music-box, and when completed the whole thing was no bigger than a thimble.

"It is playing now," he said to me one day.

"Indeed!" I replied, "I can hear nothing."

My patient smiled, and enclosed his wonderful little instrument in a worsted ball. From this an elastic tube, with a nipple at the end of it, extended.

"Put the nipple in your ear," he said.

I did so, and was astonished. I could hear it now, as loud apparently as a church organ, but as sweet and soft as an Æolian harp.

"I put the ball under my pillow at night," he said, "and the nipple in my ear, and go to sleep to music."

My desponding patient is still alive and well—desponding now no more, for he no longer needs even the dulcet tones of that fairy music-box to woo him to dreamless, wholesome sleep.

TALKS WITH MY PATIENTS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

MY CHEERFUL PATIENT.

"THERE is no pleasure," a celebrated surgeon has been heard to exclaim—"no pleasure greater than that one feels after having performed a dangerous operation successfully."

Perhaps not; but there is a pleasure which comes pretty close to it—namely, that which a physician feels after having conducted to a successful termination some case which at one time appeared almost a hopeless one.

Now the case of Ethel R——, which I am about to describe, I may as well say at once was one of consumption. I do not mean the reader to understand that in my judgment her condition had at any time actually entered the region of the hopeless, but it certainly verged on that region. Such cases are usually, even now-a-days, considered incurable; and in the medical schools, five-and-twenty years ago, students were taught—positively taught—to look upon them in that light.

Am I bold enough, then—some who read these lines may ask—to assert that the disease, consumption, which has baffled the skill of the medical profession for centuries, may now, in these modern times, be considered amenable to treatment? If there be any boldness in the assertion, I can lay claim to it. I have, to use a much-hackneyed Parliamentary phrase, the courage of my convictions.

I believe that we may hope for the cure or alleviation of *any* ailment from the science of medicine and the skill of the thinking physician. Medicine is a science for ever advancing—for ever to advance. If that which is taught at medical schools were to be critically examined, it would be found to consist, not of truth alone—not of knowledge alone, but of the two combined, mixed with a deal that is merely specious, not to say clap-trap. For the mere schoolman, then, one can have but a meagre amount of respect. He has much to unlearn, and he has to go on learning; but if wise, he soon discovers the difference between theory and practice—between that which he reads in books and that which he sees and hears at the bedside.

It is the duty, methinks, of every physician to add if it be but his mite to the fund of knowledge we already possess, and thereby to leave the world of medicine better than he found it.

But this paper is written, not for people in my own profession, but for the laity, and for invalids in particular; and something may be learned from it, if even at the commencement I frankly confess that I should have had little hopes of restoring Ethel R—— to health, had she not helped me—had she not gone hand-in-glove with her physician, and cheerfully carried out all my instructions, even to keeping up her heart and spirits.

Ethel R——, when I first knew her, lived alone with her mother, in a small cottage on the banks of the Thames, not a hundred miles from our great City. I was called to see her because, as her mother frankly told me, "she had heard I was that day in the neighbourhood." I knew very well what this meant—they were not rich.

Ethel was an artist, and, when I entered her room, was working a little in bed, propped up on her pillows. The room was everywhere clean, wholesome, and tidy, and, though humble, there was no ornament in it that did not show the good taste of its inmate. It was a very tidy room, and it was also very cheerful, just then, at all events, for the rays of a summer evening sun were stealing in through the small, half-open casement window, round which roses were nodding, the strong light giving the green leaves about them tints like those of early spring.

Ethel looked very fragile, and, indeed, very ill. I guessed then that she must have been delicate even at her best, but in this I afterwards found I was somewhat mistaken. Pale she was; thin almost to emaciation; and with a kind of beauty in her large, expressive eyes that I did not like to see. The hands, also, that lay on the coverlet, were so white and transparent, that the veins looked like the blue lines traced on white foolscap paper. She smiled me a welcome, and I sat quietly down. The mother was evidently much more alarmed about her child than she herself was, and began to tell me a long story, which I soon stopped. I would not have rambling statements at any price. The friends of patients would do well never to attempt to force such upon their family doctors, for prominence in this way is sure to be given to symptoms which are of no real value, and others of intrinsic importance are left out of the history altogether, or merely "slimmed" over. Let a medical man ask his own questions. He will do so in proper order; and depend upon it he is well weighing in his mind both questions and answers.

I elicited all the symptoms by degrees; I was in no hurry. I should not have entered the room at all, had I not had half an hour at least to call my own; for nothing is more to be deprecated than the habit of jumping at conclusions in cases of—or that may be of—life or death. Well, after all, the case was not one that was by any means difficult to diagnose. She had been ailing, off and on, for a year; languor, weakness, dyspeptic symptoms, capricious appetite, cough, and slight, very slight spitting of blood—she had hardly remembered this; sometimes better, sometimes worse—"worked with the weather," her mother told me.

Thus she *had* been; *now* she was what I saw her, as she lay before me, and the cough was worse, with a good deal of expectoration; she complained that her nights were restless, her sleep "bad," and that she was troubled with sweating, but shivered soon, if she eased off the bed-clothing to prevent this. I do wrong to use the word "complained," in the last sentence. Ethel *told* me of all her symptoms; she *complained* of only one, and that was her recent loss of the power to sing.

Well, I had my stethoscope and tiny thermometer, to tell me all else I wanted to know.

"What had she been taking?"

"Not much of anything, sir. Just the cod-liver oil, which she doesn't care for, and a mixture she had from the dispensary which she has attended."

Most excellent establishments, those dispensaries, reader mine! Pity, though, that they do not more often serve out a little common-sense sound advice with the medicines they give. Physic is not everything, and cannot work alone. My experience, however, is that poor people who go to dispensaries for medicines, nearly always bring along with them a little something which they themselves put into the bottle, without knowing it, after the doctor has done with it, and that this little something sometimes—nay, but often—does more good than the physic. I refer to faith.

The cottage where my patient dwelt was, as I have said, on the banks of the Thames, and not quite far enough from the city to secure air so pure as I could have wished. There were many mill-stalks, too, about, and sometimes ugly dews rose up from the river. Both these were enemies I should have to battle against, if I was to do this poor girl any good at all. The dews were a depressant. The bad air was worse: it was in her case, though it would not be in that of a strong, healthy person, a positive poison. When I say poison, I wish you to look upon the word in its most strictly literal sense, as though you actually saw the poison in the air; saw the food and substance on which disease germs or sporules floated and lived, and without which they would cease to exist. Could I have had my wish, Ethel would have gone to live in a purer atmosphere—say, in the country or by the sea-side, or to sea itself. This was out of the question for some time, so I had to do my best for her where she was.

It will be seen from my mention of the word germs, that I am in some measure a believer in the theory that consumption is a parasitic disease. That tubercle in the lungs and in other organs of the body can kill in other ways than by a multiplication or growth and birth of disease germs, there is no doubt; but that these germs are increased at a terribly rapid rate by the patient breathing and re-breathing of air congenial to them, I think has been proved beyond doubt, and upon this fact depends our belief in the curability of consumption.

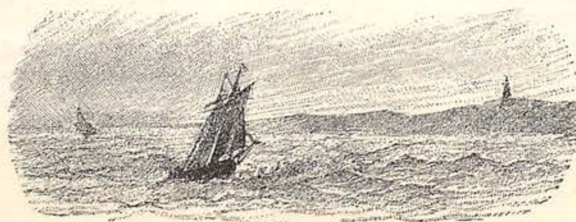
In a few words, the plan of treatment, which, for the simple reason that it can only be well carried out by the family physician, I cannot describe specifically, consists in an attempt, by the inhalation of certain medicaments, to destroy the germ-nest in the lungs, and to prevent the breathing of germ-laden air or impure air of any kind, or too cold air to irritate and inflame, or damp air, that would depress; for depression of the system, whether from physical or mental causes, is most inimical to our hopes of success. It is for this latter reason that we do all we can to support the system by good food, cream, oil, and easily-borne tonics to increase the appetite for nutriment. In addition to this, we guard against cold and changes of climate; we try to give sleep at night by natural means; we do not over-clothe to sweat. And we find ourselves more successful, in carrying out all this treatment, if we have a patient with a cheerful mind.

I want the reader, be he a consumptive or any other kind of patient, or no patient at all, to bear in mind that the air we breathe is usually filled with disease germs of all kinds, but that only the *weakly* and *depressed* need fear them.

Much of the good that is done to consumptive patients by sea-voyages depends upon the fact that the ocean's ozone is the best disinfectant, and contains fewer germs than that on land. And I must say this, that if patients could take all home-comforts with them to sea, they would assuredly return healthy and strong from a long cruise—that is, if they departed with any life in them worth speaking about.

Ethel R—— was a cheerful patient. There was nothing she did not do that I wished, though often it must have been with a struggle. To close her story, she is well now, and recently married. But is cheerfulness of mind, you may ask me, a thing that can be made to order? Is it not a gift, or the outcome of some particular state of brain or body? I think there is a certain quality of mind that every one, well or ill, would do well to develop, and that is self-control; and from this cheerfulness springs; in this it grows.

I cannot close this paper without one other remark. Ethel had a mind deeply imbued with religious feeling; and true religion I have ever found to be one of the greatest factors in the cure of disease.



TALKS WITH MY PATIENTS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

MY OBSTINATE PATIENT.

"WHAT is the good of asking a medical man's advice if you don't mean to follow it?"

Every one has heard this question asked, and generally asked of the obstinate, wilful, or doubting patient. It is one that the patient feels it somewhat hard to answer. And still, to call in the aid of a physician, but not, after all, to trust him implicitly with the case, and follow his instructions to the letter, is doing a very foolish thing, to say the least of it—ay, and it is a mistake that has cost many a precious life. Choose, then, your medical adviser as wisely as you can, but having made that choice, in the name of common sense let all the wisdom rest on his side, till you are well and up, and out again.

I first met W. G. at the sale of a property at N——'s, in town. The place—a small but very pretty one—a kind of *rus in suburbe*—was put to the hammer. I do not know what I myself was doing there. I did not mean to buy, certainly; but the property to be sold was near mine, and I dare say I was wondering who would come to reside at it.

W. G. did not prepossess me in his favour—not much at all events. He was a tall, squarely-framed, raw-boned, bold-chinned man about fifty, with rather more jewellery than I like to see on a gentleman; and he kept tossing the bunch of seals and trinkets suspended from his waistcoat—from force of habit, perhaps, but it gave one the idea he was purse-proud. He stood well to the front, held his head erect, and looked determined. A man, I thought to myself, that, with sword in hand, could defend a breach.

There were many there who seemed wishful to purchase that property, but the calm insolence of this man's "bids" finally put them all down. Then he turned round and smiled as he addressed me.

"They might have saved themselves the trouble of talking," he said. "When W. G. wants a thing, W. G. usually manages to have it."

This was my new neighbour, then—this the man who finally became my Obstinate Patient.

Although gradually, as I came to know him better, he developed many very excellent qualities, still at first I did not quite like him. He was too brusque in manner, too forward—one of the sort of people (you know them, doubtless) who in argument put a question, then, if you hesitate a second in answering, reply for you—"putting the words in your mouth," as lawyers call it.

"W. G. wasn't feeling the thing: could I look round and see him about 11 a.m. to-morrow, as he was starting for the City?"

That was the purport of a note my man handed me one evening after dinner.

I could hardly help smiling. W. G. could not be so very ill, then, if he meant starting for business immediately after his interview with medical science.

He was in his library. He rang the bell, and ordered his carriage "punctually at twelve."

Presently we were both seated, I waiting expectant, he pausing, as if he did not know exactly how to commence.

"Ahem!" he said at last; "I have sent for you to ask your advice about a trifling ailment, that has rather worried me for some time back. There's no harm in having advice, is there? Of course not. I knew you would say that."

Mark this, reader—I had not spoken a word yet.

"My symptoms are merely those of indigestion, I know; and I believe my liver is rather out of gear."

"That unhappy liver!" I couldn't help muttering.

"Unhappy liver!" he said quickly. "How did you know it was bad?—from my eyes, I suppose. Well, I must confess I have worked it pretty hard for the last twenty years, and I suppose it needs a holiday. My professional duties—those of a civil engineer in good practice—are trying enough at times, and one positively needs support. *You* know."

"Yes, *I* know," I replied; "but I was alluding more to livers in general. Pray proceed."

"What frightens me, though—and I never used to be nervous—is the fact that at times my memory is not so good as it used to be."

"Yes, at times," I said.

"And at other times it is all right. Then the brain does not take so kindly to sleep as it used to. Oh! I'm aware of what you would say—at fifty-five one doesn't require so much sleep; but, doctor, the little ought to be real—short and sweet, eh?"

"True."

"And one ought to awake refreshed, and full of life and energy; yet I don't. But then, if one keeps on building bridges or running tunnels all night in his dreams, how can one expect to feel like a lark in the morning?"

"I've never consulted any one before," he added, in answer to a question of mine.

"Yes, I have taken medicine. I have taken this."

He produced a long, neat phial containing fluid, and handed it to me.

After looking at it, I put it away in my breast pocket.

My patient smiled. "Doctor," he said, "are you in the habit of purloining things in that quiet way? Because——"

"I am," I said, smiling in turn; "it is a habit I have fallen into. But seriously, now: how did this medicine affect you?"

"For the first week after I commenced to take it," he replied, "I felt a new man. I felt twenty years younger, slept sounder at night, and had a better

appetite; but both sleep and appetite soon left me, and I felt more shaky, weak, and nervous than any old woman."

"Just so; and touching your other symptoms?"

"I don't know, doctor, that I have a deal more to mention. Those I have told you of are distressing enough, in all conscience; though they all, I suppose, point to simple disorder of the digestive organs, and your skill will soon put matters right."

But further examination of my patient proved that he was worse than he himself believed—worse than I myself had at first suspected—and that even paralysis was threatening, that terrible disease by which many of our hardest-working men are struck down at the very time they are busiest—at the time, indeed, that they themselves imagine the world can least spare them.

There was no use mincing matters with a man like this self-willed W. G. I told him my fears, and while promising to send him medicine, enjoined rest, complete and real.

This he assured me meant great pecuniary loss. He did not see how rest could possibly be arranged for; and besides, what would be rest to other people would be quite the reverse to him: it would be worry. His mind would be on his work, and he really did not see how that could be carried on without him.

I set myself to combat all his objections to my plan of treatment. The pecuniary loss, I pointed out, would be a gain to him in health and happiness, which are indeed, to a great extent, synonymous terms. As to the impossibility of carrying on the work without him, I was sorry to say I could not believe it. Work of all kinds had been carried on before he was born, and would be as well executed after he and I were laid in the "mools." The rest must not be of a wearisome nature. I should not think of prescribing mere surcease of labour, nor even the substitution of simple manual for brain exercise. I know well from personal experience that the mind is often working its busiest when spade or hoe is in the hand. No; W. G. must seek for entire change of scene and change of thought—for complete recruitment—for rest, not in name, but in reality, and for not less than six months of it.

"If you will promise to follow my advice," I added, "I will promise you in turn, as far as a medical man may, that I will restore your health—restore your mind and body to their original strength and balance; and I see no reason to doubt that some alterations in your habits and mode of living will enable you to remain well to a goodly old age."

"Six months' total rest!" said W. G., as if talking to himself: "six months' change of scene and thought! It cannot be, I fear. There must be some other means—some *régime* less trying and exacting—that, carried out, will not fail to restore me to myself. Pardon me, doctor, but I think you take too dark a view of the situation."

"Do I?" I replied. "Very well; you——"

"Oh!" he cried, interrupting me, and laughing, "I know what you are going to say: I may call in some one else. Well, he is a man of the world, W. G. is: he would like to buy even health at the cheapest market. Have you any objection to consulting with Mr. P——?"

"Not the slightest; I shall be delighted."

It did not please W. G. that Mr. P—— and myself took precisely the same view of his case. He had fondly hoped, I think, that the doctors would have differed. They do not, however, invariably do so!

One would have thought that now W. G. would have yielded to the persuasions of medical logic. He was a man who loved the world, and had no wish to quit it while still but little over the prime of life; but he had never been as yet counselled to make any sacrifice for his health's sake. He had depended hitherto on the strength of a good constitution, and he told both Mr. P—— and myself, candidly enough, it must be confessed, that he would continue to do so.

I ceased to attend him—some one else did; but he never left England, or even went to the country for the sake of rest and change. I missed the sight of his carriage for a whole week about six months after our last interview; but a day or two after I heard he had died—and died, too, rather suddenly.

If there is anything to be learned from W. G.'s case, it is this:—We busy people of the world—men and women—who labour with brain, who work with mind—while we should not allow ourselves to be panic-stricken every time we have some little ailment, should at the same time never despise little warnings. They are like slight flaws in the boiler of a steam-engine, or tiny rents in a sail: they need instant seeing to, or the whole fabric they threaten may go, and go suddenly. Indigestion may appear a very trifling thing; so may that slight headache you suffer from sometimes, or the giddiness on getting up quickly from the reclining position, which you may have by this time got almost used to. Despise them not. You may answer me boldly enough that you have always been energetic, always in the van of life, and that you are willing to die in harness, whenever the call comes. Well, death is the common lot of all, and happy are they who can contemplate the coming change with equanimity. But one may have to endure what seems worse than death—years and years of hopeless, wearisome sickness and inability, mayhap even of semi-imbecility. Who, I ask you, can contemplate a change to such a life as that with equanimity?