

lurked in its intricate paths. Sitting in the little farmhouse garden, he had conceived a new idea—an idea so bold, so audacious, he might call it, that it had taken his breath away, and left him no thoughts for anything else. What mattered it that the midday sun beat down fiercely on his head, and that more than once he stood in danger of ignominiously embracing his mother earth? Had not this visit to Thornleigh been the means of furnishing him with an inspiration which would enable him to dispense with Hugh and Vere, and placed within his own hands the sword wherewith to cut the Gordian knot of the Bellairs estate? He started as he suddenly came upon Mrs. Meredyth, slowly walking towards home, with camp-stool and sketch-book in hand. It seemed to him that she looked much older than when he had last seen her.

"My dear Lewis," she said, "I am afraid you have been to see me, and I was out."

"Yes," he answered; "I was very sorry not to find you at home, but Mrs. Bradshaw received me most kindly, and I have been enjoying a chat with her. What a charming woman she is!"

Mrs. Meredyth smiled. "Have you fallen under the spell?" she asked laughingly. "I always tease Amy over her conquests—her unconscious conquests," she added.

"Yes," he answered in the same spirit, "I have fallen under the spell of those beautiful sad eyes. She must have been, she is, very handsome."

"And how did you think her looking?" eagerly.

"Better, very much better, and stronger than I expected. Who was she, Mary? she does not look quite English."

"No, she is not pure English; her father was an Italian."

Mr. Tresidder gave an imperceptible start, but quickly recovered himself.

"An Italian! Well, I can quite believe it. What was his name?"

"I always forget it. Man—Man—something like

Mazarin's nieces. He died when she was about nine years old."

"Mazarin's nieces! Ah, my dear Mary, I am afraid I have forgotten my French history. I am falling into the sere and yellow leaf, and my memory too."

"Nonsense," she answered, "there is not much of the sere and yellow leaf about either you or your memory, when you can recollect who everybody's wife's grandmother or great-aunt was. I only wish I could boast as good a one. But, indeed, I must not stop now, for I ought to be at home to look after my invalid. Did she tell you how delighted we are with our quarters? They really seem as though they had been made for us. Bring the girls down to tea tomorrow, and you shall be regaled on all manner of delicacies, of which Mrs. Gleen assures me she is a mistress."

Mr. Tresidder smiled and readily acquiesced. He asked nothing better than to go to Thornleigh for tea or any other meal to which Mrs. Meredyth might choose to invite him. Bidding her a warm good-bye, he resumed his walk in high spirits, appearing at Torworthy five minutes after the riding party had come in. His visit to Thornleigh seemed to have exercised a most soothing influence over him; his irritability had disappeared and he was bland and amiable, joking Vere about her cottages, declaring that he meant to put in a claim for Arabi—in fact, conducting himself as the kindly facetious guardian that he had been in the early stages of their acquaintance.

In the afternoon, when the two girls had locked themselves up in Vere's new sitting-room, to proceed with the work of decoration, he made a secret raid on Mabel's old school books, and, with the valuable assistance of Mrs. Markham, discovered that Mazarin's nieces were named Mancini. It did not affect him much, ominously as the word resembled Manceschi; he was now armed at all points; come what might, he flattered himself he held a winning card.

END OF CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

THAT HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



HAT horrible nightmare!" one well may say if he or she has suffered from any such dread visitation.

Now, if nightmares, or bad dreams, were, with all of us, only of occasional occurrence, and the evident result of some trifling dietary indiscretion, I might well

leave the subject alone. Unfortunately, however, with a large class of people, it is the exception rather than the rule to enjoy a night of rest, unperturbed by dreams.

These dreams really point to a state of health that, bad as it may be, is capable at any time of becoming worse, and which should therefore be seen to as soon as possible.

A sufferer from nightmares and disturbing dreams would scarcely care to call himself an invalid, but he might do so for less occasion, for restlessness at night, tossing in bed, starting, screaming, or even talking in sleep, are all symptomatic of mischief going on in some important internal organ.

"Dreams," I have heard some people say, "are merely the result of indigestion."

We must not be too sure about that ; the stomach, the brain, and the heart itself are most intimately connected, and no one of these organs can suffer without affecting the others ; besides, indigestion is not one of those ailments to which the adverb *merely* should be attached.

Merely indigestion, indeed ! Why, indigestion may be the agent in advance, that paves the way for disease of almost any sort. But in itself pure and simple, is there anything much more difficult to endure, or for which one is more to be pitied, than this complaint when chronic ?

The dyspeptic is an invalid who receives but the very smallest sympathy, yet is he a misery to himself and to every one around him. He *is* so, and he cannot help it ; and his very inability to help it makes him still more peevish, till every nerve in his body is racked and weakened, and also the brain itself.

If he seeks for solace in solitude, he is unfeelingly dubbed "a miserable misanthrope," who is like nobody else, who likes nobody and is liked by none.

Merely indigestion ! Who suffers from spasms of pain in chest or stomach, from attacks of sickness, from burning pyrosis, from pains in the head, from fulness and drowsiness after eating, at the very time when the healthy are happiest ? Why, the dyspeptic. Who, often and often, feels his heart palpitate, flutter, and stop a beat, flutter again, stop again, then go slowly, heavily on, while fears of impending death crowd his mind ? Your unfortunate dyspeptic.

And who suffers—and oh ! so sadly—from hours and hours of gloom and depression, amounting at times to deepest melancholy : when all the world seems to him dark and dismal, and those in it hard and cruel and selfish, when even the attention of friends is harassing, and love itself appears but an empty name ?

No, reader, dyspepsia is an ailment which the sufferer ought to use every means in his power to remedy, before it gets so firm a hold on body and mind that no medicine on earth can remove it.

There are those who believe that the brain never really rests, that in sleep we are always actually dreaming ; and a certain celebrated physician, whose name I forget, attempted to prove this, by having himself suddenly wakened at various hours of the night, and always, as it happened, it was from a dream which he distinctly remembered. But a thousand such cases would form no logical proof of the constant activity of the cerebral organs. Besides, we all know with what marvellous rapidity an apparently exceedingly long dream will be formulated, run its course, and come to an end.

To give an example, a nervous lady the other night, while the maid was in the room, started from her sleep, crying exultingly, "The dog is shot, and I'm safe !"

Her dream was as follows :—She was out walking and gathering wild flowers by the banks of a beautiful river. She had wandered on and on for hours, and had quite filled her basket, when suddenly from behind a bush a dog sprang on her and bit her. She felt no pain or inconvenience from the bite, but went, never-

theless, and took out a summons against the dog's master.

There was a long trial. Witnesses were called on both sides, and finally the poor dog was condemned to be shot. The lady determined to be present at the execution, and was so. The firing of the gun was the finale.

Now all the business part of this dream seemed to occupy weeks, but in reality it had taken but the fraction of a second. A piece of coal falling on the fender was the firing of the gun ; between the noise and the almost instantaneous waking of the lady, the long, long dream was framed, and ran its course to the bitter end.

No, I believe that in the healthy sleep of a healthy man, the brain and all organic nerves enjoy complete repose.

But from a restless night of dream-filled sleep, though the dreams may be forgotten, the dreamer awakes as weary and jaded as when he lay down.

The memory, too, of some half-forgotten dream may continue to haunt his waking hours with a sense of gloom and depression till far into the day.

Now both the old and young, including children, suffer from nightmare. The latter, however, more readily recover from the depressing effects thereof, but the former retain the evil impressions for hours and hours. This makes them peevish, if not cross, during breakfast, apt to be nervous and gloomy, and upset about the merest trifles, or anxious and restless about little matters which would hardly occupy a thought were they in really good health.

Be it remembered that it is not the dream itself that is thus affecting them ; the bull that chased them, the owl that sat on their chest, the fearful fight they were eye-witnesses of, the cliff over which they fell, all these are no doubt forgotten at the dawn of day, but the shock to the nerves remains. This it is that does the mischief.

Now, from long experience, I feel convinced that in at least six cases out of ten it is suppers which have to account for the disturbing dreams of the aged.

The motto of many is "Keep up the strength," and old people as well as young overload the stomach. The young get over it easily, the aged do not. To them indiscretion in diet, even the most trifling, means subsequent fever, a rapid pulse, a restless night, and perhaps a rise in the body's temperature.

People who are well advanced in years ought to remember that the stomach is no more able to bear a heavy load than the back is. But matters are worse with the former when abused ; the back can slip its load off, the stomach cannot. It has more than it can amalgamate, more than it can get rid of. The undigested mass lies there, and it does not even lie inert, for it is working mischief : it ferments and causes flatulence, qualms, and pains, the brain sympathises, and becomes excited, blood lies in its capillaries which cannot get clear away, dreams and nightmares ensue, and the nerves receive a shock that days will hardly suffice to overcome.

I have known a great many old people die very

soon after the celebration of a birthday. They were old or, in the beautiful phraseology of the Book, "well stricken in years." When that fatal birthday came round, friends were invited, friends who were thoughtlessly kind to the old, old man, who flattered him and excited him, made him tell stories of the bygone times that caused him to feel young again. He was kept up beyond his time: even the leave-taking agitated him, and when he retired it might have been to sleep, but not to rest. Strange, wearying dreams, a running medley of the half-forgotten past and the present, kept coursing through his brain, and at length he awoke, gloomy, depressed, and ill. In a few weeks—well, why pursue the story?

If abstemiousness in eating and drinking is beneficial to the young and middle-aged, it is life itself to the old.

Rest should be their motto—rest for limbs, for stomach, and for brain; thus shall their days wear away to a peaceful, happy close.

I cannot resist here quoting a few words of a certain old abbé, one of the greatest workers of the age. "Although eighty years of age," he says, "I enjoy indefinite capacity for work, unconscious digestion, perfect assimilation of food; and I may be permitted to affirm, with perfect confidence, that those who follow in my footsteps will be rewarded as I have been."

He is alluding to a life of abstinence, and in advising others to adopt his *régime* adds that, if they did so, "they would be able without harm to sit at their desk immediately after breakfast and to stay there till dinner-time. No sooner would they be in bed, about nine o'clock, but they would be softly asleep a few minutes later, and could rise at five in the morning after a nourishing sleep of eight hours."

To avoid unpleasant dreams, the old should dine early, and sup early and lightly; the bed-room should have an equable temperature of about 65° kept up all night, and should be well ventilated; stimulants of all kinds should be avoided.

I must now say a word about the night terrors of children. They are generally nervous, weakly infants who are thus afflicted, and the trouble is caused as often as not by a disordered stomach.

If the nightmares come on almost every night, a medical man had better be consulted. If this be not practicable, give some gentle aperient every morning for

several days running, and a warm bath before retiring. Let some one remain in the child's room till he is asleep, and let a night-light be left burning, but not in such a position as to throw shadows on the wall. Nor should articles of clothing be left hanging over chairs or behind doors. It would be better in any case if the child did not sleep alone.

The name of those who suffer from nightmares and disturbing dreams in this country is legion. It is difficult, therefore, to give advice which shall be practical and beneficial, the causes of the trouble being so very numerous.

Nevertheless, if I can only get my readers to believe me, when I assert as I now do, that *the state of nightly unrest is one of a serious character, likely to bring about ailments of a very grave nature*, I shall do some good.

But what do I advise? This question may be reasonably asked.

I advise self-examination to commence with. Are you infringing any of the simple rules of health? Do you go to bed in time, after a day in which occupation, rest, and exercise have each been attended to—a day in which nothing indigestible has been either eaten or drunk? How about the morning bath? Is your appetite weak? A cupful of hot water and a little sugar with a slight squeeze of lemon taken before breakfast and dinner is an excellent and safe digestive tonic. For the young—I do not refer to children—a teaspoonful of syrup of the phosphates, taken twice a day in a wine-glass of cold water for a fortnight at a time, will be found a wonderful spirit-raising and nerve-soothing tonic.

Is your heart weak? This may be merely functional, but if you ever suffer from palpitation or fluttering, by all means consult a medical man.

As to medicines: everything in the shape of narcotics and stimulants must be sedulously avoided. The very mildest aperients do good if taken occasionally, those that act on the liver to some extent being the most effectual. Tonics may also be used, but never longer than a fortnight at a time, then miss a week. A warm bath occasionally, just before going to bed, may also be advisable; at all events, the maintenance of the skin in a healthy, working condition is imperative, if we would avoid nightmares and their depressing consequences.

