

I like the wardrobe especially, because it combines so much; it includes a bookshelf, two drawers, and a shoe cupboard. The floor is covered with Indian matting a yard wide at one-and-twopence, and a Madagascan mat, weighted with shot at each end, is used in front of the fireplace. The grate is a fixture and is made of Doulton pottery to match the dark green tiles of the fireplace. The mantel-covering is made after an old fashion. A plain piece of cretonne is cut to fit the top of the mantelpiece, to the edge of which is sewn a deep frill made with box-pleats. These coverings have the advantage of being washed without being unpicked, and are very neat. In the window stand an Italian maple chair and footstool for which I gave thirteen shillings.

And now I think I have described the greater part of our new furniture, though I am perfectly aware that I have not mentioned many of the necessaries of a household, because space has forbidden a detailed account of each article.

Since I spoke of the library, I have "picked up" some old Chippendale chairs for it, which I have had covered with hog's-skin in the natural colour, nailed

with two close rows of silver nails. I hope in time to furnish that room entirely in mahogany. I have also had a wooden fender made to match the mantelpiece, and during this summer I have added a lovely inlaid chair to the drawing-room, of the same style as some I saw at the Italian Exhibition. It was too beautiful to leave! It is inlaid with ivory, while the back and seat are painted after an antique copy of rough leather. The tables of the same work were perfect, but I say my chair furnishes the room!

I must not forget to chronicle a new kind of Brussels carpet, called the "Broché," dark red with a raised pattern in velvet pile. It is very lovely. I have a rug of it in one room in which the floor is covered with red China matting. The only important room that I have not described is my painting-room, and that description must wait for another time. At present the room beats my powers. I can find no words for it! Some day it will settle down and be tidy. Now it is a studio, a play-room, and a workshop combined! I have such good times in that little room; such pleasant hours fly by there! But turpentine, enamel, and copal varnish forbid the introduction of visitors just now.

## HOW TO CURE DESPONDENCY.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



**C**HEER up, my friend, cheer up. Do not give way thus. It isn't particularly manly. Indeed, I'm not sure it isn't sinful."

But my friend did not cheer up. And I knew he would not, or rather could not, at that particular moment. As well might I have asked old Betsy Fliggins, who has been bedridden for twenty-three years, to get up and trip it on the light fantastic toe. Betsy has not got one single light fantastic toe left, and my friend Fraser did not appear to have half an inch of solid heart in him to cheer up.

It was summer time, and early for that. It was a perfect pleasure to be out of doors in garden or on lawn, or away among the wild woods. The trees had just received their new coats of soft green leaves, and were so glad that they seemed to wave time to the music of the balmy wind that went whispering through their silken foliage like a lullaby—not too thickly foliaged yet, however, to prevent the sunlight from filtering through, and falling in ever-shifting patches on the sward beneath, giving many a little wild flower a chance to bathe and bask in it, and many a curious beetle as well, and tiny shivering *aphis* that had just fallen heir to a pair of wings, and did not know what to do with them—not too thickly foliaged to prevent the birds from seeing each other, though all invisible to eye of man. And how those birds sang! What an exuberance of joy was theirs, what perfection of delight! Earlier in spring, though

they had sung as loudly and as long, a kind of hysterical note would mingle now and then with their melodies, as if they could not quite forget they had recently come through rather a hard time, as if they could not all at once shake off the shadows of winter from their hearts, and so were still a trifle nervous. Now all that was gone, and singing was the only safety-valve for the well-spring of joy within them.

It was indeed a hopeful season.

But for all that friend Fraser was not happy. All the world to him wore a jaundiced, gloomy sort of look, the very flowers lacked clearness of colour, softness of outline and beauty, and the spring-green foliage was tinted with lemon.

Had Fraser been bereft of some dear relative, or had he failed in business? No, neither calamity had overtaken him. And yet he had temporarily lost all taste in life. There was not, he would have told you, a stake in it worth trying for. All was worthless, and he never meant doing anything any more. And so on, and even worse, for Despondency is really twin sister to Despair.

Now, I shall tell you presently what really was the matter with Fraser; but first let us finish our consultation.

"Fraser," I said, "you ought to go abroad."

"Pshaw!"

"Abroad," I continued, unheedful of his ungrateful interjection. "Italy, Algiers, or still further afield and afloat. O Fraser! what say you to the Bahamas?—the long, delightful sea-voyage, the glorious sense of

freedom from all care and worry, the sound and refreshing sleep at night, 'rocked in the cradle of the deep,' rising from your cot in the morning, bursting, I might say, like a butterfly from its chrysalis, to revel in the delights of another day; perhaps early enough to see the sun rise like a disc of molten steel over the blue-grey waves; treading the deck like some rover of old, drinking in health and heart at every step, wondering why or how you had ever been ill, ever been sad, or sighed one stupid sigh. Then the isles themselves, laved by warm soft seas that lisp and sing on coral sands, bathed in eternal sunshine, glorious in flowers of shapes and tints without a name——"

"Glorious in garlic."

"Fraser, you are positively unfeeling."

"Perhaps, doctor; but I can't help it. And I tell you that is where you medical men err: you send some poor solitary patient off to the seaside to be out of the way—out of your way, perhaps. But what is he to do when he gets there? Why, mope. That's what I should do. All the change, all the sunshine, glitter and gaiety, would do me no good if I had no one to talk and converse with that I cared a pin's head about—probably at table to assume your company airs and try not to look like an invalid, though in your inmost soul you felt you were one. Why, all this hypocrisy would kill me in my present state of health, and I'm not sure I could stand it even if strong. If you weren't a countryman of my own——"

"There, there, don't get excited, and for once in a way I'll confess something."

"What?"

"That you are right: that it is the height of folly for a patient suffering from low spirits to go anywhere all by himself. To the seaside certainly not, nor abroad. But country patients of mine suffering from despondency—if I really am justified in calling it an ailment at all—I have often cured by sending off to London for a spell."

Well, reader, of course my friend got all right after a time, because in reality there was not a very great deal the matter with him. As I have already said, he had not failed in business. Indeed, one sudden blow or reverse of fortune is usually better borne and more easily recovered from than a whole series of little worries, especially if they come from different and unexpected quarters, as his had. In fact, these worries constitute just so many successive shocks to the brain and nervous system. But the brain has more even than shock to bear, for it suffers from an almost continual strain of blood upon its smaller vessels, amounting, I might safely say, to turgidity or congestion. When this is kept up for a long time, mischief in some form or other is certain to follow, and the amount of that mischief will depend upon the length of time the cause has been in force, and of course upon the constitution of the sufferer, some being far more sensitive than others.

I have called despondency an ailment of the age—I might have said modern times—for it was far less frequent a hundred years ago, when there was not such a hand-to-hand and day-by-day struggle for existence,

when there was more contentment and, consequently, more solid comfort and happiness: when, mark this, there was less ambition, because ambition leads to a species of gambling in the great market of life. You or I want to have a mansion in the West End, and drive a noble turn-out in Hyde Park. We think we see our way to attain this end, so we go heartily into the battle of speculation, or business, or something; we keep constantly on the alert; we watch for every chance we see to slip in and make a hit; we pore over our papers and ledgers, and we do not let even sleep stand in the way of our advancement. Well, all this is stimulating to the brain, it keeps artery, vein, and nerve on the stretch; but one of two things eventually occurs: either the nerves get worn out even while the stimulus lasts, or some reverse kicks the stool on which we stood from under our feet. In either case down we come and sink into a state of nervousness, irritability, and despondency. That seems to me to be the physiology of the whole affair, for it is a law of nature that depression follows excitement.

There are all degrees of despondency, from the case of a person who is "up one day and down the next," as the saying is, to that of him who suffers for months or years.

It would take me a long time to describe all the symptoms that despondency may give rise to. It is unnecessary to do so, because such a relation would not interest those who do not suffer therefrom; and those who do, know them only too well already. Yet, this one symptom is present in all, and may be considered diagnostic: namely, a darkened, chastened feeling of life and soul. There is, moreover, a disposition on the part of the sufferer to exaggerate not only little bodily ailments but outward grievances; he is easily offended himself, and too often thinks himself slighted by others; his appetite may be indifferent, or more likely it is capricious; his sleep is not what it should be, there are seldom frightful dreams, but there is uneasy slumber. In a word, both by night and day, if not exactly miserable, he is not happy—far from it. He or she may live and move in the very best society for all that, though everything palls on the senses.

Now about the *treatment*—and let me try to be as practical and common-sensical as possible. Bear this in mind, to begin with:—First, the cure must be slow, systematic, regulated. Secondly, the sufferer *must* try to do something for himself, and must not expect too much sympathy from friends. The treatment then should be directed to easing the vessels of the brain—I am using plain language—which are inclined to be congested under the slightest excitement, to giving tone to the nervous system, and strength to the muscular. It will be seen from what I say that I do not for a moment admit that despondency is simply or wholly a mental complaint. Neither the sufferer himself nor his friends should look upon it in that light; if they did, they would have less hope. But there is no need to be downhearted about the matter in most cases; only as misery of mind is even more painful than misery of body, no one should nurse despondency if by an effort of will he can shake it off. But

in shaking it off he must creep before he walks. I used the words "slow, systematic, regulated." Let them be borne in mind. So long as a patient has the desire to get well, he usually can. Now, exercise, daily and judicious, will, in most cases, tend to relieve the brain, and conduce to sleep at night, but sea-bathing and the salt-water matutinal tub greatly aid this. As regards exercise, I have to remark that the sufferer from the species of nerve ailment to which I have given the name "despondency," is seldom inclined to go out much at all, either for driving or walking. He may be most averse to muscular movements of any sort; exercise is a penance. Nevertheless, seeing the good it does, not only in relieving brain tension, but strengthening nerve and muscle, we cannot afford to leave it out of count in our treatment. What I generally advise is about fifteen minutes of dumb-bell exercise just after the bath and before completing the toilet, half an hour or more of the same in the afternoon, and two hours at least of good hard walking every day, in spite of the weather.

In the Turkish bath, taken once a week, we have an excellent accessory also. If there is a tendency to acidity, Vichy water should be used with meals.

Something more aids, and must come in: he must find some congenial employment, something to interest and absorb without fatiguing. Next comes recreation: choose what is the most pleasant, but do not neglect it.

Sleep must be had by honest and fair means. A warm bath greatly conduces to this, but stimulants and narcotics are poison.

The skin must be kept in good order by the bath, the rough towel, and massage, when it can be procured. The digestion must be seen to, and the appetite improved by the bitter tonics.

If the food is but slowly digested, pepsin will be required. When constipation is present, an occasional simple vegetable aperient may be needed, but trust more to diet, and do not forget oatmeal in the morning, and fruit and green vegetables in plenty. I feel confident that obedience to these directions will restore nine cases out of ten to health and cheerfulness.

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## BLAZING GULCH.

### A YARN IN TWO LENGTHS.

#### FIRST LENGTH.

ANT the story of Blazing Gulch, do you, stranger? Well, I don't know that it's much to tell, but here goes.

Bill Macey and I were partners down in Desolation Camp—they called it that because of the big flood that washed out half of the cabins one night, and left the banks down below strewn with pots and pans, and dead men too, till we went down and buried them.

How we took up with each other, goodness only knows. He was as great a scamp as ever wore boots, and though I didn't know it then, I guessed at it. As for me, my folks down East thought I was dead years back—a good job, too—or there'd have been worse grief than there was, perhaps, in the little old parsonage under the New Hampshire hills. I'd been rather a bad lot as a youngster—nothing so bad, after all, as boys go—but a little wild, and full of larks; but they thought me a gone case down in those quiet parts, and the place got so hot, that at last I left it and went off to sea.

That ship got wrecked off the Californian coast one fine day, and most of the crew went to the bottom. Why I didn't go too, I can't say; but as it was

generally supposed at home that I had, I dare say it answered the purpose about as well. How I drifted about for the next few years doesn't matter just now; anyhow, I turned up at last at Blazing Gulch, with a pretty firm purpose not to let the old folks know I wasn't dead after all, until I could do something to make them pleased to hear it.

So Bill Macey and I fell together, and somehow we froze. He was the sort of chap who could tell a story or sing a song with anybody, and he was popular for that; and with the women for his long legs, and his yellow hair, and a certain way he had of making any one of them he happened to be with think he thought her the only woman in the world—the scoundrel!

Up at the head of the valley, just where the big rocks hang together till they almost touch, and you can only see a thin slip of sky, like a ribbon, as you stand under and look up, there's a store—the store, in fact—there isn't another nearer than Tomkinsville, fifteen miles off. The old storekeeper got shot one night, when the boys were foolin' round, a little gay over a find some of them had had, and news came that a new chap had taken the place, and was coming out from down East somewhere, with his wife and one girl. You bet that made the boys look up! There wasn't an unmarried woman nearer than Tomkinsville, and she was fifty-five, and squinted! There was a run on bright-coloured handkerchiefs about the time the new storekeeper was expected; and hair-oil went up to a premium!

Well, they came.

Did you ever see a white lily floating on a black

