

"One anxiety is at rest, so I won't think of gloomy things upon this happy, this blessed day. Listen, mother, to what Mr. Dodd says :—

"DEAR MADAM,—I have the pleasure to inform you that an unexpected codicil has been found to the late Miss Thornicroft's will, in which she leaves you a further legacy of two hundred pounds, and also a small property called 'White Rose Cottage,' situated on the south coast, near Dover. The cottage is now vacant, and both it and its furniture are yours. It contains four bedrooms and two sitting-rooms—all in excellent order—and has, in addition, about half an acre of excellent well-stocked garden. Miss Thornicroft was in the habit of spending the summer of each year at White Rose Cottage. Allow me to congratulate you on the possession of a very pretty little residence, which will let well in the autumn."

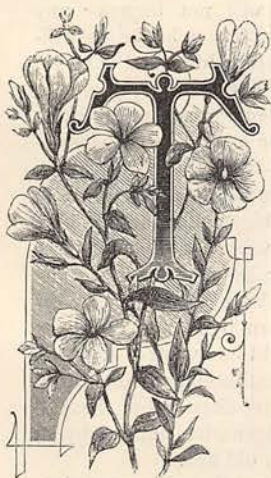
"No, it won't let well," said Emmy, not caring to finish her letter, "for we will live there. Oh, mother! what will not those sea-breezes do for you?"

Whatever the sea-breezes were to do for Mrs. Thorn, the present good news acted as a tonic. She and Emmy, and Bertha and the boys really became quite childish over that wonderful letter. The legacy of two hundred pounds was delightful, and, of course, dear Emmy could go back to London now—but what was it in comparison with the cottage with the picturesque name, the cottage with the garden, and the sea?

END OF CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

## ON LIVING TO BE NINETY.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



HERE is no earthly reason why every man or woman in the British Islands should not live to be the age of ninety," said an octogenarian acquaintance of mine one day, as we were travelling in the same carriage to town.

He did not make the remark to me exactly, but to his friend; only as I had made one in the conversation previously, I thought myself justified now in putting an oar in. "Oh, nonsense!" I said, with emphasis.

The octogenarian turned sharply round on me. "Doctor," he exclaimed indignantly, "you're exceedingly polite, I must say. Ex—ceed—ingly polite!"

"Medical men are permitted to be polite sometimes," I replied. "Remember Abernethy, for example. He was politeness personified."

"Boor!" muttered the man of eighty summers, as he commenced to read his paper upside-down.

As there was no means of knowing whether the epithet were hurled at me or at the shade of the great physician, I took no notice of it, but continued talking to the other occupant of the compartment, a young man and an intelligent listener.

"Instead," I said, "of there being no earthly reason why every one should not reach the age of ninety, the reasons are legion, and they are all earthly. We have all of us a debt to pay to Nature, and they live longest who, while always prepared and resigned, never think of it, but at the same time take care to avoid the more ordinary causes of disease, and to live rationally without, mind you, making molly-coddles of themselves. For whenever the more ordinary causes of disease take to any person the form of bugbears they become depressants of life and action; the man or woman, as the case might be, would therefore live

in a world full of bogies, and these bogies would, before very many years, scare him or her over the brink of the grave.

"Every physician could give you scores of instances of bogie-haunted molly-coddleism; one occurs to myself at the present moment. The subject is a man of about thirty-five, a jolly-looking fellow, strong and rosy, with perhaps a slight inclination to *embonpoint*—his corners are well rounded off, at any rate. But he is one of the biggest cowards in Christendom; he would not sit in a draught, get his toes wet, or keep his window open in summer, or take a cold bath in the morning, if he were offered a dukedom for so doing. He died in the spring of 1888—not entirely, though. I am talking figuratively, for you know cowards die often, the brave but once. It was a cold that killed him that time. However, he died a more painful death in the following June. He had to have a tooth out; the shock to his system he felt sure would stop the beating of his heart, so he made his will before he set out in a cab for the dentist's. I dined with him the same evening, and he sang, "Let me like a soldier fall," so sonorously that I was half afraid the gaselier would come down. Well, this gentleman died again in the autumn of a whitlow—his flesh is rather soft, you know—but he did not require to be buried even yet. I have not heard of him since, and, for aught I know, he may be dying away of something, somewhere, at this very moment. But life is not a bed of roses to him, jolly and all as he looks.

"One of the most curious cases of prostration caused by timidity occurred to a friend of mine, in the city where we were both Arts students. The cholera was pretty rife just then, and in certain streets the black flag was up. When a case succumbed, the bedding, &c., were taken in a covered cart to a spot among the sand dunes near the sea, and burned. I went to meet my friend one day near the beach—we were going to bathe—and found him sitting close to the heap of black-grey ashes. He was quietly reading.

"‘I wonder,’ he said, ‘what boys have been making a bonfire here.’"

"‘M——,’ I replied, ‘that was no bonfire. That is the spot where they burn the clothes of those who die of cholera.’"

"He turned ghastly pale as I spoke, and, though he soon recovered, he complained of cold and refused to bathe with me. Nor would he, though usually brimful of fun, talk, save in monosyllables, all the way home.

"I missed him at classes next day, and going to his rooms, found him in bed.

"‘Don’t come near me,’ he cried, ‘I’m booked. My clothes will be burned on the sands in less than eight-and-forty hours!’"

"The doctor came and laughed at him, but M—— stuck to his bed for three days, and he was very ill from pure nervous fear. Only there was no symptom of cholera, and he made me promise not to mention the nature of his ailment to the ‘fellows.’"

"We see then that terror itself can produce illness. It sometimes actually opens the door for the very infection one would seek to avoid. If, for instance, five men are exposed to the contagion of, say, scarlet fever—men I mean who have not had the trouble before—probably two out of the five will become affected. The three who escape, some medical men will tell you, are unsusceptible to the peculiar poison. I think this is wrong, and that their immunity depended more on their being at the time in ‘good form,’ to use simple language, and not subject to fear. A medical man himself will work in the midst of pestilence without fear or, perhaps, even danger, until his system becomes debilitated by his exertions—then he may be speedily overcome. From these facts, I think we may gather a hint or two how to avoid those accidental ailments that are due to infection and contagion. In times of trouble of this kind the plentiful use of disinfectants is, of course, to be recommended, but we must wear the breast-plate of health if we would go scot-free.

"One of the reasons then why people do not become nonagenarians, lies in this:—We are all just like soldiers in a battle, all exposed to innumerable dangers, and no sooner clear of one than we are confronted with another."

Now, reader, this paper of mine is a purely cautionary one. I do not intend telling you how to cure anything to-day, but the hints I give may help you to avoid illnesses of an accidental nature.

Neuralgia may often be classed as one of these. To be sure, many persons are predisposed to this painful complaint, but one of the commonest causes is the "accident of sleeplessness," or even of not having a chance to get proper rest. This may be owing to the serious illness of some dear friend, or from the fatigue of travel, from over-brain-work, from worry or excess of any kind; but I say, let a person who is susceptible to neuralgia want good rest for a few nights, and be unable, in consequence, to take a proper allowance of food, then he is almost sure to be knocked out of time by his old enemy.

We all of us have some one particular organ weaker than the other, and when exposed to causes that

provoke congestion or inflammation, it is usually this organ, whether the lungs, liver, or kidneys, or heart, that is sought out and determined to. The reader will, no doubt, remember the story of the "wonderful one-horse shay" that was built to last exactly a hundred years and a day. This "shay" was equally strong all over, it never lost a tire nor bent an axle, but ran its appointed time, and at the end thereof collapsed all at once, the driver finding himself suddenly seated in a heap of dust. But human beings are not built like that "shay."

However, for the comfort of those individuals who are nervous as to the causes of illnesses which, like inflammations, bronchitic, or otherwise, may be called accidental, I may mention that seldom, if ever, does any single cause produce a severe illness. For example, some one is going to Paris, as every one will this summer, and in crossing the silver streak he gets wet with a green sea. Now this will not improve any landsman’s physical condition, but if he be in ordinary health, it will no more injure him than it would injure a duck. On the other hand, if that person is suffering at the time from temporary derangement of liver or digestive organs, or from want of sleep—if, in a word, he be below par—then that wetting may cause serious illness. If he be a full-blooded man, who has been in the habit of living high, inflammation may be the result. If he be under weight, a severe cold or some nervous complaint may be generated that he will have some difficulty in shaking off.

You will see then what I mean by ailments that are accidental. Most of these might be avoided, in which case, if a person has a fair constitution, a good flow of animal spirits, and no hereditary disposition, there is no reason on earth, as the octogenarian put it, why he should not enjoy life to a green old age.

I have condemned "molly-coddleism" as I call it, but, nevertheless, unless we take reasonable care of ourselves, we are almost certain to stumble in the way of one of those accidental ailments. Food and clothing should be studied above everything. The first is the great generator of heat, health, and power; and the second is the rightful conservator of heat, health, and power. The man who eats too much or too little, or eats irregularly, certainly does not eat to live or to avoid accidental ailments. He lives—well, exists, rather—in a state of constant fever, nervous or otherwise, his sleep cannot be refreshing, and if attacked by illness, he is very likely to go down. The person who errs in clothing is also liable to sickness at any time. If he wears too little or wears harsh, cold, cotton stuffs, the attack of illness is direct, if he wears too heavy clothing it is an indirect attack, but none the less certain and severe. Walking with heavy clothing on is a most foolish and dangerous proceeding, for perspiration is caused, the clothes become damp, and after that the cooling process sets in, and trouble may ensue.

Regularity of living includes exercise, recreation, fresh air, and the bath, and these are indispensable if we want to avoid accidental illnesses, and so live and be happy.