sob in her voice also. Then, so far as I could believe I heard correctly, it seemed to me that she reversed Aunt Maria’s instructions, and sighed out, “Oh, Tom, stand by Perry!”

I thought that if my ears did not deceive me she must have uttered that injunction because our brother was so much taller and stouter, though he was in reality younger than our cousin.

But Jane, who noticed everything, pulled my sleeve to attract attention and whispered, “You heard that, Car? Why, Sally’s late snails and slight to Perry were just a pretence.”

It could not be; and what reason Sally could have for pretending to snub and slight Perry, unless that girls as they grew up were bound to be affected. But I had no time to attend to the question because of the trampling and shouting overhead while the decks were being cleared for action; at the same time there was so much stirring and shouting we were perforce sent to the other ships in father’s squadron to get them into position. Then the head hearth and Tom say that a naval battle is one of the most beautiful and terrible sights that are to be seen. A fight on shore is nothing to it. The ships are generally in line or in a half-crescent if they have had time to form. When they had time to form.

I hope that there are not many readers of The Girl’s Own Paper who may be called nervous, yet with so large a circulation we are bound to have a few. For these their paper is written. And for girls also who are over thirty or forty, if such may be called girls at all, I am the oldest of us and probably the most likely to suffer from the nerves. It is they who have stood in the forefront of the battle of life, and have borne the strain of much art and science and of much importance, and ailments connected with them were lightly termed “the vapours,” and were supposed to be more imaginary than anything else. The nerves are as real as the silver thread you hummed that handkerchief with, and when strange and disagreeable feelings of pain or uncertainty call in the body, there is no question but what there is a matter of great and immediate danger to those who want a moment in the flame of a candle.

There may be actual injury done to some of the parts or portions that are included in the words “nervous system,” as from the pressure of a tumour, from the spread of an inflamed surface, or from the inflammation about the nerve itself, in which case there will, of course, be very great pain either constantly or periodically. There may be the least injury to any part or part of a nerve that can be located easily, but only general weakness of the whole system. This is the trouble I have to deal with, and I think it is the most troublesome thing I have to do, for I have adopted a name which may be found more euphonious than easily understood. Nervousness is a word derived from the Greek, and signifies want of strength in the nerves. The old-fashioned title of Nervous Dullness was, perhaps, equally true to the point, and both are names to which we are less prone as symptoms than real disease. Perhaps in some cases of nervousness such hardy be the ease. When a little girl was asked how she felt when nervous, she replied that she felt "in a hurry all over." She could not have expressed it better. When one is momentarily nervous there is a positive loss of the time being force power from almost every portion of the skin and muscles all over the body. The very heart, for the time being, feels this loss, and is sometimes so pallid as to be red or cold which is something well-known as the fidgets, when you do not know what to do with your hands; and other times is so cold that it is safe

Now this physiological reasoning may not be quite easily understood by my younger readers, who however must admit that I seldom
seek to dose them very much with "allogies" of any kind, but nearly everyone will understand the simple statement that all bodily force or vital power passes to the muscles, for example, through the nerves, just as electric force passes through a telegraph line to the instrument, and that if that force be not equal to the amount expended, the whole body will suffer. The simile of the silen, neurasthenia is the result. If in addition they had to work hard day after day one has to stand up against the mental shocks caused by innumerable small annoyances, to have to undergo what is politely calling a paralyzing effect upon the nerve tissues themselves, easily may the system go to the wall, or become physically degenerate. Indeed under such circumstances the body is usually deteriorated.

What are the effects of general neurasthenia? These are broad and wide, and so many and varied that while it is impossible to individualize, it is difficult even to generalize.

The symptoms of the first oncoming of an attack of neurasthenia will differ greatly in different individuals. Occasional attacks of weightlessness with depression, or with depression on spirits are usually common to every case. The young lady thinks something is going to happen to her, there seems to be a dark cloud over her. Her face loses its former "colouredness," and life for the time being is hardly worth living. The middle-aged lady bogies that she is growing old, and both are nervous. And if it is neurasthenia, then it is a complaint which chooses its victims preferably from among the best, the cleverest, and the bravest of womankind, and among the least selfish. It is one of those things which all stand in the front of the battle; who fight in the breach, and in fighting too often fall—and all perhaps for the want of the needed rest. The dull and the phlegmatic feel it first, and the other hand flings down the toils on the very first signs of the enemy, gaining a footing in the back door. The battle goes on very often quietly—perhaps to the seaside for a month for the rest and quiet which their common-sense tells them are needed to recruit the health and strength. We know which class we are the more, but we seldom know or can appreciate the efforts of those who unselfishly and unthinkingly fight the battle of life until they drop. We know how they suffer at times, especially when alone, for they cannot see that their best efforts are certainly not overrated, the great majority caring little, perhaps, for whom do these things for them. It is their choice to be in the battle's van, says the majority to itself, "well let them have; I have chosen the better part." And the captain and cried, "Oh, master, the vessel has sprung a leak; pray repair the damage that our lives may, peradventure, be spared!" But the master thought and replied, "Begin! I have no time to repair leaks. Am I not making a speedy voyage—a wondrous passage—so tell me not of leaks. I will not; therefore I adjure you to hurry on. To destruction, hurried be on."

But people may not be able to run away somewhere every time they find themselves suffering from neurasthenia, and weariness. Nor need they. I am not convinced even till this day that, after all, the best place in which to spend a holiday isn't one's own garden. There should be a week, daily, at least, almost an hourly, thing with every workaday individual. A brain worker should be like a garden worker, the war-path. He ought to walk the strength of his forces and consider how shall he lead them forth and spread them out, or concentrate them to the greatest advantage. Giving this, the heart itself has its periods of rest; it rests between its own beats. The heart is seldom enough considered. It is tired when you are. Rest it therefore whenever you can, if work is in your own room. You rest it by reclining. Yes, or even by putting the feet on a chair for ten minutes. You rest the mind by glancing for a few minutes in a book or by setting it down. You do the piano—that is, if you really love music and play only the airs or pieces that touch the heart. But one can never rest either by food or drink. Unhealthy stimulants or so-called cordial. A general would commit the same sort of mistake if he drew out his reserves and exhausted them before they were really required. So be wise even of this kind of rest, if you would not go very quickly indeed to the wall.

Rest in bed is the best rest of all. I know a hard-working man who always takes a holiday in bed only for a day, but it does her good. She makes some consistent change in it, and surrounds herself with nice books, etc., and if you are a friend and call, her audience-chamber for the time being is her bedroom.

But insomnia, or sleeplessness, is one of the worst symptoms of neurasthenia. It is usually a very advanced symptom too, and a symptom, moreover, that makes the disease advance, but not to a happy termination. When this comes on a cure is nearly impossible to be obtained whatever it costs. It is really now a matter of life and death.

Dyspnoea is a most troublesome symptom of neurasthenia, and one that not only interferences in the most marked degree with the blood-making process, but renders at times sleep almost impossible, except, perhaps, a few hours of dream-perienced slumber toward morning, when town or country noises are making themselves audible.

Fretfulness is one of the commonest symptoms of neurasthenia. Irritability is seldom absent entirely when there is debility, and never present when the nerves are in a healthy condition, but when it enters upon pure food. But fretfulness is terribly distressing. So, as a rule, to the sufferer herself than to others around her. She has every wish and desire to see everybody about her happy, but still she cannot help giving way, many times and oft perhaps, to outbursts of peevishness under scarcely any provocation at all.

There are symptoms of the aliment under consideration that I have no space even to name, but they one and all depend upon the body itself, on an inadequate amount of pure wholesome blood to the whole system—the supply of fuel to the human machine not being in proportion to the outbursts of nervous waste.

Upon the cause we must found our plan of treatment. Of course we may, by taking extra nutritious food, manage to struggle on for a little while longer, but this is not cutting straight at the trouble. I need hardly remind the reader what a terrible complete break-down is to the majority of brain-workers in these busy times, when both women and men have to work hard and have no time for leisure, for recreation, for bare existence. What might it not mean in our married brother for example—and I know that our readers are often as much concerned for the health of their brothers as for their own. Well, but your brother, let us say, has not been many years married, although already two pledges have come to stay, and so the work has been increased. He has a very pretty little house, but as an added love marriage pure and simple—very simple, indeed—there is little behind it of worldly substance. Well, he has been working hard and has got paler and even thinner. Supposing he broke down—I don’t want to frighten you—and had to take a spell of inactivity for a year. Who would fight for the children then; or get for them the little comforts they and their mother have been used to? Yes, indeed, who? The world is absolutely powerless, if not pitiless.

The cure of neurasthenia should be in hand, therefore, from the very first week of any of its symptoms made their appearance. If the sufferer cannot go for a holiday she, or he, can have a nice garden. A good room in the house may be had. While at work it is imperative that there be no driving, no distracting rush-work. This is what kills so many, or lays them on the shelf for a whole year.

As nothing can be done without regularity some plan of treatment should be adopted and laid down in your note-book. If this be well considered and followed you may expect a cure in a month or a week. If this be not the case, then perhaps a plan of work for a week or fortnight. It is so difficult to do this. Was that what you said? And a doctor runs into the room and lets me lay down one for you and just try for yourself.

Rise in time to have your cold sponge bath, which should if possible have a couple of handfuls of salt dissolved in it. Dress as leisurely as you can. When half dressed take at least five minutes’ dumb-bell exercise. Go into the open air for ten minutes before sitting down to meals. Eat leisurely. In fact you must learn to do everything leisurely. It will come easier by-and-by. Whatever be your duties, enter them with all the spirit you can, and do not hurry. Care killed a cat. Do you know that a sudden attack will make you hurry and worry and so fell a victim to a fast way of living.

Do you work in the air? Don’t say you won’t or you can’t; I say you shall. Open that window of yours right up to the top and sit where you can breathe it. Three days working thus is as good as some days at the seaside.

Don’t be afraid of cold. If the body is well nourished it won’t catch cold, can’t catch cold. I would engage to march two hundred thousand of my girls readers to the top of Ben Nevis in the dead of winter, and they should not catch cold. But I should feed and wrap them up well. What a dinner we should all eat in such a month.

Keep out of doors as much as you can and carry your work if you can.

Rage to have a nice long walk in the afternoon or evening. Have a hard hike in the chest out and keep the arms back. Walk regularly every day from three to six miles, rain or shine. Eat a solid, nutritious dinner. Avoid a second plate of the day. Never touch coffee or tea or strong drinks, but drink good milk and buttermilk whenever you can get it. Have a hot bath every Sunday night. Avoid any disorder of the stomach.

Begin to lay up for your summer holiday. If you spend your day as I tell you, you will be far better off at night. But avoid worry and hurry and think of anything.

Medicine? No, not any now. Nourishing food makes good blood, and it is good pure blood you need, and nothing else.