

THE PALACE WALL.

UPON a lofty mountain stands
The palace of the King,
And workmen out of many lands
Around it work and sing.

They rear the lofty granite halls
And set the portals strong,
And evermore around the walls
They raise a joyous song.

A troop comes up the mountain road,
Great stones the people bear,
Though each is bowed beneath his load,
A merry look they wear.

Although the hill is steep and high
Their hearts are full of glee;
A vision beams on every eye,
The palace that shall be.

“Old man, why stand you on one side,
Thus downcast and alone?
Your face is dark with angry pride,
Your shoulder bears no stone.”

“See how the toilers’ faces glow
With hope and rapture keen;
Come, join us, and forget your woe.”
“My offering was too mean.”

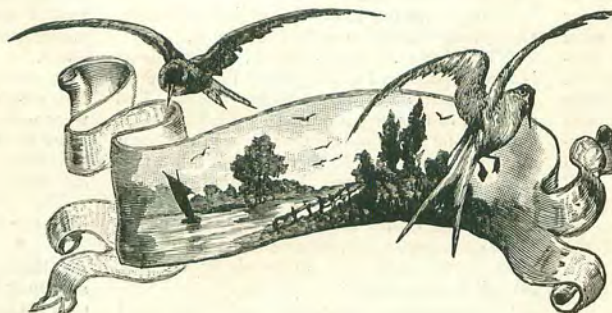
“I only brought a little load,
Because my strength was small,
With pain I dragged it up the road,
To build the palace wall.”

“But when I looked around and saw,
With sudden grief and pain,
The greater loads that others bore,
I cast it down again.”

“Look up and note that empty place,
Plain on the wall to see,
Thy stone must fill that vacant space,
The building waits for thee.”

“Take up again thy little stone,
Nor do the palace wrong,
Stand no more weeping here alone,
But join the builders’ song.”

D. J. S.



“A BIT FANCIFUL, SIR.”

By “MEDICUS.”

“FACT is, sir, I wouldn’t have called to bother you, knowing that you are a very busy man and all that, but my wife hearing you were in the neighbourhood made me come.”

“Yes; well?”

“Well, she is an ardent admirer of your writings, sir; reads all your papers and swears by you.”

“Swears?”

“Oh! you know I didn’t mean that, exactly, but thoroughly believes in you. Thinks you have six senses to other people’s five.”

“Indeed, and what may the sixth be?”

“Oh, common sense, of course.”

“And now, my dear sir,” I said, “as I wouldn’t for the world do anything to alter your wife’s good opinion of me, tell me how I can be of service.”

“Well, my wife is suffering from nervousness, and all that.”

“Yes, proceed; what do you mean by ‘all that?’”

“Just this. Sometimes she’ll eat and sometimes she won’t or can’t. What’s meat to her one day is poison the next. Some nights she sleeps and some nights not. Then for a whole hour at a time she’ll be as merry as a post-boy, and maybe after that she’ll be as quiet as our old cat, only if I speak kindly

she will start crying right away, and the cat don’t, sir.”

“I see; nervous she *must* be.”

“Only a bit fanciful, sir; that’s what all the doctors tell her.”

“All the doctors,” I cried. “Now I fear I must back out of it. Professional etiquette forbids my taking up a case that is already under treatment by another medical man?”

“Ah, sir, but she hasn’t nary a doctor at present. She is giving them a rest be-like.”

I laughed in spite of myself.

“It would be a good thing,” I said, “if she would take a little rest herself. And has she had many doctors?”

“A dozen at least, sir. I’m in a good way of business, sir, and do a good trade, and make a fair show in my books. Three carts from my bakery start every—”

“Stop, Mr. Sangster,” I interrupted, “we won’t go into your business matters, if you please.”

“Ah! but, sir, I was going to tell you that for all I turns over, I do be just as poor at the end of the year as I was at the beginning; and all owing to my wife’s fancifulness.”

“She spends your money over her doctors, eh?”

“So far, that’s so. But law, sir, there isn’t a new cure nor a new quack pill that

comes out that she doesn’t go in for. A—’s quack pills, B—’s quackery, and C—’s as well. A, B, C, sir, why, she has a pill for every letter of the alphabet. Then she has visited about every watering-place in this country, both inland and by the sea, to say nothing of the hydros. No wonder I’m pretty poor, sir.”

“Any children?”

“One only. A girl of thirteen, and of course she goes everywhere with her mother, which adds considerably to the ex—”

Once more I interrupted him.

“Well, Mr. Sangster, I’ll say good-night now because I’ve letters to write. To-morrow at twelve I’ll call and see your wife.”

“Thank you, sir, a thousand times, I somehow believe you’ll do her a lot of good—”

“There, there—good-night. Be assured I’ll do my best.”

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The villa where Mr. Sangster lived was a very pretty one on the outskirts of B—, a garden in front, bay windows, and trellised-roses creeping up the walls to the very roof and even twining round the chimney.

My knock was answered by a pretty young girl who, I rightly concluded, was Mary, the daughter.

Mrs. Sangster, attired in a charming dressing-

gown, was half sitting, half reclining on a couch. The room itself was tastefully furnished. She was delicate-looking and pale, but pretty withal. I noticed this as she extended her left hand to me without getting up. It was the hand nearest me, you know.

"It is so good of you to come and see a poor invalid!"

I made pretence to feel her pulse, though I had no need to. I could see an artery in her temple beating, and could mark the force and form of the pulse by that.

The room was stuffy. Goodness knows when that window had been opened last. I got up now, and threw it wide to the very top. A gust of June air came in, laden with the breath of roses, and the music of song-birds. How delightful, how refreshing!

"Oh, doctor, isn't it dangerous?"

I didn't even reply.

I picked up a little Shetland shawl, that I found on a chair, and tucked it round her chest, and under her chin, as if she had been a baby going to be fed.

"Now we can talk," I said, as I took a chair facing her. "Tell me all about it."

I repented very quickly having made that remark, for she started off with such a list of ailments, that, even had they been alphabetically arranged, would have deafened a miller. I have trained myself, however, not to listen to anything that is tiresome, so Mrs. Sangster's pathetic volubility had little effect on me.

I got her quiet at last, and then began to question her as to her habits of life, and her doings from morn till dewy eve. I soon elicited enough to prove to me that she herself was to blame for most of her troubles, not only by letting her mind dwell on purely imaginary evils, but by giving in to them, and disobeying every law of health, while swallowing all sorts of vile medicines that would scare rats away from a farm steading.

It was indeed the neatest case of nervousness that ever I met with.

Somehow I couldn't help blurting out the following brief sentence—

"I'll cure you, Mrs. Sangster, if you'll do all I tell you."

At the same time I did not quite believe I could; for cases of nervousness like these, that last long, are apt to become a kind of monomania.

However, I was going to try, for in my innermost heart I pitied poor Mr. Sangster more even than I did his wife. My treatment might be called heroic, it certainly was radical. I got Mary to bring me all the pills and quackery that her mother was taking. These I confiscated, and presently they found their way into the dust-bin. Then I told Mary to get her mother ready to take a turn with me round the garden, 'gainst I came back.

"I'll smoke a cigarette in the summer-house," I said, "and by the time I am finished you will be ready, Mrs. Sangster."

"Oh, but—" she began.

"No but," I answered, and off I marched.

"You must begin," I said, when, some time after, we walked in the garden together, "by believing that you are not an invalid at all. Whenever it occurs to you that you are, you must at once either go for a turn out of doors, do some interesting work within, or read some absorbing story."

"Take a turn in the bath-chair, doctor?"

"Certainly not; but on your feet. That bath-chair I'd burn."

"And must I have no medicine? I shall die."

"Pray," I answered, "do not think me unfeeling. Your ailments are of a nervous character; but that does not mean that they do not exist. My object is to gradually strengthen and tone the nerves, acting on them both through mind and body. But to begin with, you must pay attention to the laws of health."

"Yes, doctor, I'm all attention. I suppose you won't, in my case, order the morning tub that you preach so much about?"

"In your case not for months, at all events," I replied; "but fresh air night and day you must have. A warm bath every second night, a not too soft bed, and plenty of nourishment. No, not any wine. In cases like yours where the nerves are exhausted, they are easily excited, and this does much harm. But—now don't turn pale when I tell you—your heart is weak."

"Oh, I always knew I had heart-disease, though my doctors wouldn't hear of it."

"You have no heart-disease. Your heart is simply pale and flabby, more from keeping in the recumbent position so much. The strength of this organ must be restored, and it can only be so by walking-exercise in the open air, and sitting in a chair instead of lolling on a sofa when indoors. You must gradually increase the exercise, and you must get the skin to act either by dry friction with rough towels, or, better still, by a morning bath taken in a warm room and followed by friction. Now," I continued, "about food."

"Oh, doctor," she cried, "talk, because I like to hear you speak, and you have given me hope already."

"Thank God!" I couldn't help saying, "for hope is one of Nature's own remedies for the cure of disease."

"But," she continued, "will you write down all you are saying, and I will read it till I have it by heart."

"Thanks, I will. Well, food is essential and so is sleep. As I wish you to take as much fatty food as possible, or food that will generate fat and nourish the nerves, I think, indeed, I am sure that the Kepler extract of malt with cod liver oil will do much good. Of this you might take a tablespoonful thrice a day after food. Fat is not so difficult to digest as some imagine;

good cream is excellent, so is good butter, and the fat of really good bacon for breakfast. I recommend also puddings of various kinds always with an egg in them. There are plenty to choose from, and you may ring the changes on tapioca, rice, cornflour, arrowroot and sago. A nice salad with plenty of pure olive oil will be found most beneficial. But remember that olive oil can only be procured at the best shops. What is usually sold in Florence flasks is cotton oil and nothing else.

"Grapes and all kinds of ripe, sweet, juicy fruits should be taken before breakfast in the morning, also a large glass of hot water with the juice of half a lemon in it. Eggs are most valuable in cases like yours. Fish should often take the place of meat, and as to vegetables, greens, tomatoes, potatoes, seakale, are very invigorating. The stomach must not be overloaded, but time should be taken to eat, and enough partaken of to satisfy nature."

"What stimulant do you advise?"

"Indeed, madam, the question is too difficult to answer. I will allow you none at present, though if you are troubled with sleeplessness, two tablespoonfuls—no more—of the best brandy may be taken in a cupful of milk an hour before retiring, and you may eat a biscuit with it."

Well, I took my leave, and in a week's time I found my patient so much recovered that I recommended honest Mr. Sangster to send her for six weeks to a bracing seaside hydro that I named, and at which I knew my instructions would be carried out to the letter.

It may interest the reader to know that the medicines I caused to be administered were well-tryed ones and nothing new-fangled. They were honest compounds of phosphorus, strychnia, quinine, etc., with the mineral acids and infusion of quassia.

The system was kept gently open more from the use of fruit, etc., than medicine.

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I think every young, or not quite young, lady may learn a lesson from Mrs. Sangster's case if they are at all subject to nervousness or nervous depression.

In every case, however, the cause or causes must be found out and removed before any permanent good can be expected.

I had a letter from Mr. Sangster not many months ago. As I happened to be touring in my caravan—the well-known "Wanderer"—it followed me all over the country, and was covered with P. O. marks.

"Mrs. Sangster is home again," it began, "and a different woman, thanks to your sixth sense, sir. She has taken to gardening and is never in when she can be out, and heaven bless you, sir, she's got right rid of all her fancifulness, laughs and sings all day and sleeps like a tee-to-tum at night, etc."

Well, reader, I was glad.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

TIGHT boots impede the circulation of the blood, and those that are much too loose are apt to make corns. Do not economise in boot-leather or in gloves, it is no real economy in the end. Take care to have boots well-fitting and of good and soft material, with low heels.

IN case of fire in a house, when escaping close all doors and windows behind you, to prevent draught, crawl as close to the floor as you can, and tie a wet cloth or towel over your mouth; you will then have much less chance of suffocation.

IT is a good plan to write one's name in ink on the lining inside one's boots. It saves the servants trouble when you are visiting, and ensures your getting your own back after they are cleaned.

IN some houses heated cupboards are used for storing and airing household linen. Damp sheets should never be put into these under the impression that they will be dry and safe to use when wanted. Damp sheets may be taken out of the cupboard feeling warm and comfortable, but they very soon become cold and dangerous.

Do not let water-taps run all night. Gallons of water are wasted in that way; see that the taps are screwed tight before going to bed.

A GOOD-SIZED pan or basin of water, changed each day, should be placed in every sick room. The water absorbs much injurious matter, and acts favourably in other ways on the patient.

A SIMPLE remedy for moths is to place whole cloves among the clothes, or a piece of cotton-wool, or lint, saturated with oil of cloves.