

home. If her heart and word are given to another, I thought, I shall go away again, but if that is not the case, if there has indeed been some mistake, perhaps she will in some way let me know that I may speak to her of my love without insult—as there would be, were I to do so and she the promised bride of another."

Margaret rose and replaced the old book as he ceased speaking, and the doctor who knew nothing of the tumult within her, thought her cold with the purpose of letting him know that his hopes had been vain.

"There, I have finished now," the girl said irrelevantly as she descended from her perch, feeling mischievous in her very joy, "and now I am going home."

Dr. Milworth rose, and she gave him her hand.

"Good night, Miss Hetherington," he said.

"Good night—Paul," said Margaret.

Dr. Milworth woke as from a dream.

"Oh, Margaret," he cried, "is it true? My little love, do you care for me? And was there a mistake about the other fellow?"

Margaret laughed.

"No, your information was quite correct. I was engaged."

"And now?"

"Now I am not."

The doctor dropped her hand, and turned away a

little, half ashamed of the boyish jealousy of the next question.

"Did you love him very much, Margaret?"

"No, that was where the mistake came in."

"Will you marry me, Margaret?" Dr. Milworth asked, taking her face between his hands as he had done when he said good-bye. There was still that sad look in his eyes which Margaret knew so well.

"If it does not distress you too much," she answered mischievously, "but you look rather doleful at the prospect, do you know?"

"Do not make fun of me. How can you possibly care for me? I am so much older than you, such a dry-as-dust old bookworm, such a hum-drum old fellow for such a bright young being as you——"

Margaret stopped him by placing her hand lightly on his lips. He kissed her finger-tips, and then blushed like a boy.

"Do you know that you are a very dreadful sort of a lover?" Margaret asked gently. "First of all you almost make me propose, then you put me through an embarrassing catechism, and then you say horrid things about yourself which are not in the least true."

"Not true!" Paul Milworth echoed.

"You love me, Margaret, really?" he asked.

And Margaret, with a joyous little break in her voice, answered—

"Oh, Paul, I have loved you and waited for you so long!"



## NATURE'S SOFT NURSE.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N. ("MEDICUS").

"O sleep! O gentle sleep!  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?"

Shakespeare.

So impressed am I with the value of sleep as a soft and gentle nurse, to guide sick and weary sufferers back to health, that before I enter the room in which I am told some patient has just dropped into a gentle slumber, I feel almost inclined to take the shoes off my feet, as if the place were holy ground. This is no mere sentimentalism I can assure you, reader, for sleep, if uninterrupted, is many times and oft the turning-point in the road that shall lead a poor soul back to health.

I have met the nurse on the staircase, treading lightly and holding up a warning finger, perhaps, and when she has told me that her charge has gone to sleep, I have whispered, "Well, I will go, and call again in three hours' time. Keep the house quiet and still if you possibly can."

"Now, nurse," I have said on my return, "has she had a nap?"

"Oh, yes, sir, a long nap, and she is now awake, but very weak."

"Never mind the weakness, nurse, I think we can combat that."

"Now a little food, but no force work. Just what the stomach can take with ease; a little nice beef-tea with a morsel of toast soaked in it. A little milk, or even a lightly boiled egg. Perhaps a mouthful or two of wine, which must be sipped, because it must never flush the face, or even make the eye to sparkle. No talking. The pillow to be eased a bit, and, if possible, a breath of fresh air admitted. Do not speak to her, but you may read to her. Nothing gloomy, however, nothing that will excite; and she may just dose off again, while you sit by the window to sew or knit."

In cases of illness in which good sleep has been almost banished for a long time, so extremely sensitive are the nerves, that the slightest quick noise will startle and give a

nightmare fright. A pair of scissors falling, or a reel of cotton, or a piece of cloth sharply torn, or, if there be a fire in the room, a tiny morsel of coal tumbling down upon the fender, will be quite sufficient. A distant hum or noise in the streets does not do so much harm, if any. It is the suddenness and unexpectedness of noises that do the mischief.

During sleep, it is well for you to know, the blood-vessels of the brain are to a great extent empty. During the active hours of the day the capillaries, that is, the hair-like veins and arteries, of the brain are full of blood, the latter carrying the aerated and life-giving fluid thereto to be distributed to every portion of it, the former bringing back to the heart the darker blood with used-up products therein. The heart, I need hardly tell even a school-girl nowadays, pumps this away to the lungs to be therein spread out and oxygenated or revived, in which state it returns to the heart and is sent off once more on its mission.

I sincerely hope this part of my health-sermon will not be considered dry reading by my girls. The younger may skip it entirely or go and play with their skipping-ropes, but their elder sisters and their aunts will, I am sure, read it, and, though they may be too young at present ever to be troubled with sleeplessness, a time might come, you know. Physiology is by no means an uninteresting subject in my own opinion. And it explains about everything in the animal economy either when healthy or the reverse.

About those brain capillaries then. Some of them are so small that it takes a microscope to see them, and they are so numerous, not only in the brain but throughout the whole body, that were a human being, plain John Smith let me call him, deprived by some magical power of every other tissue of the body with the exception of the blood-vessels, there would still be a plain John Smith left perfect in shape and feature. Go a little further, if you please, and imagine John deprived of every tissue of his body, including arteries and veins, except the nerves; there you would have him before you still—plain John Smith, only in this case he would be a pale white fellow, not red, as in the former. You see, veins, arteries and nerves are all intimately mixed, not huddled together, and I might say that, while every artery and vein, even the capillaries, is supplied with nerves, every nerve is supplied with blood-vessels. Verily, we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

And now we get to one or two of the causes of sleeplessness, and I beg your undivided attention for half a minute.

I have said, then, that during sleep the capillaries are nearly empty of blood. I do not say quite, because I could not prove it. Therefore, if when lying down at night the excitement of thought or care or worry still keeps those tiny vessels full of blood, one cannot get off to sleep. If, then, one worries more because one can't sleep, matters are only made worse.

You will understand me, then, when I say that the capillaries have a natural resiliency of their own, gifted to them through nerve force, which you may call electricity or heat or anything else you please. Let it suffice to say that every thought we think expands nerve or brain cells and permits the flow of blood into the capillaries, which thus renew the cells until they are worn out with fatigue. As soon as excitement is withdrawn, the resiliency of the blood-vessels tends to empty them of their contents and sleep is the result—in more poetic language, Nature's soft nurse steps in to steep the brain in oblivion and give the brain cells a chance of revivifying themselves in time for the battle of life, which begins immediately after we open our eyes.

Bear in mind, then, that the power to contract and empty themselves is in health ever present in these marvellous capillaries, that this power is far greater in infants and very young children, who ought to sleep from fifteen to twenty hours a day—naturally, I mean. Oh, goodness and mercy forbid we should give them soothing powders to drug and destroy the splendid anatomy of the brain. The brain of young children is not needed, and so the blood is used up in the growth of other tissues, so that a bairn or a baby has nothing to do but to sleep and eat and grow. As she or he gets older, Nature is able to spare more blood for the brain, and the child waxes more intellectual.

Young people, by which term I mean girls in their teens and even in their twenties, still need a good deal of sleep, although they often take more than is good for them; but older people, or, I should rather say, people who are really old, could do with more than they can get. So there is a species of sleeplessness called senile insomnia, and our physiology of sleep steps nimbly in to explain this. The arteries, then, in old age become harder, or to some degree even ossified, and thus lose their power of contracting and emptying themselves.

Again, grief, worry, care, over-hard study, and excitement of all sorts which has been kept up too long, destroy natural nerve force, and therefore the resiliency of the capillaries is for a time destroyed and insomnia is induced.

I may pause here for a moment to say that cases of this kind brought on by such causes might well be called accidental insomnia, and that as it is the loss of nerve force and vitality which brings this condition about, the natural remedy lies in change of scene, proper ventilation of rooms, life in the open air, good food to nourish, and the cold bath to brace, with quiet exercise and interesting recreation. To these may be added tonic medicines, but narcotics only if the physician sees the necessity thereof.

Well, now, I think, we have got fairly well on in our discourse; we have learned, anyhow, that whatever tends to weaken nerve force, and consequently injure the contractile power of the capillary blood-vessels, will bring on insomnia. When, therefore, we know the causes, we have lines laid down to guide us in our treatment. The madness of attempting a radical cure of such cases by giving sleeping draughts must already be apparent to the girl who can think—because these medicines are paralysing in their effect, and are invariably followed by reaction. Mind, I grant that in the hands of the skilled physician they are necessary at times. He has the two evils placed before him, and he chooses the least. Besides during a period of sleep which has been induced or forced by a narcotic, Nature may so far recover nerve force as to be able to get up and get on again with the assistance of better food and fresher air, or—she may not.

Some people can sleep more in one hour than others can in three; this is really the explanation of the saying that some can do with less sleep than others. Certain foods or drinks often banish sleep, or render it far indeed from refreshing, by the effect they have on the nervous system. In fact, these act in a truly mechanical way, for they produce temporary indigestion with all its disagreeable symptoms, such as uneasiness, pain which causes dreaming, weight at the pit of the stomach, and general discomfort, which result in restlessness and semi-congestion of the brain.

Your dreamful sleep is not real. The capillaries are but half emptied. It may seem a strange thing to say, but it is true, nevertheless, that the condition of a person's brain who dreams much is, during sleep, analogous to, if not identical with, that of one suffering from certain kinds of insanity. As with the mad person, so with the dreamer—nothing is real, but reason is, for the time being, unseated and the dreamer thinks it all real.

Unusual noises disturb sleep, so does cold or too much warmth in bed, or anything, in fact, which causes discomfort. I need hardly add that weakness of the body, from whatever cause, and notably anæmia or bloodlessness, prevents one from obtaining really refreshing sleep.

Many girls awake in the morning feeling, they will tell you, as tired as when they lay down. But as the condition is generally banished by activity as the day goes on, it is probably more apparent than real. Yet it is one which wants seeing to, and ought not to be allowed to go on too long, else there may be permanent injury to nerves and blood-vessels, and therefore permanent ill-health.

In anæmic girls such a state may usually be remedied by well-chosen tonics, such as a pill of the carbonate of iron or oxide of iron, with a liver aperient—not quack—now and then, better food, more meat and more fresh air.

In my monthly health-sermons I have over and over again pointed out to my readers the dangers that lie in the administration of sleeping-draughts to either children or

their elders. It is stupor these produce, not real sleep, and they cannot be taken for any length of time without inducing brain mischief, which may be irremediable. Indeed, imbecility in the young and insanity in older folks is very often induced from the habit of taking narcotics such as chloral, opiates, sulphuret, and many of those new drugs which are so much extolled for the cure of insomnia.

Well, now, reader mine, be you young or not so young, this paper will not have been written in vain if it succeeds in having forced on your memory the fact that cases of sleeplessness mean cases of illness, and that the sooner sufferers therefrom are put in a way to be cured the better it will be for them.

Each case differs somewhat in its symptoms and in its causes, so in giving advice to-day I can only generalise.

Doctors often recommend change of scene to patients suffering from insomnia. Well, if they are not too weak, too low and dispirited to take such change and to stand the racket of railway-travelling, it will do good. But if anæmia, with its weaknesses and its wearinesses be present, some attempt must first be made to get rid of it. As I

have already suggested, some preparation of iron will be needed in these cases, and the doctors will very likely combine this with arsenic.

In conclusion, I object to insomnia being looked upon as an incurable disease and the patient thus treated as a confirmed invalid. Better far she should be aroused somewhat by every legitimate means, and we must not forget that a day of outdoor activity is generally followed by a good night's rest. Exercise in the open air should be insisted on; walking is best, even if it should be but sauntering. But no form of exercise does much good if it be not pleasant and recreative.

The bath should be taken—the colder the better—every morning. This is often a cure in itself, and although it takes some considerable power of will in the first off-go, the benefits that accrue from its use are soon very apparent.

The bedroom windows should be kept generously wide open all night, the room having a fire and the bed so positioned that positive draught does not blow thereon.

A little nourishing food after lying down often does good, but heavy suppers should be avoided.

## RÉCHAUFFÉS.

How often, especially in small families, where a new joint cannot be replaced every day, is there discontentment and want of appetite occasioned by seeing the same dish served up half a score of times! That everlasting leg of mutton or cold round of beef annoys one at last, and one eats more for the sake of the pickles or Harvey sauce than for any real relish in the meat.

To serve up these remnants of cold joints in such a manner that their origin is scarcely traceable—to make dainty *ragoûts*, toothsome little *pâtés*, and delicate *réchauffés*—should form a part of every girl's and woman's education; appetites would be invigorated, tempers sweetened, and money saved by the process.

The following recipes, culled while *en voyage*, may prove in some respects new to "our girls."

### GOULACHE.

*Ingredients.*—Cold remains of mutton or beef. One Spanish onion, two ounces of butter, one teaspoonful of mustard, parsley.

Cut the meat into small square pieces. In the butter fry brown the onion, finely chopped. Add the chopped parsley and the meat. Let the meat fry for about five minutes. Strew over the whole mixture a tablespoonful of flour, pepper and salt. Mix well together, and then add the mustard, and, by degrees, half a pint or more of broth, or water with meat extract therein. Let all cook for about five minutes, and serve up over toast or fried bread.

### HACHÉ.

*Ingredients.*—Cold remains of any sort of meat. Two ounces of butter, one Spanish onion, flour, mace.

Hash the meat fine with the parsley. Fry in the butter the chopped onion; add the meat. Strew over a tablespoonful of flour. Fry all together for five minutes. Pour into the mixture, by degrees, a large breakfastcupful of either bouillon or water flavoured with meat extract, pepper, salt, and, if liked, a little mace. A couple of tomatoes added and cooked with this dish is a great improvement to the flavour.

### MEAT BALLS.

*Ingredients.*—Remains of meat, remains of potatoes, parsley, milk, one egg, flour and butter.

Hash up the meat fine, and put it into a basin with the cold mashed potatoes, and a handful of chopped parsley; mix all well together by means of an egg, half a cupful of milk, and a little heated butter. Add sufficient flour to be able to form the mixture into solid little balls. Fry in boiling butter or fat. The balls may be smeared with egg and bread-crumbs if desired. This gives them a better appearance.

### MEAT OMELETTES.

*Ingredients.*—Two tablespoonfuls of flour, three of milk, two eggs, salt, remains of meat.

Add a teaspoonful of salt to the flour and make into a paste with the milk and eggs. Mix well together, and add to the mixture a cupful of finely-hashed meat, and, if liked, a little shredded onion. Prepare in the frying-pan a piece of butter the size of a walnut, and let it be steaming hot. Add to this the mixture made into thin pancakes. One tablespoonful, well strewn over the pan, at a time is sufficient.

### STUFFED OMELETTES.

*Ingredients.*—Two eggs, two tablespoonfuls of flour, salt, milk, remains of any sort of cold meat, minced parsley.

Mix the flour with half a teaspoonful of salt; add two tablespoonfuls of milk and the eggs and beat into a stiff paste. Take the meat and hash it finely with the parsley; then fry it in butter and damp it well with bouillon or a little water. Keep this mixture hot whilst you make thin pancakes from the paste; then, when all the pancakes are ready, put a tablespoonful of the meat in the middle of each and close them up well on all sides. To be served with salad or other vegetables.

### MEAT PÂTÉS.

*Ingredients.*—Cold meat remains, one Spanish onion, parsley, salt, pepper, nutmeg, butter, and flour.

Make butter pastry by rubbing a quarter of a pound of butter into three-quarters of a pound of flour, add a little salt, and work into a dough by adding water. Roll this out very thin, and make into round forms with a glass. Hash up the onions and parsley and fry a light brown in butter; add the meat, finely minced, the pepper, salt, and a little nutmeg, if the flavour is liked. Over all add half a cupful of bouillon or gravy. Take the round forms of pastry, and in the middle of each put a teaspoonful of the mincemeat. Shut up or fold over and close well with the fingers. Paint the *pâtés* with the yolk of an egg, and bake them in a medium oven.

If you do not happen to have an oven, these *pâtés* are excellent if fried in hot swimming butter or fat.

### MEAT PASTRY.

*Ingredients.*—Slices of cold meat, pepper and salt, dripping pastry, butter.

Take the slices of meat, strew a little pepper and salt over them, cover them round with dripping pastry, and fry in swimming butter or fat. Serve with salad or green vegetables.