

The Hot Axle.

The express-train was flying from Cork to Queenstown; it was going like sixty—that is, about sixty miles an hour. No sight of Irish village to arrest our speed, no sign of break-down; and yet the train halted. We looked out of the window; saw the brakeman and a crowd of passengers gathering around the locomotive, and a dense smoke arising. What was the matter? A hot axle!

We were on the lightning-train for Cleveland. We had no time to spare. If we stopped for a half-hour we should be greeted by the anathemas of a lecturing committee. We felt a sort of presentiment that we should be too late, when, to confirm it, the whistle blew, and the brakes fell, and the cry all along the train was, "What is the matter?" Answer, "A hot axle!" The wheels had been making too many revolutions in a minute: the car was on fire. It was a very difficult thing to put it out. Water and oil and sand and swabs were tried, and long detention caused, and a smoke that threatened flame down to end of the journey.

I thought then, as I think now, that is what is the matter of people everywhere. In this swift, "express," American life, we go too fast for our endurance. We think ourselves getting on splendidly, when, in the midst of our successes, we come to a dead halt. What is the matter? The nerves or muscles or brains give out; we have made too many revolutions in an hour. A hot axle!

Men make the mistake of working according to their opportunities, and not according to their capacity of endurance. "Can I run this train from Springfield to Boston at the rate of fifty miles an hour?" says an engineer. Yes. "Then I will run it, reckless of consequences!" Can I be a merchant, and a president of a bank, and a director in a life-insurance company, and a school-commissioner, and help edit a paper, and supervise the politics in our ward, and run for Congress? "I can!" the man says to himself. The store drives him; the bank drives him; the school drives him; politics drive him. He takes all the scoldings and frets and exasperations of each position. Some day, at the height of the business season, he does not come to the store. From the most important meeting of the bank directors he is absent. In the excitement of the most important political canvass he fails to be at the place appointed. What is the matter? His health is broken down; the train halts long before it gets to the station. A hot axle!

Literary men have great opportunities opening in this day. If they take all that open, they are dead men, or worse—living men who ought to be dead. The pen runs so easy when you have good ink and smooth paper, and an easy desk to write on, and the consciousness of an audience of one, two, or three hundred thousand readers. There are the religious newspapers through which you may preach, and the musical journals through which you may sing, and the agricultural periodicals through which you may plough, and family newspapers in which you may romp with the whole household around the evening stand. There are critiques to be written, and reviews to be indulged in, and poems to be chanted, and novels to be constructed. When out of a man's pen he can shake recreation and friendship and usefulness and bread, he is apt to keep it shaking. So great are the invitations to literary work, that the professional men of the day are overdone. They sit, faint and fagged out, on the verge of newspapers and books; each one does the work of three. And these men sit up late nights, and choke down chunks of meat without mastication, and scold their wives through irritability, and mail innocent authors, and run the physical machinery with a liver miserably given out. The driving-shaft has gone fifty times a second. They stop at no station. The steam-chest is hot and swollen. The brain and the digestion begin to smoke. Stop, ye flying quills! "Down brake!" A hot axle!

Some of our young people have read—till they are crazed—of learned blacksmiths, who, at the forge conquered thirty languages; and of shoemakers, who, pounding sole-leather, gat to be philosophers; and of milliners, who, while their customers were at the glass trying on their spring hats, wrote a volume of first-rate poems. The fact is, no blacksmith ought to be troubled with more than five languages; and, instead of shoemakers becoming philosophers, we would like to turn our surplus of philosophers into shoemakers; and the supply of poetry is so much greater than the demand, that we wish milliners would stick to their business. Extraordinary examples of work and endurance may do as much good. Because Napoleon slept only four hours a night, hundreds of students have tried the experiment; but, instead of Austerlitz and Saragossa, there came of it only a sick-headache and a botch of recitation.—Rev. T. De Witt Talmage.

"Without Earnestness."

Without earnestness there is nothing to be done in life; yet even among the people whom we call men of culture but little earnestness is often to be found; in labors and employments, in arts, nay, even in recreations, they plant themselves, if I may say so, in attitude of self-defense; they live, as they read a heap of newspapers, only to be done with them. They remind one of that young Englishman at Rome, who told, with a contented air, one evening in some company, that "to-day he had dispensed six churches and two galleries." They wish to know and learn a multitude of things and not seldom those things with which they have the least concern; and they never see that hunger is not appeased by snapping at the air. When I become acquainted with a man my first inquiry is: With what does he occupy himself, and with what degree of perseverance? The answer regulates the interest I take in that man for life.—Goethe.

ADAM SMITH, a philosopher of olden times, defines necessities of life to include only those commodities that are indispensable to our healthful support.

HER SECRET TROUBLES.

The Unknown Trials Which a Woman Endured Without Complaint—Why They Vanished.

Near the close of one of the most trying of the few hot days of the present year a pale, care-worn woman might have been seen at the window of her dwelling apparently in a condition of complete exhaustion. Her efforts to meet the accumulated duties of her household had been great but unsuccessful, while the care of a sick child, whose walls could even then be heard, was added to her otherwise overwhelming troubles. Nature had done much for her, and in her youthful days she had been not only beautiful but the possessor of health such as is seldom seen. Her home and family duties and the depressing scenes which often accompanied them had proven greater than her splendid strength, and she felt at that moment that life was a burden but that death would be a grand relief. This is no unusual experience. It is, in fact, a most common, everyday occurrence, and a great prayer is constantly ascending from thousands of homes for deliverance from the deadly power which is devolving so many wives, mothers, and daughters, and yet these duties life must be met. No woman can afford to turn aside from the proper care of her home and the ones who are committed to her care, and in doing these duties she may sacrifice her health, and possibly life itself. The experience of one who successfully overcame such trials, and yet retained health and all the blessings that brings, is thus told by Rev. William Watson, Presiding Elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, residing at Watertown, N.Y. "He said:

"My wife became completely run down through overwork and care of a sick member of our household, and I entertained serious apprehensions as to her future. She was languid, pale, utterly exhausted, without appetite, and in a complete state of physical decline. And yet she did not, could not, neglect her duties. I have seen her about the house, trying courageously to care for the ones she loved when I could tell, from the lines upon her face, how much she was suffering. At times she would rally for a day or two, and then fall back into the state of nervous exhaustion. For a week or two I was on my feet, and now I am completely cured. It was certainly a miracle." All druggists keep Kidney-Wort, which is put up in liquid and dry form.

WHY DO YOU WANT?

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