

RESTING BETWEEN HEART-BEATS.

BY REV. CLAY TRUMBULL.

IF there be one symbol above another of tireless activity in living service, it is the throbbing human heart. By day and by night, whether sleeping or waking, in all the years from birth to death, the heart keeps on in its life-supporting toil. The heart-throb is the first token of a new existence; it is the last sign of remaining life, when even the very breath has ceased to come and go.

Modern physiologists have shown that after every heart-beat there is a distinct and well-defined pause of the heart as if for rest, and that the aggregate of these brief heart-naps is about eight hours, or more, out of every twenty-four,—a reasonable amount of sleep for a busy worker. If the human heart can keep at its important mission as steadily and as continuously as it does, and yet gain one-third of all the passing time for absolute and refreshing rest, who can say that his toil is so unceasingly exacting that he has no opportunity for needful rest without a complete break from the responsibilities of his position, and a prolonged intermission of their activities? Who would claim, indeed, that the heart itself would wear better, and do its work longer, if it were to take its resting times in a continuous eight hours of every day, or a continuous four months of every year? What ground is there, in fact, for supposing that the rest that comes to the heart between heart-beats is not the best and the truest rest which the best and the truest hearts could ask for?

Rest is essential to efficient service in any and every sphere; but continuous and prolonged rest is not the order of repose from action in the higher spheres of nature's working. It is the earth-clinging reptile, and not the sun-seeking king of birds, that will sleep for months together in a state that is little better than death itself. It is a sign of cold blood, rather than of hot, when a mammal must hibernate for half a year. In a land where the night is six months long, after a six months' day, there is no high achievement of genius possible, in the season