

A FIT OF THE BLUES.

I went Mr. Editor to our local temple of Thespis to see a piece called a "Cure for the Blues." Between the curtain raiser and the *piece de resistance* I gave myself up to reflection, which not even the twitterings of two love birds behind me, or the chattering of a school boy by my side could interrupt. Why should we want a "Cure for the Blues?" What are they? Whence come they? And why, if there are such things, should they be called Blues? I had just come to the conclusion that I must answer these several questions satisfactorily to myself, when the curtain rose, and for the nonce I dismissed from my mind all thoughts of the derivation of "Blues," and gave myself to the full enjoyment of the humour of the piece put on the stage.

But now I've found out all about it, and find that I myself have often been a victim to a malady, to which the pains of the ancient rack were as nothing.

I find that a 'Fit of the blues' is a fit of spleen, or low spirits. Roach and Esquiroir affirm that indigo dyers are especially subject to melancholy—hence the name "Blues,"—while those who dye scarlet are hot tempered. Paracelsus also asserts that blue is injurious to health and spirits. Therefore there may be more truth in calling melancholy *blue*, than is generally allowed. And now, as to what these same blues are, and in what way they make their presence known.

Happy is the man who knows not what it is to have a "fit of the blues." These "blues" have been thought by many to originate in a disordered liver, the old fashioned remedy being blue pill, I suppose, on the homeopathic principle that "like cures like." There are many and perhaps with truth attribute their "Blues" to the enormous quantity of unappreciated missives contained in blue envelopes, with contents often on blue paper as well. It is a well known fact that ghosts always appear in blue flames, and "blue devils" bear a very strong resemblance to the "blues" themselves. Put a Frenchman out of temper, and you will hear him mutter *sacred blues*. Ask him what he means. He may give you an answer, but it will be of such an enigmatical nature that you will be none the wiser. Blue is the color spoken of as belonging to that class of the female sex, abhorred by their kind, and getting no esteem from the "lords of creation." Blue again is the color of the Peter, that hoisted at the mast head, tells us the sorrows of parting have to be endured. I might go on like this till all is blue, but it's now time for facts.

"The blues" are undeniable facts, a disease equally prevalent among people of extra intelligence, like—well, like you, my reader, it is a dream, for which no satisfactory cure, save "time's all healing hand," has yet to be discovered. I am aware that there are many that try to drown "the blues" in the flowing bowl, but the relief gained is only temporary, and is dearly bought, resulting as it does in a violent reaction, and bringing about a worse state of affairs than before. An attack of "the blues" is generally preceded by a time of excessive good cheeriness, it may be an hour or two after a champagne lunch, it may be after a delightful stroll with one who is our all in all or it may be the morning after a convivial evening that the disease is felt. Often it is that the patient's friends notice the incipient stages long before the patient himself. Should the patient be married his better half will be able to notice the coming attack, by her husband's moroseness and tendency to being bored, it is her duty then to try and stop this blight of a man's life by cheerfulness and encouragement, and at this stage just one Brandy and Soda is allowable. Should the attack not be stayed whilst in the incipient stage, the patient's

condition becomes so unbearable that wife or friends have to leave him.

This is wrong on their part, for the miserable wretch hastens to his study, which now to his bilious eyes is a veritable charnel house, containing as it does—to him—the dead bones of bye-gone sins, and foolhardy adventures—where his condition becomes pitiable indeed. No rest for body or mind. He cannot smoke. One moment he walks the room like a crazy tiger, the next, he is sitting a huddled up mass of human flesh, all the paltry actions of his life crowding before his mind's eye; again floats before him all the ambitions of his past life, thoughts of what he might have been, what he is, and how it is all to end. He sneers at himself for not having carried out the programme which he laid down for himself. He thinks of the friends that he has treated worse than badly, and even wonders if there is such a thing as friendship at all. He thinks of his wife, and wonders what made him such a fool as to marry at all, and then with a cynical smile wonders what she thinks of these same attacks of his? He thinks of his pecuniary difficulties, magnifies them a thousand fold, his friends are a mean lot, oh yes, they'd borrow right enough, but wouldn't lend a \$5 bill to save his soul. He'll be hanged if he'll ever have anything more to do with them. He feels careless and indifferent to all things, utterly *blase*, life is a mistake, its not worth living. Again, his children may be all that a father could desire, his pecuniary position unassailable, and yet he is still ready to curse his very existence, and die the death. Under these circumstances, it is not very wonderful that he should take a morbid interest in funerals, and all that appertain thereto: He will wonder even how his poor body would look, when under the tender care of Mr. Snow, the undertaker, wonders still, if his friends so wished it, how, what was left of him would look, whilst undergoing the embalming treatment, practised with such success by the same Mr. Snow, he can carry his imagination so far, as to recognize Mr. Snow saying, in tones so well known to the undertaking profession, "Lovely body, make a perfect picture sure." Having allowed his imaginations to run riot to such an extent, he pulls himself up short, with a shiver, and a Ugh, ghastly!

These then are "the blues" and let there not be one to laugh or think it exaggerated, because they have as yet escaped an attack: they are no laughing matter, many a coroners jury have brought in a verdict of "mental aberration" from these very same blues. Doctors will call them "indigestion," "mental depression," "liver," while your dearest friend will with a wink, put his hand to his mouth, and elevate his little finger, exploding with laughter at the same time.

And now a word as to the treatment and care of this fearful disease. There is one great preliminary difficulty, and that is to get the patient to own that there is anything the matter with him at all, when taxed by the wife of his bosom, that there is something wrong, he will in nasty disagreeable tones indignantly deny it,—thinking all the time, that if he could get one more brandy and soda, he would be all right—and asks to be left alone and not bothered.

Continued on Page 10.

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