

On Going to Bed

drastic weeding out which Night imposes upon her wooers—so as to cull and choose only the truly meritorious lovers—experience supreme delights which are unknown to their snoring fellows. When the struggle with somnolence has been fought out and won, when the world is all-covering darkness and close-pressing silence, when the tobacco suddenly takes on fresh vigour and fragrance and the books lie strewn about the table, then it seems as though all the rubbish and floating matter of the day's thoughts have poured away and only the bright, clear, and swift current of the mind itself remains, flowing happily and without impediment. This perfection of existence is not to be reached very often; but when properly approached it may be won. It is a different mind that one uncovers then, a spirit which is lucid and hopeful, to which (for a few serene hours) time exists not. The friable resolutions of the day are brought out again and recemented and chiselled anew. Surprising schemes are started and carried through to happy conclusion, lifetimes of amazement are lived in a few passing ticks. There is one who at such moments resolves, with complete sincerity, to start at one end of the top shelf and read again all the books in his library, intending the time really to extract their true marrow. He takes a clean sheet of paper and sets down memoranda of all the people he intends to write to, and all the plumbers and what not that he will call up the next