

"actively ill." It was a source of great mortification to them, but it was constitutional; they could not control it, and no one could attribute it to fear.

The realization of danger is always egotistical. Men waiting to go into action turn their conversation upon their previous hair-breadth escapes and the havoc made among their comrades, just as passengers on a steamer invariably assemble in a storm and relate their former harrowing experiences in the "roaring forties," and travelers on a railway train as soon as it gets to running at a break-neck speed on a dark night begin to tell each other their blood-curdling stories of fatal telescoping and tangled wrecks. These recitals are not calculated to be cheering in their effects, but human nature is so constituted that the mind will dwell upon the horrors which the presence of danger always conjures up, and it seems to find a melancholy relief in expending its thoughts in words.

Superstition, which is the child of fear, is common among all people who lead a life surrounded by dangers. Sailors are proverbially superstitious, and it is natural that such a feeling should enter an army and sometimes warp men's courage. Presentiments are usually common with recruits, but after repeatedly finding their most clearly defined apprehensions unrealized they lose faith in such imaginings, and begin to look upon these things as so lost to all sense of punctuality that they no longer believe in their coming. I have known but one presentiment which was fulfilled, and that was accomplished in such a bungling way as to be robbed of all respect for its methods.

The practical questions involved in this discussion are, Can courage be taught, and, if so, what are the best means of education? Numerous experiments have been attempted in this direction. I knew the father of a large family of boys who became greatly distressed on account of the timidity shown by several of them, and set about educating them up to a higher standard of courage after a method which he had practiced successfully with dumb animals. He had found, for instance, that when a horse showed great terror at sight of a railway train in motion, the surest way to break him of it was to throw him down close to the track and confine him in that position till the train had thundered by. After subjecting the animal to this mode of discipline two or three times its sense of fear was entirely overcome. He applied similar lessons to his boys. If one was afraid to be alone in the dark, the father made him wander repeatedly through the attic rooms at midnight without a light. If another had a dread of the water, he compelled him to swim swift streams and dive off high landings. The

practice was disagreeably heroic for the boys, but the father insisted that it finally drove all fear from the most timid of them. He proceeded upon the theory that fear is fed by the imagination, and as soon as any one is convinced that the objects dreaded are harmless, all fear of them will vanish. He evidently believed, with Schiller, that the chief element in the sense of fear is the unknown.

Some years ago a gentleman traveling on a European steamer became such a victim to his terror of the sea that he attracted universal attention. He allowed his mind to dwell constantly upon the objects of his fears. A morbid curiosity led him to take a look into the boiler-room and watch the blazing fires just before going to bed; every few hours in the night he would open his state-room door and sniff the air to find whether he could notice the smell of smoke, and prow around through the passage-ways to see just when the expected conflagration was going to break out. In a storm he would watch the waves in an agony of fear, in the confident belief that each one was going to swallow up the ship. Finding his business would require him to make frequent ocean trips, he set himself to work on the "mind cure." He gradually schooled his mind until, by a strong effort of the will, it could be in a great measure diverted from dwelling on the causes of his fears. When a sense of terror seized him he struggled manfully to concentrate his thoughts on other subjects, and finally he so far succeeded that, except in very dangerous gales, his fears were completely controlled, and he began to acquiesce in the popular belief that, after all, crossing the ocean was about as safe as crossing Broadway, New York, in the era of omnibuses.

The peculiarity of the cases just related, however, lies in the fact that the dangers were mainly unreal, and all the mind required was to be assured of the harmlessness of the objects which had inspired its fears. If the dangers had been real, and their effects had been destructive, the training by which the fear was expected to be overcome would not have been so effectual. If the father mentioned above had attempted to silence a son's fear of being shot by sending him into battle, the son, instead of finding his apprehensions unrealized would have seen that shots were fatal and that there was actual destruction of life all around him; his worst fears would have been realized, and in this mode of educating him to a higher standard of courage the lessons taught would doubtless have been found unprofitable.

It is true that a person may often nerve himself to meet danger courageously if he has