Rest is the restorer of lost power. Motion is the result of force exerted upon matter, and so long as the force continues to be applied and there are no impediments, the motion will continue. But to the motion of terrestrial bodies impediments always exist, and however much the motion may be stimulated by the renewed application of force, it will be retarded, and will ultimately cease. As an illustration, let us consider an engine run by water power, steam or electricity. As long as the power is applied, the engine runs, for a while, smoothly and with ease. Soon interruptions occur; there is a jar, and a hitch in the action. If this is not looked into and remedied, the machinery begins to run irregularly and something gives way. It either stops altogether, or its action becomes inefficient and the product of its labor useless. One of the most prolific sources of impediment in such machines is friction. This is obviated, as far as possible, by lubrication. But the oil may be carelessly applied or may be of inferior quality, charged with impurities of a gritty nature, thus failing to prevent friction. Parts of the machinery become oxidized, corroded by acids or ground by foreign bodies that find their way into it. Parts are loosened by the violence of the motion, and this condition communicates itself to other parts, until the whole machine is out of order. Now the engine has to be stopped for repairs; the parts worn out or broken replaced by new ones, others cleaned, smoothed and otherwise made fit for use again. Most engines work all day and rest at night, during which period the “master of repairs” examines it and remedies any defect he may discover, in order that it may be able to resume work in the morning....

The human body is a wonderfully complicated machine, yet exhibiting an admirable simplicity in its arrangement and working. It has a “master of repairs” whose name is “Vis Medicatrix Naturæ.” This repairing power dwells within and exercises its function all the time. If the body is properly nourished, the materials for repair are always present. By the process of assimilation the nutritive material is appropriated by each organ or tissue in quantities sufficient to supply the loss, while at the same time a depuratory process is going on to rid the system of the waste material resulting from activity or disease....The system requires a certain amount and a particular kind of nutritive material to keep the animal machine in motion. If this were always systematically administered, the proper balance would be maintained and the body would continue healthy, barring external influences. But, owing to circumstances producing variation in the activity of some of the functions, thus increasing or diminishing the waste, the quantity of the required nutrition varies very materially. Besides, the ignorance of the individual as to what constitutes suitable nutrient, the unstrained indulgence of the appetite, on special convivial occasions perhaps too frequently repeated, cause many to take too much food, or of an improper kind, along with undue quantities of intoxicating beverages. The food on these festal occasions is frequently of a richer and less digestible character than can be easily disposed of by the gastro-intestinal tract. Hence ensue various ailments, by which the whole machinery is disabled; such as gastritis, enteritis, gastro-intestinal catarrh, followed by dyspepsia and its accompanying horrors....When the headache and the acid eructations give evidence of the failure of the stomach to do its work, and of the consequent fermentation of the ingesta, I advise my patients to drink a quantity of warm water and give the stomach a rest. This will give the “master of repairs” dwelling in the body, time to correct the congestion which prevents the development of the gastric fluid and the resulting digestion of the food. After the expiration of the period of rest, I put them upon a suitable diet, both as respects quantity and quality, at the same time prescribing some simple innocuous medicine that will in some degree assist nature without interfering with any function....

All teaching is best enforced by example. If we desire to be heard and obeyed by our clients we must set them a good example in our own conduct. Let us be moderate, taking a reasonable rest in eating, in drinking, in physical exercise, but especially in the labor of the brain, which is the organ most extensively used, and often most abused, by the highly educated and constantly employed physicians. Let us exercise our powers systematically and cautiously, looking to the advantage and benefit of our patients, but at the same time not forgetting ourselves....