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3 YEARS ABED YET DIRECTS BIG INDUSTRY

Amazing Story of M. E. Layne, Heading Vast Enterprise; Taking Rest Cure, but Always Busy

For three years M. E. Layne, president and general manager of the Layne & Bowler Companies of Los Angeles, Houston and Memphis, has been taking the "rest cure" at his spacious South Pasadena home—with the aid of a battery of telephones, a couple of desks, great files and a stenographer.

For three years he has lain on his bed on the sleeping porch of his home, and from his bed directed the multifarious activities of his company—said to be the greatest of its kind in the world.

The amazing story—the story of a man who wouldn't give up and kept "pluggin' along" in the face of death—came to light yesterday.

He told about it reluctantly. The sleeping porch where he has, day after day and night in night out, kept "everlastingly at it" doesn't look, at first glance, like a sick man's bedroom. The visitor's eye is caught first by the files, the desks, and the rattle of a busy typewriter.

ILL FOR FIVE YEARS

But over in a corner, beside an orderly desk, is the bed from which Layne has been directing his business during the long months of his illness. Clear-eyed, mentally alert, he said:

"Five years ago I became seriously ill and had to go to bed for several months. I fit better and for eighteen months I was up and around again, at my office every day. But the strain began to tell and three years ago I went to bed.

"When the doctors told me to take the rest cure it seemed impossible that I could bring myself to the point where I could enjoy life without physical activity. I'm only 55.

"But I learned after a while how properly to relax and get lazy. Then I began to appreciate the benefit of the rest cure. Now that I've become physi-

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HOW INVALID RUNS HUGE BUSINESS



Diagram, by staff artist of Examiner, of sleeping porch office of M. Layne at South Pasadena, with portrait of Mr. Layne at lower left.

—Photo by Blackburn, Houston

SICK-A-BED; RUNS INDUSTRY

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cally lazy," and he smiled, "I'm wondering whether I'll ever get over the habit.

"From the first I felt I couldn't absolutely divorce myself from my business and the men who take part in it. So I had telephones installed beside my bed and kept in touch with things that way for awhile.

"Out of that idea grew the inspiration to keep mentally active while my body was resting. Hence the rests of the telephones, the desks, the files, the stenographer and all the rest. I've simply moved my office here.

"Aman doesn't get a chance to think about the wonderful laterals of communication in the twentieth century until he comes to the place where I am now. It's the telegraph, including night and day letters, the telephones, the daily papers, the financial reports that make it possible for me to keep in constant touch with my own business and the outside world—just as closely as I could in my office downtown.

"I really have more time to think, too. Snap judgment has been replaced by the inclination to consider weightier problems in connection with the work. My staff of executives in Los Angeles confer with me daily, often hourly. By long distance telephone and telegraph I am constantly in touch with the factories at Memphis and Houston.

"Pessimism? Just because I'm here in bed? Never! I like to think I'm still an optimist, a live wire. Often in normal times I have 1000 men on the payrolls, men with whom I am in actual physical contact all the time.

"They talk about depression, business readjustment and all that. Lying here I have come to think of business as being somewhat indisposed just now, not eating very much. And when it recovers, like a sick man, it will eat more. When conditions come into their own again they'll be better than ever before. Just wait and see."

One of Mr. Layne's most valuable possessions is his "thought trap." It's a little black-bound book, and it is at his hand day and night. When he gets an idea concerning his business he makes a note of it; designs come to his mind and he sketches them. Afterward he calls a conference of executives and the scheme is discussed.

His company manufactures pumping equipment, water and oil well supplies. Besides the three factories, it has branches all through the United States. Layne's son, Lloyd, is general manager and vice president of the company at Memphis. Father and son talked for several minutes over the telephone last night.

"Perhaps my strong inclination for business activity is due to my early life," Layne said. "As we say in the drilling business, I started at the top and worked down. When I began the business I was the whole works, main spring, hair spring, dial and all. My father-in-law mortgaged his cows to buy my first drilling rig after I'd been working for \$1 a day and board. That was thirty-eight years ago.

"After the business got well underway I ceased to perform the function of the dial, our sales engineering and field force relieving me. Then I ceased to be the main spring because of the volumes of hard work necessary to meet that increasing demand; business grew and I even ceased to be the hair spring, because of the continuous accurate labor it involved. Now I'm only performing the function of the little 'ding' preceding the alarm."

He is an engineer and inventor, holding several valuable patents.

"But what is your system?" the interviewer asked, "the system that enables you to coast physically and travel in high mentally?"

"Did you ever read Paul's admonition to the Philippians?" he counter-queried. "I've found my inspiration in the eighth verse of the fourth chapter of Philippians. It goes this way:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

"It's good advice, I think. Don't you?"