

THE NATURE OF THE FOOD AND CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

Has not some one said, tell me what sort of food a nation subsists on and I will tell you the character and standing of the people? When it is considered that every thought and word and act is the outcome, directly or indirectly, of nerve or brain influence, and that the brain is sustained only by the food we eat, through the blood, it can be readily enough understood that the nature of the food must influence the character of the thoughts and words and acts. And furthermore, when one considers the close relationship that exists, as every one knows, between the stomach and the brain, and that any physical discomfort (as from indigestion, or dyspepsia) directly influences mental perceptions and actions, one need not have difficulty in comprehending the extent to which the food consumed may and must influence the character of the individual.

It appears there are two ways in which the diet may influence character: one in which improper or excess of food gives rise to derangement and disorder of the digestive organs, in which even heredity not infrequently plays an important part, and of which the history of Carlyle affords an example; another in which some more subtle and less understood influence is exerted, and only becomes manifest through hereditary influences in more or less remote generations. Observe the difference in many characteristics existing between the English, the Scotch and the Irish people. It is well known that the nature of the food used by the masses of the people in England and in Scotland and in Ireland differs materially, and it cannot be doubted that to this is owing in a large measure the difference in the characteristics of the people.

We cannot do better than to give here the words of the *Lancet*, in the article above alluded to. Truly, "as a person by eating naturally and rationally may eat himself, so to speak, into good health, and the happy, joyous spirits which bodily vigor confers, so by eating unnaturally and irrationally, a person may eat himself into ill health, ill nature, unhappiness, and even crime. Unkind words, domestic jars, and social discords, are, in no small degree, due to imprudent eating. Indeed, so long as faulty digestion continues to prevail to any considerable extent, just so long will domestic disquiet and social discord continue to drive happiness from our homes and peace and good-will from society."