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"Plus apud nos vera ratio valet, quam vulgi opinio."

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## ON DIET.

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[Continued from our last.]

For the important discovery, which, like the appearance of a point of rock in a plain, suggests a series of hitherto undiscovered analogous facts, we are indebted to Dr. Claude Bernard. He found, that on puncturing a particular spot of the fourth ventricle of the brain close to the eighth pair of nerves, one of Sir Charles Bell's respiratory system, in an hour or so, evidences of an excessive quantity of sugar were observed. The blood and all the secretions were loaded with it. In one instance a cat with kittens was the subject of experiments, and even the fetuses were all sugared through. The artificial diabetes mellitus lasted for about a week, and then disappeared spontaneously. Besides obtaining this result as a constant consequence of irritating the brain at the particular point mentioned, he observed it to occur after any violent perturbation or lesion of the nervous system. No doubt a portion of sugar, and a large portion, may continue unchanged in the blood, till it passes through the lungs, where it may be oxydized and converted into carbonic acid and water; but there is as little doubt, that what we consume as sugar is largely converted into fat; and hence the fattening effect of a purely sugar diet upon the negroes who work at the sugar-cane plantations. The facts which seem to me of such immense importance to us practically, are these two, that we are now on the road to discover what substances yield the elements of fat to the body, and what the condition of the body

is which enables it to turn its opportunities to account; and what the bodily states are, on the other hand, which debar it from the privilege of converting the bounties of nature into that ductile element, which rounds the harsh masculine features of bone and muscle into feminine beauty, and tends to mollify the temper and tranquilize the mind.

Besides the fat we obtain from the starch and sugar we consume, there is a considerable quantity of it in the principal grains employed in making the various kinds of bread, or the cakes and other forms in which meal is prepared for use. And it is of consequence to know the proportion in which it exists in the different varieties of these bread-stuffs, for upon the amount of fat seems to depend the laxative or binding action of these articles of diet upon the alimentary canal. Professor Johnston, in the book we have before so often alluded to, gives the following proportions:

In fine English wheaten flour.....	2 per cent.
In bran of English wheat.....	6 "
In Scotch oatmeal.....	6 "
In Indian corn.....	8 "

From this table we learn that fine wheaten bread contains only one-third the quantity of oil contained in oat-cake or bread made from bran, and that we may derive a useful hint from this in the management of cases attended with constipation. It is generally supposed, that the bran acted as a foreign body upon the mucous membrane, and that from the irritation it produced, the peristaltic action was increased. This may be partly true, but the presence of the oil is undoubtedly highly conducive to the greater activity of the bowels. Rice contains very little fat, and hence its binding ten-