

the brain for nervous energy and blood, or from the muscles, to respond to mental or muscular activity, the energy which should be applied to digestion is diverted, and the result is that some food is undigested; valuable material is treated as waste because the organs cannot cope with it, or perhaps actual congestion of the stomach sets in, accompanied with pain, discomfort, and irritation. Better far if the exigencies of business require that we should take a hurried bite in the middle of the day, forego the meal altogether, and be content with an egg and milk beaten up and a few biscuits, which will give the stomach little work to do, and at the same time prevent hunger. There is much wisdom in the plan of dining at night, provided it be not too late. Mental and bodily quiescence is needful after a full meal, and can best be obtained after the day's work is done.

It takes the stomach usually four hours to digest a full meal; that is to say to complete its part in the complicated process of digestion, and having mixed the food well with gastric juice to pass it on to the other organs of the alimentary canal. After that it should have a rest and (except in certain exceptional instances) it is wise to allow five hours to elapse between meals.

Eating between times is one of the most injurious of habits. It means that our hard-worked stomach can never rest. Before it has well got rid of one lot of food down comes another, perhaps only in the form of a few candies, but requiring the same treatment exactly as the material of any ordi-

nary meal. This kind of digestive work is what wears the stomach out and creates chronic dyspepsia. When a meal is digesting it is an outrage to load the already busy stomach with a further supply of food, requiring more gastric juice for its dilution and hindering the half-completed process with the former quantity. And yet that is what we are continually doing allowing our children to get into the habit of doing. We should think ourselves badly used if we were made to walk for a whole day without pausing for rest, and our muscles would certainly show signs of fatigue, yet we set our luckless stomachs, with their wonderful muscular coats and secreting glands, to work as soon as we rise, and keep them going for the best part of the sixteen hours of the working day. Not only this, but we oftentimes take the food in a form which gives the digestive organs double work to extract nourishment from, and too often that which is practically useless for the purposes of nutrition.

What we need is food which contains the amount of nourishment, suitable to our condition, and prepared in a way which helps instead of hinders the action of the digestive juices upon it. We want food that can be turned easily and naturally into blood and muscle, not a congested mass of cookery which remains half digested in the body, breeding discomfort and disease.

There is one more consideration which we must take note of, and that is personal idiosyncrasy which exists in the matter of food digestion, just as it does in