

Modern Dietetics.—There is a curious lack of system, and consequently of uniformity, in the rules which guide medical men in their advice on the matter of diet, whether for the healthy or the afflicted. The present method of dieting athletes offers a singular and striking contrast to that which obtained only a few years since, and it is open to question whether we have yet solved the problem how to get the maximum of vital energy with the utmost economy of expenditure on internal arrangements. Still more striking are the vagaries of medical men in arranging the diet of invalids. They are tolerably agreed now-a-days as to the diet of fevers, for the simple reason that the diet is then reduced to its most simple expression. When, however, it comes to advising persons who suffer from inconvenience rather than ill-health, their inconsistency becomes rather too apparent, and patients are never weary of relating the advantages they have derived from deliberate evasion of the instructions laid down for their guidance, this tendency to insubordination being fostered by the contradictory views of different practitioners. It is possible that we do not take a sufficiently broad grasp of the subject. It is true that the dietetic habits of civilized peoples differ from those of men and animals *feræ naturæ*, but we are warranted in concluding that these have grown up in deference to altered requirements and in response to special needs. The habits are none the less natural because they have undergone development. Civilization itself is only a branch of natural history, and not a departure from Nature. We cannot, indeed, depart from Nature's laws. They are immutable and relentless, and if these customs in the aggregate have not been found inconsistent with health, strength and progress in respect of the race, we may be sure that they are the outcome of a process of evolution by which man adapts himself to altered conditions of environment. At the same time, the formation of habits and the engrossing nature of one's pre-occupations in the worry and turmoil of civilized existence, tend to impede that gradual adjustment which is indispensable if the functions are to be adequately fulfilled.

As age advances digestion and assimilation are on the wane,