

SEMINARY DIETETICS.

Few subjects are of more vital importance to the welfare of the present and future generations, than the hygienic conditions under which our children are placed at boarding schools. There is no doubt, but during that period of their lives and development, the foundation is laid for much of the pain and suffering with which our daughters meet in after life.

Have we not all known many instances wherein girls previously healthy, have returned from the academy so broken down in health and strength of body and mind, that when they came to assume the cares and anxieties of maternity, they have become nervous, irritable, exacting, unable to perform properly their household duties, a source of constant anxiety to their husbands and friends, a burden to themselves, and too often the occupants of premature graves?

This should not be the case, and we maintain, that any system of education, that does not return our children to us better developed in both body and mind, (and consequently more healthy,) is wrong.

If their minds are to be educated only at the expense of their bodies and lives, and the health, comfort, and happiness, of those with whom they are to be associated in after life; then, in all sincerity, we say, let them be uneducated.

Mens sana in corpore sano—is said to have embodied a living principle for the old Greeks and Romans. In all their schools they steadily kept in view the healthy development of the body, while providing for the culture of the mind; knowing well how much the healthy working of the mind depended upon a healthy condition of the digestive organs. It has been stated by the President of Amherst College, that where the laws of health are violated, "the once active student becomes physically indolent; his mental powers are dulled; his movements and appearance indicate physical deterioration, and every year some lives are sacrificed."

From a paper in the *Cincinnati Medical Repository*, we learn that by the establishment of a gymnasium at Amherst College, and proper attention to the health of the students, "fresh, ruddy and healthful countenances have taken the place of the sallow, sickly, careworn looks, that of old greeted the observant eye."

The writer says "students are sent away to their meals or their studies, as the case may be, with an appetite to relish, and a stomach to digest without difficulty, classics or mathematics, physics or meta-

physics, beefsteak or roast pig, mincepies or plum-pudding."

The writer very clearly shows that not only has life been saved by the greater attention paid to the healthy development of the body, but there has been an equal gain to the scholarship of the college. Now, if these results have been produced by a wise regard to the hygienic conditions under which our sons have been placed, why should they not be secured for our daughters, whose welfare should be as highly prized by us as that of our boys; while they are also much less able to protect themselves from those little oppressions to which they are often subject within the walls of educational institutions.

Many of our seminaries are wholly unprovided with any adequate means of furnishing satisfactory and healthy bodily exercise, while the diet is of such a character, that no growing girl, making large drafts on her nervous power, by her mental work, can long maintain a vigorous or healthy state of digestion. They are often, too, while dispirited by the separation from home and friends, still further depressed by cold rooms and improper exposure to inclement weather, at times when the female system absolutely requires rest and protection. A diet roll may contain all the elements required for the growth of the body, but if it is not sufficiently varied—if there is too much sameness, day after day, and there is not enough bodily fatigue incurred—the appetite will soon pall, digestion and nutrition will languish, the girl will become anemic, nervous, excitable, and often broken down in health for life. We know that the diet furnished at some of our boarding-schools, for months at a time, has been bread and butter, with tea or coffee, for breakfast; bread and butter, without drink of any kind, for lunch; bread and butter, with tea, for supper, with a very good dinner of meats, vegetables, &c., and we know that notwithstanding the good dinner, the dislike to the frequent repetition of bread and butter without change for so long a time, has produced the utmost loathing on the part of girls, towards the whole diet roll, and severe attacks of indigestion from which it has taken weeks to relieve them.

A peculiar effect observed in these cases, and one which we have often before seen among the children of our public charities where bread enters largely into their daily diet, is that with a flabby state of the muscles and a pasty appearance of the face, the bowels become so tumid that in many instances the ordinary clothing could not be worn.

We hope the profession will take notice of this matter, in the exercise of their functions as medical