

This simple habit will often procure hours of uninterrupted slumber, which would otherwise be passed in restless longing for daylight and breakfast.

I have said, eat sparingly and frequently. eat sparingly, because the digestive action is not so strong as in earlier life, nor is the demand for large quantities of food so urgent. Eat frequently, for several reasons. The digestive organs are not then burdened with large quantities of food, and dispose of it with greater ease. A moderate amount of food in the stomach gives a feeling of comfort and quiet to a person whose sole occupation may be a little reading or knitting, or even nothing at all, when extreme age is reached.

The kind of food to be eaten varies with the condition: if the old person needs building up, the more nutritive foods, that is, those containing the greatest amount of nourishment to a given volume, the greatest proportion of assimilative matter; if, on the contrary, it is necessary to encourage the digestive action, we select stimulating food. In this connection I shall quote from an eminent French authority: "As age advances, not only is one able to bear with impunity food which is piquant, pungent, and more exciting, but the use of these latter foods is necessary to the physiological conditions acquired by the 'organs of digestion.'

"This alimentation becomes especially necessary to individuals whom residence in great cities, sedentary life, and confining work separate in a great measure from the natural conditions of life, found in free air and bodily exercise." With regard to the use of wines or liquor by the aged, I would say, if there is a proper time in the life of a man when he should use stimulating drinks, that time is when he has arrived at a good old age.

A glass of sherry or burgundy during dinner often aids digestion wonderfully. When the tongue is pale, and the desire for food absent, a "nip" of brandy will stimulate the stomach into secreting properly. This condition of atony or sluggishness of action is not at all unusual. A glass of milk-punch at night often goes, as a very good and exceedingly temperate old lady once told me, "to the right spot." Coffee is a natural drink for the aged. Its mildly-stimulating, soothing qualities directly indicate it as a beverage for the old. Gasparin tells us that "coffee has the property of rendering the elements of the body more stable, and thus, if not affording nourishment, it diminishes the waste going on."

The origin of many dyspepsias in the old will be found in the lack of the proper means for the complete mastication of their food. The loss of their teeth, and the neglect to replace that loss with artificial ones until a dyspepsia is established, will often entail a long train of ills. A set of false teeth will sometimes remove dyspeptic troubles of long standing. The teeth with metal plates (platinum or gold), although more expensive than rubber or celluloid, are to be preferred. Mastication must be well performed even if the food is not very solid. The one golden rule is to eat slowly.

Some old people have idiosyncrasies about certain foods, which must not be overlooked. Milk is one of the most easily digested of foods, on account of its various constituents, and can be taken when nothing else is permissible. Eggs, soft-boiled or raw, are easily digested. Oysters, fish, and lamb follow in about the order named. Beef, mutton, and fowls, and wheaten bread, occupy about the same time in digestion. I have met with two forms of dyspepsia more frequently than any others in prescribing for old people—the acid form, where there is an excess of acid found in the stomach, and the atonic form, where there is sluggish action of the mucous membrane of the stomach, and the time for digestion is greatly lengthened. In acid dyspepsia, Dr. Ringer recommends the use of glycerine, stating that an old gentleman upon learning that glycerine prevented milk from turning sour, concluded that it would be just the thing to prevent "himself from turning sour." I have used glycerine combined with charcoal with considerable success in remedying this form of dyspepsia.

Dilute nitro-muriatic acid, a half-teaspoonful in a claret-glass of water, immediately after meals, breaking up the weaker acids and affording the natural acids of the stomach, is an exceedingly useful remedy. The atonic form of dyspepsia, combined with loss of appetite, requires quite a different treatment. The stomach is feeble and needs stimulating; two or three grains of capsicum with one half-grain of aloes in a capsule will will excite it to action; the constipation which often accompanies this form will be obviated. When there are accumulations of gas, charcoal tablets an hour or two after meals generally give great relief; but it is not a good plan to keep up their use permanently, as it tends somewhat toward constipation. Electricity is the great tonic for those debilitated, relaxed stomachs. The