

A poor fellow once went to a dentist with a terrible tooth ache. He fairly groaned with the pain of it, as the doctor was arranging his instruments for the slaughter. Then the dentist told him to open his mouth, and it spread apart like a fox-trap. "That will do," said the doctor, "don't open it any wider. I intend to stand on the outside." The wit of the dentist so tickled the sufferer that the tooth was extracted with comparatively little pain.

I may be asked in which way and by what physical process a hearty laugh does a person so much good. The testimony of great men on this point should have much weight. The gruff old Carlyle said: "Oh, it's great and there is no other greatness—to make some work of God's creation more fruitful, better, more worthy of God—to make some human heart a little wiser, manlier, happier, more blessed, less accursed." Goethe said: "One ought every day at least to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, to speak a few seasonable words." Abraham Lincoln kept a copy of the latest humorous work in a corner of his desk, and it was his habit when fatigued, annoyed or depressed as he often was, to take it up and read a chapter of clean, sensible wit, sheer nonsense—anything to promote mirth and make a man jollier.

An eminent medical practitioner tells us how a laugh benefits the human body; laughter begins in the lungs and diaphragm, setting the liver, stomach and other internal organs into quick, jelly-like vibration, which gives a pleasant sensation and exercise, almost equal to that of horseback riding. During digestion, the movements of the stomach are similar to churning. Every time you take a full breath or when you cachinnate well, the diaphragm descends and gives the stomach an extra squeeze and shakes it. Frequent laughing sets the stomach to dancing, hurrying up the digestive process. The heart beats faster and sends the blood bounding through the body. "There is not," says