

## Health Department.

[A certain space in each number of this journal will be devoted to questions and answers of correspondents on all subjects pertaining to health and hygiene. This department is now in charge of an experienced Medical Practitioner, and it is believed that it will be found practically useful. Questions under this department should be as brief as possible and clear in expression. They should be addressed to the editor of this journal and have the words "Health Department" written in the lower left corner on the face of the envelope.—Ed.]

### About Eating.

We may profess to ridicule the manners and customs of our forefathers, and talk about the enlightenment and wisdom of this, the nineteenth century, but there was much sound sense in some of the customs of the days gone by. For instance, there was grand and good philosophy in that old time custom of having a buffoon or music at the dinner table, for where care and anxiety are allowed to accompany us to our meals, we need not look for sound digestion to wait upon our appetites—if so be that we have any appetites with such uncongenial companions.

True, the buffoon is very often present nowadays, at dinner parties, but if he was made aware that we regarded him as such, he would be highly indignant. The society buffoon is an unintentional one, but he is a buffoon for all that; but his efforts do more to make us very sad than to enliven and cheer us up as did the jesters and buffoons of old make glad the hearts of our ancestors; consequently the modern buffoon cannot be looked upon as, in any way, an aid to digestion, but rather the reverse.

It is better to refrain from eating any dinner at all than to partake of it with an anxious and disturbed mind, and all men should strive to assemble at the family board with kindly feelings and a cheerful spirit. Business cares should be left outside the dining-room door, and if they will intrude themselves let them wait till a more fitting season. Men do themselves an immense amount of injury by letting harassing thoughts engage their attention at dinner time, and though it may be, and undoubtedly often is, a difficult matter to shake them off and consign them to oblivion for the time being, a determined effort will go far towards banishing them, and, if persisted in, may put them to flight for the nonce.

Another thing should be borne in mind and attended to and that is to never sit down to the meal of the day, whichever one it is, after any intense mental effort, for mental and physical injury are almost inevitable.

If you feel exhausted, worn out, "knocked up," "played out" (choose which term you like; they are synonymous) never partake of a full meal; take a cup of warm black tea and a soda-cracker and in a quarter of an hour you will be surprised at the feeling of refreshment you will experience, and this is a permanent feeling and not such as would be imparted by a glass of wine or alcoholic stimulant which merely string you up for a few minutes and then leave you in a worse plight than before. The tea gives stimulus and a little strength, and before that subsides nutriment begins to be drawn from the sugar and milk and biscuit, and the body, gradually and by safe degrees, recovers its usual vigor. Then, in the course of an hour or so, take your regular meal, and it will do you good.

The importance of cheerful conversation at meals as an aid to digestion is too often forgotten. Besides being a preventive to fast eating it keeps the mind agreeably employed and therein lies half the secret of good results from the food we eat. Above

all things avoid "bolting" your food. Human beings are not dogs, and very often wear a temptation to think that they are not nearly as intelligent as those creatures. A dog bolts his food because it is his nature so to do, and he feels no ill effects from doing so—at least we presume not—and it is no more man's nature to swallow his food in "gulps" than it is his nature to stand on his head at meal times and take his food in that position. His stomach is certain, sooner or later, to rebel against any such treatment, and, in the end, nature is sure to get the best of it, and poor man has to succumb.

Nothing is, perhaps, more injurious than to continue eating after one's appetite is appeased, merely because one's food "tastes good." If food is not eaten with a genuine appetite and relish, it is better not to eat at all. Do without eating for half or a whole day if you don't feel like eating, and you will probably be all right. If you have no appetite, never attempt to force victuals down your throat, and pay no attention to that fool's saying "if you don't eat you'll die," for, though it is partially true, inasmuch as you will surely die if you continue not to eat for a few weeks or so, it is all "boah" as often applied. A man's system is frequently just in that condition when food would be injurious, and nature very often intends the temporary withdrawal of his appetite as a mild way of saying, "Give us a rest"—which is a very slangy expression, indeed, for Dame Nature to make use of.

We have all of us heard the phrase, "A good cup of tea or glass of beer (or something else) to wash down one's food." Ye gods! what an idea! If a man cannot swallow his food without "washing it down" he had better give up eating altogether. He is better out of this world, for he can't be much use in it. If we saw a man trying to stuff three pounds of flour into a two pound bag, we should be inclined to think one of two things: either that the bag would suffer or that the man was a noodle; perhaps both; but, the man who tries to eat a full meal when he has not the slightest feeling of appetite, is merely doing what the noodle was trying to do with the flour, only his stomach is the unfortunate bag and bad consequences must come of such a foolish act.

In conclusion let us lay down seven very simple rules for eating: 1. Don't attempt to eat unless you are hungry. 2. Eat plain food. 3. Drink sparingly at meals. 4. Be cheerful. 5. Eat slowly and masticate your food thoroughly. 6. Never "wash down" your food, and 7. Pay for what you eat.

### Breakfast Beverages.

Under this heading the editor of Science groups together a great deal of information on the action of tea, coffee and chocolate. The latter, he says, from its large proportion of albumen, is the most nutritious beverage, but at the same time, from its quantity of fat, the more difficult to digest. Its aromatic substances, however, strengthen the digestion. A cup of chocolate is an excellent restorative and invigorating refreshment even for weak persons, provided their digestive organs are not too delicate. Cardinal Richelieu attributed to chocolate his health and hilarity during his later years.

Tea and coffee do not afford this advantage. Albumen in tea leaves, legumin in coffee berries, are represented in very scanty proportions. The praise of tea and coffee as nutritive substances is, therefore, hardly warranted. Tea and coffee, though of themselves not difficult of digestion, tend to disturb the digestion of albuminous sub-

stances by precipitating them from their dissolved state. Milk, therefore, if mixed with tea or coffee, is more difficult of digestion than if taken alone: and coffee alone, without cream, promotes digestion after dinner by increasing the secretion of juices. The volatile oil of coffee and the empyreumatic and aromatic matters of chocolate accelerate the circulation which, on the other hand, is calmed by tea.

Tea and coffee both excite the activity of the brain and nerves. Tea, it is said, increases the power of digesting the impressions we have received, creates a thorough meditation, and, in spite of the movements of thoughts, permits the attention to be fixed upon a certain subject. On the other hand, if tea is taken in excess, it causes an increased irritability of the nerves, characterized by sleeplessness, with a general feeling of restlessness and trembling of the limbs. Coffee, also, if taken in excess, produces sleeplessness and many baleful effects very similar to those of tea drinking. Coffee, however, produces greater excitement, and a sensation of restlessness and heat ensues. For throwing off this condition, fresh air is the best antidote.

### The Evils of Tight-Lacing.

No girls need to wear stays; they are born as strong and robust as the boys, and would grow up as erect and sturdy if left alone. A small waist on a young girl is a sad spectacle, hideously unnatural. Punch truly said: "The girdle of beauty is not a stay lace." Dr. Conquest forcibly puts the matter. He says: "No custom is more injurious than that of affixing bands round the chests and waists of tender girls. The ribs during the period of growth are readily moulded to the artificial form, admired by depraved taste, and the naturally somewhat flat, broad, and expanding waist of woman gradually becomes by the falling in of the ribs, and by their distortion, the rounded waist so pleasing to the eye of the improver and modeller of God's last, most beautiful, and perfect work."

But as these remarks refer to stays and other artificial supports in their least harmful application, what must be said about tight lacing? Simply this: that seriously interfering as it does with the three vital functions of the body—respiration, digestion, and circulation—its influence on health must be the very worst possible to conceive.

Professor Marshall has given the average height of English women as 63 inches, and he adds the following natural and healthy proportionate measurements: width across the chest 9½ inches; at the waist 9 inches (half an inch less than under the arms); on the hips the width should be 11½ inches; and the circumference of the waist a trifle over 25 inches.

Mr. Treves gives the circumference of the waist in a perfectly developed and normal woman as varying from 26 to 28 inches. The *Venus de Medici* measures 20 inches round the waist, to a height of 5 feet 3 inches.

Now, young ladies, what do your dress-makers say? I leave the matter in your hands, merely pointing out that if this relative proportion be not present, you are undoubtedly deforming yourselves, and more or less jeopardizing your health and life. To be fashionably dressed you must indeed offer up your body like an ancient Christian martyr, to be squeezed and compressed, tortured and twisted. You must take as a model that lady commemorated by Thomas Moore, who had—

"A robe of gold,  
But ah, so tight the nymph had laced it,  
Not a charm of Beauty's mould  
Presumed to stay where Nature placed it."

But if you wish to be healthy and natural, you will discard stays and stay-laces, and should you still crave for some artificial support, adopt a boneless corset, with carding instead of whalebone, or a "basque bodice" in place of a steel cage.—Dr. J. J. Pope in "Number One and How to Take care of Him."

### Regulate the Heat.

In the sitting-room, see that the mercury remains about seventy degrees, rather below than above this. In the sleeping apartment sixty degrees is a very comfortable temperature. A higher degree of heat than this would be quite admissible where

there are young children. The ventilation of rooms in which human beings must remain hours at a time is a very important matter. Separate rooms can only be kept anywhere near reasonably ventilated by raising the window sash one inch from the bottom and lowering it a like distance from the top. By this means the air in the room is constantly renewed and draughts are avoided. The effect of muscular activity on the production of body heat is well known, and this makes it appear that an active habit is the best for the winter season, which is a fact for more reasons than the one just given. For winter wear woolen fabrics are best because of their pliability and of their lightness as compared with the weight of cotton fabrics that would afford the same protection against the cold. The substances to be eaten and drunk in winter should be used as hot as possible and should contain a maximum amount of fat. Hot milk, beef tea, chocolate and soups are especially well adapted as food for winter use, and now fat fries of oyster, sausage, etc., are admissible to a greater extent than at other times. At this season liver oils, such as that of the cod, are very useful to those who can stomach such matters.

### MEDICAL QUERIES.

Persons sending us questions to be answered will confer a great favor by stating their age and general habits.

(ESCLAP, Rockton, Ont.—"What are the pills known as 'Abernethy's' composed of?" Ans. Blue pill 2 grains, compound extract of colocynch 3 grains.

SUBSCRIBER, Toronto.—Ans. About that mustache. Get a druggist to make you up some preparation containing *cantharides*. If that doesn't do what you want, probably nothing will.

JAMES MARSTERS, Cornwallis, N. S., writes: "For some time I have been afflicted with a watery discharge from the nose said to be catarrh, and have persistently treated it with syringes and salt and water without any improvement. Can you give me any advice in view of a cure." Ans. Use, as a douche, a weak solution of permanganate of potash.

Mrs. E. G., Fargo, says: "I suffer terribly from neuralgia and have tried many remedies but none have done me much good. Can you recommend one?" Ans. 1. Hypophosphite of soda taken in one dram doses 3 times a day in beef tea. 2. Apply lightly, with a camel's hair brush, bruised horse radish or oil of peppermint. Both the internal and external remedies may be tried together.

JOHN CRUMMER, Spence P. O., Parry Sound, says: "I have a soreness in my chest, a ringing in my ears, chills, aching in my shoulders, palpitation of the heart at times, water gathers in my throat and sometimes I cough. What should be of use to me?" Ans. Try quinine in 5 grain doses morning and evening, in a little sweetened milk or water. If you feel better after a couple of weeks of this treatment, write again and we will further advise you.

Mrs. E. B. N., Walkerton, writes: "Will you kindly tell me what is the cause of the falling of the left eyelid, the eye constantly watering, sometimes aching, silver specks floating before the eye, and seeing two objects instead of one. What is the matter with my eye, and what would you advise me to do?" Ans. If you are at all advanced in years it is very probable that the symptoms described are due to straining of the eyes by reading or sewing without glasses. As the eye is such a delicate organ and should never be tampered with, or experimented upon by any but a qualified oculist or medical man, you had better consult such a person at once.

### Cleanliness of Sinks.

One of the most prolific causes of defilement and offensive odors in kitchen sinks and their outlets is the presence of decaying grease. This comes from the emptying of kettles in which meat has been cooked, from the dish water, and from the soap. The grease lodges in every crevice, and catches at every obstruction. A remedy may be found in the use of the common alkalis instead of soap—*aqua ammonia* in washing clothes, borax in washing lawns and laces, and washing-soda in cleaning dishes. These alkalis prevent a solid substance from forming in the sink and its pipes, and neutralize all efforts of decomposing fats.

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