

present writer is much inclined to doubt the propriety of grinding off the coarse exterior of wheaten grain. It does not seem by any means likely that nature calculated the human alimentary cavity for the use of the white interior of the grain, exclusive of all the rest, which consists of very different but not less necessary chemical constituents. Wheat forms so large a part of our daily food, that if this be the case, we unquestionably make a departure of a very important kind from the laws of health. Experience is favourable to this view, for the effect of coarse brown bread in relaxing seems only comparable to that of white bread in constipating the bowels.

Quantity of Food—Number and Times of Meals.

With respect to the amount of food necessary for health, it is difficult to lay down any rule, as different quantities are safe with different individuals, according to their sex, age, activity of life, and some other conditions. There is a general and probably well-founded opinion, that most persons who have the means eat too much, and thereby injure their health. This may be true, and yet it may not be easy to assign to such persons a limit beyond which they ought not to go.

The best authorities are obliged to refer the matter to our own sensations. Dr. Beaumont, for example, says that we should not eat till the mind has a sense of *satiety*, for appetite may exceed the power of digestion, and generally does so, particularly in invalids; but to a point previous to that, which 'may be known by the pleasurable sensations of perfect satisfaction, ease, and quiescence of body and mind.'

The number and times of meals are other questions as yet undetermined. As the digestion of a meal rarely requires more than four hours, and the waking part of a day is about sixteen, it seems unavoidable that at least three meals be taken, though it may be proper that one, if not two of these, be comparatively of a light nature. Breakfast, dinner, and tea as a light meal, may be considered as a safe, if not a very accurate prescription for the daily food of a healthy person. Certainly four good meals a day is too much. No experiments, as far as we are aware, have been made with regard to the total amount of solids which a healthy person in active life may safely take in a day. It has been found, however, that confined criminals and paupers are healthiest when the daily solids are not much either above or below twenty-four ounces. Of course, in active life there must be need for a larger allowance, but only to a small extent. We may thus arrive at a tolerably clear conviction of the reality of that excess which is said to be generally indulged in; for certainly most grown people who have the means, not excepting many who pursue very sedentary lives, eat much more than twenty-four ounces.

The interval between rising and breakfast ought not to be great, and no severe exercise or taskwork of any kind should be undergone during this interval. There is a general prepossession to the contrary, arising probably from that feeling of freedom and lightness which most people feel at that period of the day, and which seems to them as indicating a preparedness for exertion. But this feeling, perhaps, only arises from a sense of relief from the oppression of food under which much of the rest of the day is spent. It is quite inconsistent with all we know of the physiology of aliment, to suppose that the body is capable of much exertion when the stomach

has been for several hours quite empty. We have known many persons take long walks before breakfast, under an impression that they were doing something extremely favourable to health. Others we have known go through three hours of mental task-work at the same period, believing that they were gaining so much time. But the only observable result was, to subtract from the powers of exertion in the middle and latter part of the day. In so far as the practice was contrary to nature, it would likewise of course produce permanent injury. Only a short saunter in the open air, or a very brief application to business or task-work, can be safely indulged in before breakfast.

With regard to the time for either breakfast or dinner, nothing can be said with scientific authority. Dr. Combe, who is by no means disposed to take lax or indulgent views with regard to dietary matters, while favourable to an early dinner hour, allows that he has himself changed his hours for both breakfast and dinner, from comparatively early to comparatively late periods, without any perceptible inconvenience. In rural life, it is found convenient to dine not long after the middle of the day; but in cities, where it is necessary to have a long uninterrupted space in the middle of the day for business, a late dinner hour is scarcely avoidable. In such a case a slight lunch serves to keep the strength from sinking; and if dinner is taken not less than five or six hours before bed-time, it is not easy to see how any injurious consequences should follow. The changes that have taken place in meal hours from old times are more apparent than real. The present substantial lunch of fashionable life occurs nearly at the same hour as the Elizabethan dinner, and the present dinner is in all respects, except name, the same as the supper of those times. The only thing which the physiologist would much insist on, is, that between the two principal meals of the day there should be no long fasts. If the interval be above seven hours, a biscuit should be taken after four of the seven hours have elapsed. When the interval amounts to nine hours, the lunch should be a little more substantial, but not of animal food, particularly if any has been taken at breakfast. A glass of wine is often added to a biscuit lunch, or wine alone is taken; but neither of these practices can be commended. While a small quantity of bread or biscuit gives real strength, and is quite sufficient for the occasion, wine only gives a stimulus, serving for the time, but making the case worse afterwards.

A HIGHWAYMAN OUTWITTED.—"Stand and deliver!" were the words addressed to a tailor travelling on foot, by a highwayman, whose brace of pistols looked rather dangerous than otherwise. "I'll do that with pleasure" was the reply, at the same time handing over to the outstretched hands of the robber, a purse apparently pretty well stocked; "but," continued he, "suppose you do me a favour in return. My friends would laugh at me were I to go home and tell them I was robbed with as much patience as a lamb, s'pose you fire your two bull-dogs right through the crown of my hat; it will look something like a show of resistance." His request was acceded to; but hardly had the smoke from the discharge of the weapons passed away, the tailor pulled out a rusty old horse pistol, and in his turn politely requested the thunder-struck highwayman to turn out every thing of value, his pistols not omitted, about him.