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### PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

#### SECOND ARTICLE.

#### FOOD.

The second requisite for the preservation of health is—a sufficiency of nutritious food.

Organic bodies, in which are included vegetables as well as animals, are constituted (as explained under Physiology) upon the principle of a *continual waste of substance supplied by continual nutrition.*

The Nutritive System of animals, from apparently the humblest of these to the highest, comprehends an *elementary tube or cavity, into which food is received, and from which, after undergoing certain changes, it is diffused by means of smaller vessels throughout the whole structure.* In the form of this tube, and in the other apparatus connected with the taking of food, there are in different animals varieties of structure, all of which are respectively in conformity with peculiarities in the quality and amount of food which the particular animals are designed to take. The harmony to be observed in these arrangements is remarkably significant of that *Creative Design* to be traced in all things.

Man designed to live on a mixed Diet.

Some animals are formed to live upon vegetable substances alone; others are calculated to live upon the flesh of other animals. Herbivorous animals, as the former are called, have generally a long and complicated alimentary tube, because the nutritious part of such food, being comparatively small in proportion to the whole bulk, requires a greater space in which to be extracted and absorbed into the system. The sheep, for example, has a series of intestines twenty-seven times the length of its body. For the opposite reasons, carnivorous or flesh devouring animals—as the feline tribe of quadrupeds and the rapacious birds—have generally a short intestinal canal. The former class of animals are furnished with teeth, calculated, by their broad and flat surfaces, as well by the lateral movement of the jaws in which they are set, to mince down the herbage and grain eaten

by them. But the carnivorous animals, with wide-opening jaws, have long and sharp fangs to seize and tear their prey. These peculiarities of structure mark sufficiently the designs of nature with respect to the kinds of food required by the two different classes of animals for their support.

The human intestinal canal being of medium length, and the human teeth being a mixture of the two kinds, it necessarily follows that man was designed to eat both vegetable and animal food. As no animal can live agreeably or healthy except in conformity with the laws of its constitution, it follows that man will not thrive unless with a mixture of animal and vegetable food. The followers of Pythagoras argued, from the cruelty of putting animals to death, that it was proper to live on vegetables alone; and eccentric persons of modern times have acted upon this rule. But the ordinances of Nature speak a different language; and if we have any faith in these, we cannot for a moment doubt that a mixture of animal food is necessary for our well-being. On the other hand, we cannot dispense with vegetable food without injurious consequences. In that case, we place in a medium alimentary canal a kind of food which is calculated for a short one, thus violating an arrangement of the most important nature. A balance between the two kinds of food is what we should observe, if we would desire to live a natural and healthy life.

#### Rules connected with eating.

In order fully to understand how to eat, what to eat and how to conduct ourselves after eating, it is necessary that we should be acquainted in some measure with the *process of nutrition*—that curious series of operations by which food is received and assimilated by our system, in order to make good the deficiency produced by waste.

Food is first received into the mouth, and there the operations in question may be said to commence. It is there to be chewed (or masticated), and mixed with saliva, preparatory to its being swallowed or sent into the stomach. Even in this introductory stage there are certain rules to be observed. Strange as it may appear, to know *how to eat* is physiologically a matter of very considerable importance.

Many persons, thinking it all a matter of indifference, or perhaps unduly anxious to despatch their meals, eat very fast. If we are to believe the accounts of travellers, the whole of the mercantile classes in the United States of America eat hurriedly, seldom taking more than ten minutes to breakfast, and a quarter of an hour to dinner. They tumble their meat precipitately into their mouths, and swallow it almost without mastication. This is contrary to an express law of nature, as may be very easily demonstrated.

Food, on being received into the mouth, has two processes to undergo, both very necessary to digestion. It has to be masticated, or chewed down, and also to re-