

is unable to make any impression upon the dry hard grain. So much for the importance of recommending social meals and the obvious risk of throwing an undue amount of labor upon the stomach by bolting food. Is it not possible, that this habit, which is said to be so common in America, is one of the causes of the remarkable leanness of the people? For, as we shall see afterwards, the ultimate destination of this starch and sugar is to supply fat to the frame.

Another question of great practical importance to us as homeopaths here suggests itself, viz.—whether we do wisely in restraining our patients from all spices. The action of mustard and pepper, and of seasoning generally, is very powerful upon the salivary glands; and it is a remarkable fact, that while the taste for sweet things is the characteristic of childhood and boyhood, the love of tarts and sugar-plums, as a rule, entirely gives place to a relish for spices in maturer years. If we condemn our patients to eat tasteless farinaceous food, shall we not incur the risk of subjecting them to the punishment of the thieving Hindoo, and will they not be too glad to get rid of the insipid stuff as expeditiously as possible, that is, little digested in the mouth, and gulp it down, “unhouseled, unanointed, unanointed,” to the sepulchre of their stomach, where it can hardly expect a proper welcome, coming in so unmannerly a fashion. If this is in any measure true of mature manhood, it will be much more so of advancing years, when the apparatus for disintegrating food, so that it may be well kneaded with saliva, is all broken and useless; and at the same time the sense of enjoyment is diminished, and there is less lively participation of the cerebral functions in those of nutrition. To insist upon an old man eating his beef and bread without mustard, is almost as cruel as to give him mustard without bread and beef. The mustard to him, at least, is an essential; without it he could not instigate the glands of his mouth to pour out their contribution to the first act of digestion.

The starch, then, on its arrival at the

stomach, has already undergone a partial transformation into sugar, the process is there completed by the action of the pancreatic fluid, which bears a close resemblance to saliva, and by the secretions of the stomach itself, the most important of which is the complex substance called *pepsin*, whose characteristic peculiarity is, its power of inducing active molecular changes in all organic matters susceptible of its influence. It is, in short, the digestive principle in its purest form. Besides converting the unreduced remnant into sugar, it acts upon the sugar in such a way as to transform a portion of it into lactic acid. This is also done by the bile, but the full action of the bile upon the chyme is yet unknown, and how sugar is converted into fat is still an unsolved problem—probably an insoluble one, for it is the step out of chemistry into vitality. This first act of vital generation, by which the hard and angular chemical sugar is transformed into the soft and globular vital oil, by which the lamp of life is fed at the lungs, and the whole bodily machine kept pliant and warm, seems to be in some way or other under the direct control of the brain. The nervous system, the differential between what is vital and what is chemical, here asserts its claim for the first time over the contribution to the reconstruction of the living body presented by external nature. This important fact has come to light during the investigations into the cause of the curious disease known by the name of diabetes mellitus, which seems to result from the incapacity of the brain to discharge its requisite office, and transform the sugar, presented to the organs of assimilation, into fat, so that, as sugar enters the blood, and as sugar leaves the body by various excretories, and thus the body is starved of its fat, and extreme emaciation, going on generally to death, is the consequence.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

KILLING ONE'S SELF MADE CREDITABLE.—A man must be a fool who at this day goes to the expense of buying arsenic or a pistol when he tires of life.