

come suffering agonies, the result of having partaken of a mouldy rabbit-pie. Unripe fruit, over-ripe fruit, too much alcohol, muskels, crabs, etc., are all common causes of irritative indigestion.

It is not only in hospital patients that we see the irritative form of indigestion. It occurs among all classes, and is indeed more common among the well-to-do than among the poorer members of the community.

All the causes of irritative dyspepsia may be grouped into three classes: indigestion in the quantity of food eaten; unsuitable food or food that is unwholesome, and insufficient mastication.

There is little to be said under these headings, but I will make one or two remarks about each.

I have already shown you that improper food is a fertile cause of indigestion. Any substance that is not thoroughly fresh or that is not well cooked is likely to cause indigestion in those partaking of it. As I wrote about food some short time back it is unnecessary to enter into the question of feeding here.

Insufficient mastication is a very important cause of dyspepsia. A piece of meat, for instance, that has been well masticated will be digested in about one-fourth of the time that the same piece of meat would take if swallowed whole. Always chew your food well and you will remove one of the greatest causes of difficult digestion.

The treatment for this condition is to give a dose of castor oil, if the patient is a child; and a dose of calomel or blue pill, in the case of an adult. Attention to the feeding is of paramount importance. With adults it is best to withhold food of any kind for twenty-four hours, and after that to eat sparingly and only of very digestible food.

While on this subject, I should like to mention that a "bilious attack" though differing considerably from the affection we have just described is to be treated in the same manner as irritative indigestion.

The second great variety of indigestion is "atonic dyspepsia," that is the condition when the stomach is out of "tone" and does not properly perform its functions.

Unlike the affection we have just discussed, atonic dyspepsia is a very chronic malady, and instead of lasting a day or two often drags on for months or years. It also differs from the

irritative form of dyspepsia, in that diet is by no means the chief factor in its causation, and also in that it does not attack all ages and both sexes indiscriminately.

One of its chief causes is anæmia, and therefore we should expect to find it most commonly in young women. This is indeed the case, the great majority of sufferers being girls between fifteen and twenty-five years of age.

The outpatient department of hospitals give relief to more of these cases than to any other form of illness, they are so common. The symptoms are pain after food; pain in the chest; heartburn; palpitation; water-brash; nausea; loss of appetite and sometimes vomiting. Anæmia is almost always present. Not by any means rarely this condition terminates in ulceration of the stomach, and then, in addition to the above symptoms another is added which is most alarming—that is, vomiting blood.

The treatment of this condition is exceedingly important, because, if it is treated properly and at once, the danger of gastric ulcer is very greatly diminished. There are various ways by which this condition is treated, for its manifestations are of most diverse characters, and the patients are very, very capricious.

As it is an "atonic" affection a tonic treatment is, as a rule, better than any other. A mixture containing iron with possibly arsenic often does a great deal of good. But as you cannot give either of these drugs to a patient with a weak stomach, it is necessary to get the stomach well as soon as possible. Nothing will do this better than bismuth and soda. An occasional pill of aloes and belladonna is also very useful.

The last form of dyspepsia is the "nervous" or "neurotic" kind. The very mention of the word "neurotic" should at once suggest that the condition is almost exclusively confined to women. But, for once, this is not the case; by far the greater number of sufferers from this complaint being business men. And the reason for this is not far to seek.

A city man gets up, let us say at half-past seven. He goes down to breakfast. Having swallowed down his meal with lightning rapidity, he rushes off to catch his train. At lunch time he has his meal and plays a game of chess. He comes home in the evening to dinner. This he eats more or less in a "physiological" manner, and rests after it.

Can anyone expect his poor stomach to stand such insults as these? During digestion the majority of the blood in the body is required by the digestive organs. Consequently, rest after meals is essential so that no more blood than is absolutely necessary should course through the limbs or brain. But here, a man "gallops" through one meal (this of itself would give anyone indigestion) and runs off immediately afterwards, and over another meal he plays chess; and then talks about his "hard luck" because he suffers from indigestion!

The treatment for this condition is as simple in theory as it is difficult to carry out in practice. It is—"Do not hurry over your meals, and always rest both body and mind afterwards."

There are other varieties of true nervous dyspepsia—such as that which occurs in people who are overburdened with cares; the gastric pain of hysteria and some spinal complaints and possibly that obscure condition "migraine." These are all very serious affections and most difficult to cure, as the cause is too often impossible to remove.

Before I leave you, I will give the following maxims to everybody suffering from indigestion or dyspepsia of any kind—

1. Avoid food that is very hot or very cold, especially ices.
2. Avoid potatoes, cheese, pastry, and take farinaceous foods in great moderation. Do not take brown bread in preference to white; it is less nutritious, in every way inferior and far more indigestible.
3. Avoid tea, coffee, and alcohol in all forms—beer, wine or spirits.
4. Never take any drugs if you can possibly help it. Above all, never take "pepsin," unless under the immediate supervision of a physician.
5. Masticate your food thoroughly. Eat slowly and rest half-an-hour after each meal.
6. Do not take one big meal in the day, but four, five, or even six small ones.
7. Always have your meals at the same hour every day.
8. Take a walk every day, rain or shine.
9. Avoid anything that disagrees with you, and never again be tempted to touch that particular article of food.
10. Never eat anything that has not been thoroughly cooked; nor drink anything that has not been boiled.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MEDICAL.

ESSIE WRIGHT.—You certainly suffer from catarrh of the throat, and probably of the nose as well, although you do not give us any information regarding the latter. What is your occupation? The condition which troubles you is often due to excessive use of the voice. Again, do you breathe through your nose? you cannot expect to have a healthy throat if you breathe through your mouth. Doubtless you will tell us "that your nose feels as though it were stuffed up" so that you cannot breathe through your nose. What this means is that the condition of your nose is the cause of the throat affection and must be seen to first. To cure the condition you must spray out your nose and throat three or four times a day with a lotion made by dissolving a teaspoonful of the following powder in half a tumbler of tepid water:—

B. Sodii bicarbonatis
Sodii chloratis aa ʒss.
Potash chloratis aa ʒss.
Sachar. abl. ʒj.

In addition to this an astringent lozenge, such as rhatany or red gum, taken occasionally would do good. We are pleased that you derived so much benefit from sulphur ointment.

FRISCILLA.—Undoubtedly the best thing you can do is to leave your nose alone and not meddle with it. It will probably improve if left alone.

HEALTH-SEEKER.—No; ferns in a bedroom are not injurious to health, provided that the room is not overcrowded with them. The plants to be avoided in rooms are those that have strong scents, especially lilies, jasmine, stephanotis, certain orchids and laurel.

PROSS STANLEY.—The condition of your face is due to the soap you use. It is exceedingly common for the face to become red and to smart after washing with soap which is not intended for toilet use. If you use a good soap which is made for washing the face with you will not be troubled further.

I. R.—1. Styes on the eyelids are very apt to recur, but if they are thoroughly and carefully treated at first the tendency to form again is greatly diminished. When you have a sty, bathe the eye frequently with a warm solution of boric acid (1 in 40). When a yellow point has become manifest, look carefully and see if there is an eyelash in the centre, if there is, pull it out and the trouble will soon subside. Bathe your eye with the lotion for at least a week after all traces of the sty have vanished. If you do this the condition will not return.—2. You should not use a hard brush to scrub your teeth with as it is liable to make the gums bleed. We doubt whether any amount of rubbing could injure the enamel.

CONSTANCE.—We know of no substance that will darken the hair that is not a dye. You had better ask the advice of a hairdresser about this point.

F. G. F.—Your eyes became crossed because of your long sight. No doubt when you first began to read you did not wear spectacles, and this is the cause of your squint. You say you wear glasses now, but are you sure that they are accurately suited to you? We strongly advise you to see an oculist about your eyes, as they ought to be looked to without delay.

MISCELLANEOUS.

VILLA FARM, or TWO-ACRE ESTATES.—There are a good number of foolish people in the world, but surely you would not be so unwise as to invest money in land at Methwold, or any other place, without investigating the property first. You must of course go and see for yourself, interview the tenants already existing there, and also ask the opinions of outside farmers as to the quality of the land and the chances of success in fruit-growing. It would also be as well to call on the clergyman of the parish, who would know better than any one else, perhaps, the success or non-success of previous tenants. Caution is needed in every investment, but especially so when it takes the form of a freehold tenancy. We have great faith in this form of land-culture, and should like to see our towns less populated, and our country places more occupied by actual owners of, and workers on, the land. But each person who contemplates a purchase of land must have her wits about her.