

LONGEVITY AND APOPLEXY.

BY T. GRISWOLD COMSTOCK, M.D.

Longevity is now regarded as a vascular question, and hence the aphorism: "A man is as old as his arteries." It is a matter of daily occurrence that sudden death seems to overtake people of the highest standing in the community. The victims are presidents of republics, statesmen, lawyers, bankers and active business men in official positions. The necessity of constant activity in business as conducted upon our modern fast methods, keeps officials and business managers constantly upon a strain of the highest tension, which is kept up without any relaxation. Such a tension will, in turn, agreeably to the laws of our physical being, be followed by an explosion, when, suddenly and unexpectedly, death ends a useful life.

When we take into account the exigencies and uncertainties of life in large cities, and bear in mind the constant temptations of an evil nature which seem to beset all who occupy high positions of trust to especially indulge in high living, it will be found that personal safety lies between habits that waste and destroy and habits that maintain and preserve us in health. It is the fact that the majority of mankind deliberately choose the former. Can a man past sixty maintain good health and longevity if he always rises from his three meals a day with his stomach gorged? And suppose he is a business man who indulges in six or ten drinks of whisky daily? We will make this query a little lighter. Most men think that they should not leave the table until their appetite is completely gratified. This is another error, and has prematurely ended thousands of valuable lives.

The celebrated Dr. John Abernethy, of London, in discoursing upon the manner of life among the upper classes of well-to-do people in England the high livers, said: "Of what a man eats, one-quarter goes to nourish him, the balance he keeps at his own risk and peril." This quaint and true saying applies at this day to good livers among our own people. The ideal healthy man must constantly control his appetite while at meals, and to do this he should rise from the table with good appetite.

During the heated term in summer, in our climate, people in health should not eat half as much as is their custom in the cold season. In the most instances

of sudden deaths that occur from apoplexy, among subjects over fifty-five years of age, it will be found that in at least ninety per cent. of such cases surfeit or a full stomach has caused rupture of the blood vessel in the brain which caused coma, paralysis and death. The prophylactic treatment of apoplexy is much more satisfactory than when we have a real apoplectic attack to combat.

The daily papers announce frequently sudden deaths and the cause is usually given as heart disease. The patient who died from apoplexy may have had a heart disease as an old affection, but, as a usual thing, death has been hastened because the patient paid no attention to a proper diet, hygiene and regimen.

A full meal, stimulants and perhaps exposure in the hot sun, has brought on the attack. The patient suddenly becomes unconscious and has stertorous breathing and complete coma. When a physician is called to such a case all is excitement, and the relatives and friends insist that the doctor shall do something decidedly of an active nature, in order, as they express it, "to bring out the patient from his serious trouble."

They cannot be made to understand that a blood vessel has broken within the brain envelope and that the coma and paralysis is the consequence. The treatment of all such cases is not satisfactory, because if the patient returns to consciousness and exhibits only a partial paralysis, nature must absorb the blood clot; and this happens sometimes, but a second attack is always to be feared.

If people desire to attain longevity they must, above all other things, adopt *temperate habits*. But old age is not to be wished for unless at the same time the subject is free from disease. I have now in mind a friend and patient of mine who, over sixty years of age, has the appearance of health and youth, and says he always has made it a rule to leave the table with a good appetite.

Whoever will adopt this rule and not deviate from it, and will take care not to weaken or invalidate his vitality by any constant mental over-strain, not given way to anxiety or worry, who will enjoy the blessing of good health, will attain longevity and prevent snapping prematurely the "silver cord of life." To come to practical details: if every subject would, when at the table, decline to eat anything that does not entirely accord with his taste and digestion, or is not well cooked, and even lose one meal, such a little fast will rather do him