

tissues that exist may be in full activity, but the tissues, *good* function, are not yet fully developed. Old people, again, are weak, but here the tissues are debilitated, or becoming worn out. I do not think in adult people all the tissues are changed every seven years, as popularly believed to be the case. Now, I should ask, especially in adult patients, What is strength? and you at once see it is a very complex thing. When the patient advancing in years says he is suffering from general debility, you will probably find also some local disease re-acting on his organism. Our tissues represent to us curious and beautifully elaborate parts in a state of vital "tension." A spring of a watch and its wheels are elaborate, but of no use till the spring be placed in a state of tension. Food (and vegetable food especially) supplies the something we call tension, but in the healthy capacity of each patient to exhibit or sustain this tension, consists his strength; in a word, the power of assimilating food through all its different stages. Now, we know that the impure, close air of cities in August and September is very unhealthy, whether from absence of oxygen, or from the vegetable world being in abeyance as regards its function of absorbing sewage gases, we do not know; but the impure close air of London—in August especially—keeps the spring unbent; children especially do not take their food, and debility with them becomes very prevalent, with diarrhoea, &c.

I am often reminded (in practice) of an excellent observation also, by my friend Mr Hilton; he says: "If limbs remain not used, they waste away—thus, by contracting the muscles; this very functional activity necessitates their nutrition." Now, amongst young ladies, in private practice, you will find the limbs and muscles remain not used; their tissues do not waste enough, and they may be actually debilitated or weak, because they appear so strong! Waste of tissue and nutrition, by some wonderful law, go together. Exercise in the open air also gets rid of *excreta* that lurk in the system and cause debility. Lying in bed is a very common cause of debility—a proper waste of tissues does not go on.

Patients often come to you also with some obscure but active inflammation in the chest—a common cold or influenza—and they invert the old rule, as they "feed a cold, but starve a fever." They are wretchedly debilitated, though, perhaps, taking beef steaks or porter. You prescribe for such cases a saline with antimony, and vegetable diet, and mild starvation for a few days, and they will grow strong, which they would in vain strive to do previously by taking food that was never assimilated. In the same way, you may have good nutrition, but too much exertion of muscle and waste of tissue, as in the very poor class of patients that