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THE AUTO-INTOXICANT AT THE BREAKFAST AND OTHER TABLES.*

By H. M. Speechly, M.R.C.S., Eng., L.R.C.P., Lond.
Pilot Mound, Man.

There is one side of his profession in which the general practitioner holds a great superiority to any other class of practitioner and especially over the surgical specialists. This superiority lies in the intimacy of the former with the habits of his patients. Shrewd the specialist may be in detecting some of the symptoms, but he fails quite often in interpreting the personal equation, and must perforce rely on the more intimate knowledge which the family doctor possesses of the patient's mode of life and thought. Some practitioners are in the habit of cultivating the faculty of careful estimation of each patient's temperament and habits; but there is one habit, one custom which wonderfully often is much neglected by the physician in private practice and which might be far more closely observed. This custom is that of eating and drinking, so common, so usual, so stereotyped that it seems to slip out of notice in treatment, yet from this custom arises the major part of all the diseases treated by the general practitioner at all times and in all places. It is easy to prove this neglect by enquiring of each new patient, "And what diet were you directed to follow?" The answer is usually either

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