ALIMENTATION.

Dr. Richardson, the author of "Hygeia," says in *Good Words*.—

In no department of life, as it at present exists, is the correction of instinct by reason more urgently required than in this matter of alimentation. At no period in the history of this nation have happiness and comfort so prevailed as in the present age. In no age have the people been so well provided with food, so well clothed, so well housed, so well educated. And yet it is true that, in the matter of feeding, nothing could be systematically worse than the systems which still prevail. The errors lie on every side.

Altogether there is an exaggerated importance attached both to eating and drinking. Everybody seems as if he carried about with him a spoon, with something in it to put into somebody else's mouth, "Won't you take something," is the first expected word of common hospitality and good-nature. If a great event of any kind has to be signalized, it must be distinguished by what is characteristically called a feast, which means the supply of certain articles of food and drink beyond what is taken in the ordinary rule of life, and beyond what is in any rational point of view commendable. If a friend be invited to dinner, the immediate object is not to give that friend what will be good for him and for his health, but what may be doubtful for him and extravagant for the giver. In the exuberance of generosity the friend is asked to eat what is no longer food, but so much money which he cannot digest, and which would not help him if he could. If a man praises his cook, and asks a visitor to his table because he has at command the best *chef* in the world, he does not speak of that *chef* as of a man who understands the relation of food to the wants of the body, and who can make the simplest supplies of nature applicable to the readiest and easiest building up of the bones, the muscles, the brain, the senses. He speaks of an artist who can spend the largest amount of wealth in ministering, in the greatest number and variety of modes, to the sense of taste, and who can, thereby, induce the visitor to wreak the worst vengeance on his stomach, and other oppressed organs, which, being overtaxed, make all the body feel with them the weight of the taxation.

From this point of view of alimentation, the art of cooking has but one object,—that of making a huge excess of food find agreeable entrance into the body. There is, however, another mode in which the art of cooking food is degraded. Amongst the working masses, in their everyday life, the food that is eaten loses more than half its value by the faults peculiar to its preparation. You see the working or laboring man going to laborious duties which call for the best and most perfect adaptation of food, so that the force that the food can supply may be all converted into working force; and there is the precious food, the compressed energy of the man for his laboring hours, tied up in a handkerchief, with little regard to its cleanliness, or to the place where it is to be stored until it is required. If you look at the mode in which that food has been cooked, it will strike you, in nine cases out of ten, that the ready digestion of it is beyond any human possibility. The bread will be dry, hard, and probably coarse; the animal food either partly cooked or cooked to dryness: the pastry thick, heavy, cold: the cheese, if as a supposed luxury it be provided, dense, or soft, or acid, or of strongest flavor. To the whole will probably be added one or two cold potatoes, which at their best were hardly boiled, that is to say were boiled hard that they might hold together. Physiologically speaking, a meal of this kind, prepared in the manner I have stated, and prepared in a manner I have copied from direct observation, loses more than half its value. If it contain all the elements necessary for nutrition, it is digested with difficulty and labor; the force expended on it by the stomach, and which ought to be expended in muscular labor of the limbs, is so much labor utterly thrown away. Neither is the mischief finished here. The labored digestion brings on what is commonly called indigestion; the stomach and intestines are distended with flatus, the nervous surface of the alimentary canal is rendered irritable, and the mind thereupon is disturbed. hard work becomes annoying work, and after a long time the body generally suffers in its nutrition owing to the persistent nervous irritation to which it has been subjected.

Thus in the richer and in the poorer classes of our society the errors in the preparation of food are all-pervading. In the one class the alimentary organs are injured by satiety and luxurious excess. in the other the alimentary organs are injured by the extra labor and irritation to which they are daily exposed. The same mistakes extend also through the middle classes of society, though not to so extreme a degree, for here is found occasionally the house-wife who can cook decently, and who, from the necessity for economy, learns, in a practical rule-of-thumb way, the kind and character of food that best suits those under her charge, and the cheapest and most efficient modes of preparation.

ACTION OF COLD UPON MILK.

Our correspondent, Professor Maurice Perkins of Union College, translates for the Country Gentleman from the Paris Comptes Rendus some statements on this subject, which are of interest in connection with the discussions now going on here with regard to the Hardin and other systems of setting milk by cream. It is an abstract from a paper by Eug. Tisserand, read, we presume, before the French Academy:

Numerous experiments have been made by exposing milk to different temperatures varying from 32° F. to 100° F., and the following facts have been elicited:

1. The rise of the cream is the more rapid as the temperature to which the milk is exposed approaches 32.

2. The volume of the cream is greater when the milk has been efficiently cooled.

3. The yield of the butter is also greater when the milk has been exposed to a very low temperature.

4. Finally, the skimmed milk, the butter and cheese, are of better quality when prepared under the above circumstances.

While it is impossible to offer a satisfactory explanation as to the reason why artificial cold should produce a beneficial effect upon the yield and quality of the products derived from milk, it is probable that it may tend to arrest that fermentative decomposition which is so prone to set in with organic fluids, and thus by preventing incipient alteration, indirectly to improve the quality of the material.

The practice of warming the dairy in winter time, so as to maintain its atmosphere at a constant temperature of about 69°, is therefore objectionable: the pans should stand in running water at as low a temperature as can be practically obtained.

It is further suggested that the foregoing facts should be brought prominently before the notice of those who are engaged in the manufacture of dairy products, in order that the many erroneous notions on this subject may be gradually eliminated.—*Country Gentleman.*

Carrier-Birds.—The large numbers of carrier-pigeons used during the Franco-Prussian war, and other circumstances, have excited a wider public interest in these birds than has existed for many years past. In Holland and France the breed is carefully guarded, and in all the European countries fine specimens of the bird find ready buyers. Prussia has a pigeon communication between her capital city and the fortresses of Metz and Strasbourg. In Paris, many of the daily journals receive news of events transpiring in the Legislative Assembly, at Versailles, through the carrier pigeons, in preference to using the telegraph. The birds traverse the distance in from fifteen to twenty minutes, and the intelligence thus reaches the offices more quickly than if the despatches waited their turn for transmission by telegraph. The long employment of the pigeons as news-carriers has been the means of proving conclusively that no instinct guides them back to their cotes. On foggy days they will not attempt to return, nor during the night, except at times when there is a clear atmosphere and a full moon. When released, the bird flies upward and then circles around until it sees certain features of the landscape which it recognizes as being adjacent to its home. These it has learned to know during short flights which it is allowed to make during the training period. and therefore the instant the surroundings of its abode, often extending over a radius of several miles, meet the pigeon's eye, it at once travels with wonderful velocity in their direction. It is said that when a bird fails to remember any portion of the landscape beneath it, it will fly for some miles without any reference to course, and then circle about again, and this will be repeated until a familiar object is caught sight of, or else the bird becomes exhausted, gives up the search, and never returns.—*Our Dumb Animals.*

Travelling Bombs.—The slaughter of three men near this city by the explosion of nitro-glycerine which they were handling has developed some curious and alarming facts. The manufacturer of the article testifies that he has carried a bottle of it in travelling for two years, keeping it in his trunk. Now we all know the gentle handling our trunks get on railroads, and it is in our proof of the tender care taken of our baggage by the baggage smashers, as they are so unjustly called, that we have escaped from frequently being blown up by nitro-glycerine. It was in testimony on the coroner's inquest that it does not explode by fire, but a sharp concussion, a smart blow, a sudden smash would set it off, and everybody and everything near would go off with it to parts unknown. On this account the Hudson River and the Morris and Essex Railroads refuse to carry it; but it is put up in parcels, trunks, boxes, &c., and sent through the country, through the city, across the ferries, by the manufacturers, without the least regard to the lives and property of the community. The record of deaths by such explosions in the few years of its use is awful, and ought to induce the enactment of such laws as will compel the makers of this mixture to transport it only in such ways as to ensure public safety. If no such ways can be devised, then its use must be dispensed with, for it is too much to ask that the lives of the people shall be constantly exposed to the fury of such an agent.—*N. Y. Observer.*

Weight and Nutrition.—The weight of the body has often been assumed as an infallible proof of the maintenance of the condition of the body, or of a man's deposition of tissue, and the food which keeps up a man's weight has been regarded as on that account satisfactorily nutritious. But the weight of the body is no criterion of the value of the food taken; because while the weight remains constant, or even increases, water may increase in the tissues and albumen and fat diminish; or there may be an increase of weight and deposition of fat, while there is also at the same time a diminution of the albumen of the body. Badly nourished people are usually not lighter than others, but their bodies contain more water and less albumen and fat than those who are well nourished. Every cattle-feeder knows that cattle which are being fattened do not at first increase in weight proportionately to the food they take. And yet people commonly regard weight as of great importance in the case of men, though a butcher will not buy a carcass on the merits of its weight alone: he must know the quality of the meat.—*Herald of Health.*

Bastie Glass.—Mrs. Nassau Senior writes to the London *Times* on the curious behavior of tempered glass. She furnished twelve gas burners with tempered glass globes purchased in London, and having the veritable label of M. de la Bastie affixed to each. On the night of October 6, after the gas had been extinguished for exactly an hour, one of the globes burst with a report and fell in pieces on the floor, leaving the bottom ring still on the burner. These pieces, which were, of course, perfectly cold, were some two or three inches long, and an inch or so wide. They continued for an hour or more splitting up and subdividing themselves into smaller and still smaller fragments, each split being accompanied by a slight report, until at length there was not a fragment larger than a hazel nut, and the greater part of the glass was in pieces of about the size of a pea, and of a crystalline form. In the morning it was found that the rim had fallen from the burner to the floor in atoms.

The Sea-Serpent Again.—Another sea-captain and his first officer have added their affidavit to those already on file regarding a marine monster which answers to the general term, "Sea-serpent." This time the creature was seen in the Straits of Malacca, from the deck of the steamship "Nestor." The description corresponds nearly enough with those of previous observers to confirm the belief that huge marine nondescripts exist in the ocean, and are at times seen by man. The incredulous will, of course, be incredulous still.—*Christian Union.*

— Professor Sanborn Tenney, of Williams College, proposes a jolly trip to the Rocky Mountains during next summer vacation—a sort of natural history pic-nic, as it were. His party is to be composed of fifteen members, principally from the Lyceum of Natural History, and all will be required to prepare themselves for the expedition by careful preliminary work. Professor Tenney hopes to work up some important scientific points, while the other objects of the trip will be to enrich the museum of the college and instruct those who accompany him. It will be known as "The Williams College Expedition."

— Every new manufacturer of giant powder or any of the nitro-glycerine explosives seems to feel it his duty to show how hard it would be for an accident to happen with his product. The British dynamite company lately gave a *séance* at which (1) frozen but partially thawed cartridges were thrown violently against an iron plate (2) a four-hundred-pound block of iron was dropped twenty feet upon a light wooden box containing twenty pounds of dynamite. (3) those smashed cartridges were violently exploded by a fuse. All this without accident.

— A French railway conductor, noticing that the boards of mortar beds become very hard and resist decay, has invented a process for preserving wood by impregnating it with lime. Lumber is piled in a vat covered with quicklime, which is slacked by sprinkling. The vat is filled with water up to the top of the wood, which remains some days undisturbed, and is believed to absorb the lime through its whole structure, becoming hardened and secured against dry rot.

DOMESTIC.

WHAT CAN LITTLE GIRLS MAKE

To the question often asked us, "What can little girls make?" we will answer, First, very small girls as well as larger ones can make patchwork quilts, such as their grandmothers used to make: and tidies, towel work and rugs such as their frugal grandmothers never dreamed of.

Most persons begin such work on too large a scale, so that they either weary of it, or give it up altogether. First count the cost of time and money and patience, and then begin. Perhaps, if you choose patchwork, you had better begin on a cradle or crib quilt. A very pretty pattern is a star, made of six diamonds; and the stars all joined together with hexagons, which make them more distinct than if joined by diamonds of one color, and is less work. Many persons baste all their pieces over paper, which takes a great deal of time, and which is useless in this pattern. You can use either silk or calico

Any friend can give you patterns and directions for patchwork.

A very odd blanket for the lounge is made by cutting (or tearing if your material will bear it) all the bits of your bright woollen dresses into strips a quarter of an inch wide, sewing them together at random, and knitting them on needles the size of your finger. This gives the appearance of a *chene* article, especially if your pieces are short and of many colors. The number of stitches you will need depends on the size of your needles. You can try a piece with twenty stitches, to see how you like it; and any one who knits can judge from that how many it will take for the desired blanket.

Your strips should be cut or torn lengthwise, as this is less likely to ravel or fringe out than if done the other way.—*Watchman.*

— Exercise your horses daily. A few carrots with their grain will aid digestion and appetites, and improve their coats. Train colts so that no breaking will be needed. Keep working and carriage horses sharp shod, well groomed, and blanketed when standing out, or in cold stables after exercise. Ventilate stables, and abolish high feeding racks.

Suds.—A little ammonia in a few spoonfuls of alcohol is excellent to sponge silk dresses that have grown "shiny" or rusty, as well as to take out spots. A silk—particularly a black—becomes almost like new when so sponged.

Ham or Tongue Toast.—Cut a slice of bread rather thick, toast it and butter it well on both sides. Take a small quantity of the remains of either ham or tongue and grate it. have ready, chopped fine, two hard-boiled eggs, put both meats and eggs into a stew-pan with a little butter, salt and cayenne, and make it quite hot, then spread quickly on the toasted bread, and serve immediately.

Pastry Made with Suet.—Get a pound of the best suet, with very little membrane running through. Roll the suet on the paste-board for several minutes, removing all the skin and fibres that will appear when rolling it, and this will leave the suet a pure and sweet shortening, looking like butter. Rub this into the flour, salt, and mix with ice water. When ready to roll out for the plates put on a little butter in flakes, rolling it in as usual. After making up paste it is a good plan to put it on the ice or in a very cool cellar for an hour or two before using.

To Destroy Insects.—The Boston *Journal of Chemistry* says that hot alum-water is a recent suggestion as an insecticide. It will destroy red and black ants, cockroaches, spiders, chintz bugs, and all the crawling pests which infest our houses. Take two pounds of alum, and dissolve it in three or four quarts of boiling water; let it stand on the fire until the alum disappears then apply it with a brush, while nearly boiling hot, to every joint and crevice in your closets, bedsteads, pantry shelves, and the like. Brush the crevices in the floor of the skirting or mop-boards, if you suspect that they harbor vermin. If, in whitewashing a ceiling, plenty of alum is added to the lime, it will also serve to keep insects at a distance. Cockroaches will flee the paint which has been washed in cool alum-water. Sugar-barrels and boxes can be freed from ants by drawing a wide chalk-mark just round the edge of the top of them. The mark must be unbroken, or they will creep over it, but a continuous chalk-mark half an inch in width, will set their depredations at naught. Powdered alum or borax will keep the chintz-bug at a respectful distance, and travellers should always carry a package of it in their hand-bags to scatter over and under their pillows in places where they have reason to suspect the presence of such bed-fellows.