

excrement be avoided? Possibly, perhaps, by feeding the invalid a little at a time, at frequent intervals, and by the supply of proteids not so very easily digested to persons in health, the requisite degree of indigestibility depending upon the digestive power. From four to six hours can be allowed for each meal's digestion. There are people whose urine is loaded with urates, and yet who are hungry at the end of two hours after food. When we are puzzled to know what to do with such a case, suppose we try giving them food which cannot be digested so soon. This is merely in the way of suggestion, but it would certainly appear as though such a protraction of the process of digestion would give the liver and kidneys their best chance for a successful work.

Further, apparently, such a protraction of the processes of digestion and elimination best serves the nutritive needs of the economy. It would appear as though the tissues even preferred the scantier and more constant supply. A lady who has travelled extensively tells me that upon her home breakfast of steak or chops she becomes hungry before the noon stop, and that she has had to depend upon ham, hard-boiled eggs and other food. I call it unhygienic and indigestible, when upon the road. Also, I understand that birds who live upon grass seed perish during the storms of the plains, when every source of food is buried by the snow for days in succession; while birds who live upon the larger grains will survive. Upon a cold winter's evening the farmer does not feed his hens upon corn meal and water nor upon wheat siftings, but upon whole corn, which will be digested very slowly and will continue to furnish a supply to the system through the night. The laboring man acts upon a similar plan. In spite of recommendations in regard to soft-boiled eggs, broiled steaks, farinaceous puddings and rare roasts, the workingman prefers and demands what he calls hearty food. This means usually hard-boiled eggs, fried steak—the harder and crisper the better, pot roasts, well boiled down,

corned beef, pork, baked beans, not too well done, potatoes with a core, suet puddings, and pies. Apparently hearty food means food which will remain a long time in the stomach, digesting slowly. The man who works out of doors requires a meal which will "stay by him" from his six o'clock breakfast until his dinner at noon. The reason for this is perhaps not difficult to find. The body is an engine for which the stomach is the coal-box. He would be a bad fireman who would empty his coal-box into his furnace all at one time. He would get up a rousing fire undoubtedly, but if he had to wait six hours before replenishing his coal-box his engine would probably come to a standstill on the road. The wise fireman puts in a little coal at a time and replenishes often. If one has six hours between meals, and continuous effort to provide for, it would be poor policy to put into the stomach food which would digest completely in two hours' time. The laboring man will never agree to such a reform. His present diet is suited to his needs. Even the frying process cannot be logically objected to.

Digestible and indigestible are relative terms. The rating of food depends upon the stomach to which it is to be applied. What is indigestible for one stomach is digestible for another. What is simply digestible in one case is too digestible in another. Food may be too digestible for the traveller, for the worker and for the poor man who cannot afford frequent meals. It can be so digestible as to leave one hungry at the end of two hours and faint at the end of four. It can be too digestible for a diseased liver and kidneys to take care of. Plain food does not mean more easily digested food in these cases. It is significant, perhaps, that milk, so beneficial as a diet in kidney embarrassment, is not a very easily digested food, not by any means so easily digested as raw beef grated, or beef juice, or peptonoids.

Digestibility is not a complete test of food value. "Pre-digested foods" and "easily digested foods" should be reserved for cases in which the digestion is in fault.