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ON DYSPEPSIA.*

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Of all the ills that flesh is heir to, derangements of the digestive processes are doubtless the most common and productive of most suffering, and therefore, with the causes of these derangements, and the best manner to give relief from them we cannot be too familiar. Not only do we suffer from the digestive system itself through derangement of its functions, but many of the derangements and diseases of other organs and parts are secondary to and caused by the imperfect performance of the digestive functions. The more thoroughly we comprehend the digestive process in even its minutest details, and consider the important relations the various steps bear to each other and to the physical economy generally, the more will we be alive to the vital importance of caring for these organs whose duty is to furnish all other organs and parts of this complex mechanism the wherewithal to maintain their integrity, and enable them to perform their allotted functions. So long as these functions are properly performed we are well, and work is a pleasure. We retire at the close of the day to enjoy dreamless repose, waking with the morn to enter on a new day's work in which no duty is irksome, and with a temper that no cross ruffles. Our meals find us with appetites that relish the plainest fare.

The answer of the wife of the good-natured husband to that of the ill-natured one, was, if coarse and blunt, also philosophical. When asked

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how she managed to keep him so good natured, answered, "I feed the brute." The following from Sidney Smith humorously illustrates the relation between indigestion and low spirits. I quote from Lauder Brunton's Lettsomian Lectures. He says: "Happiness is not impossible without health, but it is very difficult of attainment. I do not mean by health merely an absence of dangerous complaints, but that the body should be in perfect tune, full of vigor and alacrity. The longer I live the more I am convinced that the apothecary is of more importance than Seneca; and that half the unhappiness in the world proceeds from little stoppages, from a duct choked up, from food pressing in the wrong place, from a vexed duodenum or an agitated pylorus. The deception as practised upon human creatures is curious and entertaining. My friend sups late; he eats some strong soup, then a lobster, then some tart, and he dilutes these esculent varieties with wine. The next day I call upon him. He is going to sell his house in London and retire to the country. He is alarmed for his eldest daughter's health. His expenses are hourly increasing, and nothing but a timely retreat can save him from ruin. All this is the lobster; and when over-excited nature has had time to manage this testaceous incumbrance, the daughter's health recovers, the finances are in good order, and every rural idea effectually excluded from the mind. In the same manner old friendships are destroyed by toasted cheese, and hard salted meat has led to suicide. Unpleasant feelings of the body produce corresponding sensations in the mind, and a great sense of wretchedness is sketched out by a morsel of indigestible and misguided food. Of such infinite consequence to happiness is it to study the body."

Digestion consists of two processes, the solution of the food and the absorption of the liquid thus formed, and the digestion of a meal is not complete until its soluble portion has been liquified or emulsified and absorbed into the lymphatics or blood-vessels. By *dyspepsia* we mean difficulty, imperfection, or both, in the performance of these processes. As with the general health, so it is with the digestion, it may be strong or weak. The function of digestion in some is so strong as to enable them to eat almost anything with impunity, as turnips, quantities of fat, pastry, etc., while