

IT'S NOT THE DEVIL, BUT

\* DYSPEPSIA. \*

**Men of genius are erratic creatures.** They scoff at the ordinary canons of conduct. They snap their fingers in the face of Mrs. Grundy. We expect Jones to obey the dinner bell, for dinner is the highest thing Jones understands. Genius, when seized with an inspiration, will burn the midnight oil, will neglect the ordinary conditions which make for health, will produce something which will live for ever, even though the effort be fatal.

**Genius and bile are indissolubly wedded.** Carlyle was a genius, and he broke his wife's heart. He was dyspeptic. The world was full of gloom to him. He could not bear to hear a human creature laugh. He was great, but instead of being a Cassandra, he would have been the apostle of gladness, if Dr. Wilson's Herbine Bitters had existed in his day.

The dyspeptic is the most miserable being on the face of the earth. His look is enough to turn a marriage into a funeral. He kills the laugh before it has had birth. The most brilliant intellects have been darkened by it. Most of the sombre things which have been written by our men of genius must be attributed to dyspepsia.

The dyspeptic may have ambition, but he lacks the energy to pursue it. For him the world is wrapped in gloom. The smiles of his sweetheart break against him like rippling waves against the adamantine rock. He turns upon the wife whom he really loves one of those saturnine looks which goes to the heart, and which are more to be dreaded than blows.

If the dyspeptic be young, he soon acquires, as the disease grows upon him, the listlessness and languor of old age. His appetite fails, or it becomes capricious—insatiable one day, indifferent the next. He is pale and thin; there is a lacklustre look in his eye; he is without hope.

It was not inherent wickedness, it was dyspepsia which precipitated the horrors of the French Revolution. Had Sea-Green Robespierre been a healthy

man, he would have hurled the guillotine into the Seine. Had Marat been other than he was—poor, wizened, dyspeptic creature—it would have been his concern to have kept the heads upon the shoulders of honest men, instead of lopping them off by the thousand in that horrible dream of blood he had before Charlotte Corday rid the world of the monster.

**We have fallen upon better days now.** We do not kill people because we differ from them politically or otherwise. But, if we are dyspeptic, we scowl friendship out of countenance. We cast a look of gloom upon love, and it shrivels up. We chase the children from our presence with a growl. We pull down the blinds that God's sunshine cannot come in and bless us. And the cross word, the act which injures another, the wound we give those who love us, and who are sacrificing their lives for our comfort—all these things have their motive, not in original depravity, from which there is no escape, but in a disordered condition of the system.

**Dyspepsia does not immediately kill.** There is not that much good in it, for death would be a blessing to those who are its victims. No; it becomes more acute; it breaks out here in the intolerable headache; it manifests itself there in a depression which nothing on earth can lift, and which makes all things appear dark and funereal, and hopeless; it declares itself yonder in the sunken eye, the colorless cheek.

And that is why you find so many saturnine creatures as you pass through life. We are meant for happiness. The animals, obeying the salutary laws of nature, have no forebodings. Each moment of their lives, in a natural state, spells happiness. And the higher human animal was meant to enjoy the beautiful panorama which God outspread for him.

**Something went wrong.** It was not the Devil. It was bad food. Or badly-cooked food. Or too much at a time. Or heating condiments. Or a departure from a simple, natural regimen in obedience to the fad or fashion of the moment.

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