

### DIGESTION AND INDIGESTION.—A FEW CHRISTMAS HINTS.

A WORD or two on the above cannot be out of place to the readers of the NURSING RECORD at this festive season. Continuous pleasure (so far as it be possible to mankind) is dependent upon good health, and good health upon "moderation in all things." The man who has a coiling python in his stomach will hardly have a merry Christmas, any more than a woman who suffers with a pleuritic pain at every breath she takes. At this season, then, as always, we shall deem it a misfortune if, perchance, any of our readers feel a twinging nerve, a burdened stomach, or an embarrassed lung.

It is common to look upon the stomach as the main organ of digestion, whereas only meat and albuminous foods are digested there; starch being digested in the mouth and intestines, and oil absorbed by the latter only. It is not unlikely that much food is absorbed into the system before being fully digested, and as most of the tissues seem to have in them some digestive principle, it appears reasonable to conclude that every tissue may exercise a special digestive influence upon certain particles that the blood brings to it.

Indigestion is held to be confined to the alimentary canal, but it is doubtless a tree whose roots penetrate to all parts of the body. When the stomach does its work imperfectly, not only is it irritated and burdened by the food, but the tissues of the body are also taxed to compensate for the gastric deficiency. Salivary indigestion is a term never heard of, and few people are aware of the great activity of the saliva upon starchy matters. To overcome indigestion of this kind it is customary to utilize the vegetable salivary principle in malt, which is of marvellous activity. Kepler Extract of Malt is an excellent agent in the digestion of starchy foods.

Speaking of stomach indigestion, we find that meat, vegetables, milk and eggs aggravate this disorder considerably. This is because the ferment required to digest the albuminous principles is imperfect or insufficient. In this case Pepsin (the digestive principle of the pig's stomach) in the form of "Tabloids" may always be relied on.

All forms of indigestion merge into one another, but classifications that are easily made in practice are not always able to be argued out on paper.

It is said that the Veddahs of Ceylon—men who have no guide but instinct on the subject of bulk in diet—do not know why they mix powdered wood in their honey, but they do know that the stomach should be filled. Bulk is necessary to healthy digestion, but bulk and excess are words that differ widely in their meaning. "As a rule," says a great writer, "the rich eat too much, and it evidently tells upon them. Both men and women get stout, and between forty and fifty many begin to suffer from affections which are called by divers names and affect divers organs, such as the lungs, the liver, or other parts, but which are more or less allied to dyspepsia and gout." "The life of a gourmand," says another writer, "is one of continued fever; the blood of such an individual is often unnaturally hot; his secretions are vitiated, his flesh unwholesome, the teeth decay at an early age, and in temper he is often unbearable, not only to his servants, but also to his wife and children. He puts one in mind of an old dog, who snaps and snarls constantly, but cannot bite because his fangs are gone. When you find a man of this sort you may be sure that he not only cats but drinks too much."

Too great a deviation from the normal lines of living must react unpleasantly. To crowd the stomach may mean not to crowd it alone, but every tissue in the body.

The furred tongue, the white of the eye tinged with yellow, complexion of a muddy hue, a bad taste in the mouth in the morning—all these tell the simple story of something more than a strained liver working imperfectly. They tell of poisoned blood and breath, irritated nerves, weakened muscles, and a general impairment throughout the body. Either there has been great or long-continued over-eating, or something has been taken which has tended to impede excretory organs in their work, and to retain in the system what should have been thrown out. The festivities of Christmas-tide are apt to be indulged in so freely that, dietetically, the results may continue in undesirable sequence over many a day. We read of no great eaters in these days, such as we read of in the good old times, and accordingly the habit of taking an after-dinner pill is fast becoming obsolete.

If our readers would take during the Christmas week a Cascara "Tabloid" every other night, and after their hearty meals one or two Pepsin "Tabloids," they would escape the many discomforts that will be the lot of not a few.

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