

SEASONABLE ADVICE.

At this season of the year one is inclined to take rather liberally of the luscious viands and wines; in fact, we start a different line of diet altogether. At the present day, however, when culinary work has become almost a fine art, the stomach is not so often forced to support and digest substances of a particularly indigestible character, but the time-honoured Christmas pudding and the roast beef—the Englishman's pride at the table—these (especially if the latter is at all underdone) will tax digestion to the uttermost, and in the train of this disorganization of the alimentary canal we have a large variety of disagreeable symptoms. Roast beef, if well done, agrees with most dyspeptic persons, but the inside part may prove to a certain extent oppressive to the stomach.

Meat must be cooked in order to facilitate its digestion. Moreover, the cooking of this food destroys the ova of tape-worm, and trichinæ which would otherwise propagate in the system. A few words about indigestion would be appropriate here. It is to a large extent caused by imperfect disintegration due to defective teeth, or it may be caused by a deficiency in the tone of the stomach or the solvent power of the gastric secretion. In such cases it is advisable to modify the diet accordingly, and to thoroughly masticate and not bolt the food. Bad teeth may be easily repaired by the modern dentist, and the latter condition by a system of tonics. Should there be any digestive disturbance it is distinctly advisable to avoid pastry, veal, pork, and other things not easily disintegrated.

The process adopted for kneading pastry makes it exceedingly difficult to digest. The adhesive gluten of the flour is rendered more sticky and adherent by kneading it with fat, so that the act of mastication is not sufficient to cause disintegration in the stomach. In fact, a piece of pie crust is rank poison to many dyspeptics. It has been tersely said by some author or other that what is one man's meat is another man's poison.

The advice of Dr. Milner Fothergill, namely, to avoid excess of fatty, sugary, and alcoholic fluids, would apply to every one. A careful inspection of the menu will enable any one to determine for himself whether such and such an article of diet would be suitable for him. Kean, the actor, is said to have suited the kind of meat he ate to the part he was to play, and selected mutton for lovers, beef for murderers, and pork for tyrants. Some discussion has been recently caused with regard to oysters, it having been suggested that they might be the medium for conveying disease germs into the system. The oyster is spoiled if cooked, and therefore there is no possibility of destroying any microbial growths which may be present. The liver of the oyster, which is the largest portion of the animal, is a mass of glycogen, and is attended with a quantity of a digestive ferment which renders it completely soluble in the stomach; in fact, if the oyster were warmed for a short time it would digest itself. If boiled, however, the ferment is destroyed, and the oyster must be digested like other food.

Undoubtedly many of the probabilities of indigestion are done away with by the dominant mirth at the Christmas-time table. Laughter undoubtedly assists in promoting active performance of the digestive functions. Mirth is better than metaphysics; and

laughter, holding the sides, more wholesome than all the learning of the Egyptians. So saith one of the old-time philosophers. Dr. Bright, physician to Queen Elizabeth, in his long discourse upon "Melancholie," solemnly requests all such as have a predisposition to biliousness to abstain from plum-pudding, muscles of the legs of animals, and all water-fowl, except goose wings, for not only do they cause much bad humour, but disturb both the mind and the temper.

Now, let us consider what the symptoms of dyspepsia are. We find in many catarrh, nausea, excessive flatulence, foul tongue, and unsteady eye. Heavy diet must upset the alimentary system, and the sort of meals we get at Christmas-time will upset any one, even though he have a digestion like that of an ostrich, and can digest toughened substances with impunity. After such feeding, it is necessary to sweep the flues. A chimney will not draw if the flues are blocked; and the bowels are in exactly the same condition—they must be cleared. Bile is secreted under a very low pressure, and a very slight increase in this is sufficient to cause its absorption, and produce nausea and sickness.

For relieving the pain and distressing nausea, it is well to take a strong aperient, for instance, two Laxative Vegetable Tabloids (Burroughs, Wellcome & Co.), which should be followed the next morning with a dose of Franz Josef saline aperient water, and a Compound Tonic Tabloid may be taken three times in the day. If the symptoms persist, it will be advisable to take an Anti-Constipation Tabloid, also three times in the day.

THE RELIEF OF NEURALGIC PAINS.

FROM an old book of great merit we make the following extract, well assured in the belief that the quotation may do some good:—"Cod liver oil is *facile princeps* of nutrient tonics, and is a splendid auxiliary to those medicines which help to build up tissues, to retard degenerative changes, and so act as conservative antidotes to pain. The therapeutics of neuralgia are incomplete in many cases without cod liver oil in the background, or unless it follows the administration of remedies technically called tonic, but which are not more truly tonic than cod liver oil itself. By this medicinal food our work is often crowned and finished. Nerve cells and nerve fibrils are endowed with a higher vitality, and becomes less susceptible to those agencies which cause pain."

Because cod liver oil is a medicinal food, many physicians have fallen into the error of regarding it as a drug instead of as a food to be taken with other food at meal times. They have "doctored" it up in divers ways, and so greatly injured its real nutritive properties. It has been mixed with alkalies, like potash, which form soap; gums, which decompose and turn the oil rancid; essential oils, which disturb digestion and cause eructations.

It has been given plain, and the question may be asked, how long would butter be tolerated if it were given alone and in bulk? Not long. We must bear in mind that cod liver oil is a food to be taken like any other oil with food. Accordingly we recommend those who need this oil to get the Kepler Solution, in which the oil is dissolved in Extract of Malt. It is the most pleasant preparation of cod liver oil extant. We should not leave the subject of neuralgia without mentioning Antipyrin, a few grains (say five) of which will often dispel the severest pain in a few minutes. The dose of this new remedy is from one to two five-grain Tabloids. As a local application Eucalyptia is frequently of much benefit when well rubbed in along the course of the painful nerve.

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