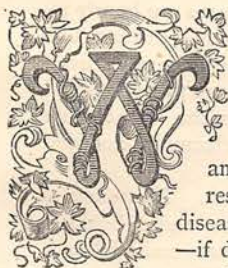


## WANTED, AN APPETITE.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



THE medical men of the present "enlightened age" are apt to look with a little disdain upon the respected practitioners of the last century, and despise in some measure their restricted knowledge of the laws of disease, their limited means of diagnosis—if diagnosis it could always be called—and their simple methods of treatment.

Scores of scientific instruments and appliances, now in daily use, had not then been even dreamt of, while the deadly little lancet was in the hey-day of its glory. The sign of a barber's shop was not then simply a painted pole, but a pole supporting an old cracked plate, and wrapped around with a blood-stained bandage, to tell the passers-by that the barber-chirurgian had just finished with one patient, and was ready and willing to operate on another. Nor did the passers-by fail to take the hint. "I was up rather late last night," the would say, "and I feel it would do me good to lose a little blood." "My head aches so dreadfully," another would remark, "and I haven't a morsel of an appetite. Bother that lobster salad—" and in *he* would go next. And thus it was, if a man felt drowsy of a morning, or tired and not himself, or if his bones ached with the cold, or if he had been injudicious in his eating, round the corner he would hurry to the shop of Mr. Suds, and presently emerge again a new man—so he thought, at least. Now-a-days we know better, and instead of rushing to be bled when feeling rather out of sorts, we have recourse to a bottle of seltzer, or better still, toast-and-water.

Yet, although we have but little respect for those old-fashioned doctors, and their odd old-fashioned ways, we cannot help admitting that they were wonderfully successful in the treatment of many very complicated diseases, and I am greatly inclined to think that the secret of this success may, in a great measure, be attributed to the fact that they invariably paid the most unremitting attention to the state of the stomach and whole digestive system of their patients.

As long as a man can eat, there cannot be very much the matter with him, is a saying which is more common than truthful. I am not going to deny that there is a spice of fact in it, but the converse is much more near to the truth; if a man does not or cannot eat, or if he plays but an indifferent knife and fork, there is certainly something radically wrong with him. It is just as true of a man as it is of a horse, if he is not a good feeder you cannot expect to get very much out of him, and he assuredly will not be a long liver. It is as true of the vegetable as of the animal kingdom. That flower will bloom the most sweetly and luxuriantly, that fruit-tree will be the most prolific, which is best situated either by nature or art for receiving an

abundance of vegetable nutriment, always provided it is not put on short allowance of those best of digestive stimulants, sunshine and fresh air.

"Wanted, an Appetite." Yes, it is, I am sorry to say one of the wants of the age. And nine out of every ten of you who yawn wearily over an untasted breakfast, have but yourselves to blame. What think you does that truly great man, Erasmus Wilson, call such as you?—Madmen. And he goes on to say in his own honest, sturdy language, "Society puts no restraint on such madmen as these; they are permitted to walk at large and become the founders of a poor puny, miserable, consumptive race; a race, mind ye, that in a more primitive state of society would be weeded from the stalwart crop, and hung up to the branch of the nearest tree."

Now I will not go so far as to say that all great men have been good feeders, but all that I ever knew have been so.

No matter whether it was for brain these men were celebrated, or for muscle, they were one and all hearty eaters—though, mind you, far from being gluttons or even epicures. Epicureanism I consider is the sign of a narrow, weakling mind. You must feed the mill to keep it going aright, but if you clog it you stop it.

I never saw a man enjoy breakfast or luncheon more thoroughly than my esteemed friend the late Sir James Simpson, but how his wit and humour flowed on while he ate and drank! How very pleasant was the even ripple of his conversation! How joke followed upon joke, and anecdote upon anecdote, and how his bright eyes used to twinkle, until his very fun became infectious, and mirth provoked an appetite in you, and when you rose from the table you would say to yourself, if not to any one else, that you never enjoyed a meal so much in your life before.

Even Byron was not so ethereal as some of his admirers might wish. He affected abstemiousness as he affected wickedness; he fed well at home and then went out to dine on biscuits and soda-water.

And what is true of men of brain, is equally as true of men of muscle. Budd, the great cricketer and athlete, who at the ripe age of seventy used to play at public matches, was moderate in both eating and drinking, but second to none in the real enjoyment of his food. My friend Gordon Cumming, the lion-hunter—now, alas! dead and gone—rises up before my mind as I write, a man of noble mien, of giant frame, and just as brilliant in conversation as he was strikingly handsome in appearance; and I declare to you honestly, reader, it would have made you hungry only to see that man eat. Donald Dinnie, the champion Scottish athlete and strongest man in the world, has always enjoyed the best of appetites, and never, I believe, forgot to make a good breakfast. But Donald



needs no dainty dish to provoke his appetite. Meat I don't think he ever touches. *Perhaps* he goes the length of a sheep's head on Sunday; but oatmeal and milk is, or used to be, his staple food. And he possesses the frame of a Hercules and the ruddiest of ruddy health.

The bravest men I ever met, whether sailors or soldiers, were men who never wanted an appetite; the best writers, the best politicians, ay, and the best and most eloquent preachers, were men who never wanted an appetite, and who wouldn't be put off with tea instead of dinner on any consideration.

$P=W$  (power equal to weight) is as true a formula as applied to the animal economy as it is to mechanics. As the food you eat and *easily* assimilate, so will your *vim* be, so will your *verve*, so your ability to work by hand or head, so too your health, and *ergo* your power of enjoying life. Life, indeed, may be likened to a balance—imagine yourself in one scale and your food or appetite in the other; if the latter isn't able to support you and keep the balance nicely trimmed, down you go for a dead certainty.

Well, then, if I have already convinced you that  $P=W$ , that according to the loss of substance of our muscles and brains, which is continually going on (a loss which the most evanescent thought or slightest action tends to increase), so must the amount of our food be—if I have done this, one-half of the good which I humbly hope may accrue from a perusal of this paper is already accomplished.

"Wanted, an Appetite." Let us see now what are the sort of people who generally complain of want of appetite, and if we can find the cause of the want, we may possibly be able to suggest a remedy. They may easily and conveniently be divided into two great classes—viz., those who are themselves in a great measure to blame, and those whose lack of appetite is more their misfortune than their fault.

To the first class belong, usually, people who have more money than brains, the pampered sons and daughters of fortune, who have no real stake in life's game, and who spend their days in pleasure-hunting as butterflies float from flower to flower, and are not happy after all. It may not be uninteresting for this class of folks to know that *ennui* is really a disease—a worrying, wearying, life-shortening disease, and the originator of very many other diseases; notably, dyspepsia, which may well be called the beginning of the end. The temptation to such people as these to become epicurean, and to look upon dining or supping as *the* event of the day, is very great. Breakfast with them is a mere passover. Commend me to the man, or woman either, who can eat a good breakfast.

"The longer I live," says Sydney Smith, "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 vened duodenum, or an agitated pylorus. Instance—my friend sups late; he eats some strong soup, then a lobster, then some tart, and he dilutes

these excellent varieties with wine. The next day I call upon him. He is going to sell his house in London—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 recovers, the finances are in good order, and every rural idea effectually excluded from the mind."

This may seem funny, but it's fact. Treatment of such cases—moderation, temperance, and a hobby—have a hobby of some sort by all means, and stick to it—go in for gardening, farming, rabbits, dogs, cats, canaries, or riding and driving.

My second class comprises the great army of toiling men and women—those who have to work wearily in life's vineyard "from the rising of the sun till the going down of the same," and who often have to strive or starve for bread and bare existence. And often must the head ache and the eyes be heavy, and the appetite fail, and the spirits sink to zero.

Those who are confined for long hours in close rooms, in towns or cities, especially deserve our commiseration, and a few simple rules for their guidance may form an appropriate ending for this paper:—

1. Rise early—not later than seven in summer and half-past in winter.

2. On no account neglect the daily matutinal bath, either tepid or cold, soaping the whole body, and finish off with a rough towel; then take time to dress.

3. If weakly, don't go out on an empty stomach, but give yourself time after breakfast for a good long walk in the open air.

4. Eat what you have a mind to for breakfast, but it is just as well to remember that eggs are more digestible lightly boiled, and chops underdone. If your digestion is weak the tea ought to be so too, but plenty of milk won't hurt.

5. Always eat leisurely and masticate the food well. Aërated or stale (two-day-old) bread is better than new.

6. If engaged all day, it is much better to have luncheon, and defer dining until work is over.

7. I pray you avoid alcoholic stimulants. If absolutely necessary, sherry if good is probably the best, or weak brandy-and-water.

8. A cup of pure good coffee is an excellent appetiser before dinner, but is positively injurious after.

9. One's dinner should be slowly partaken of, and so abundant as to cause one to feel afterwards on good terms with himself and all the world. "Unquiet meals make bad digestions."

10. Avoid taking medicine as a rule, unless under dire necessity. A dinner-pill of simply rhubarb and ginger *may* be useful, and ten drops of dilute nitro-hydrochloric acid taken a short time before a meal in a little water often does good.

11. Good rest at night is indispensable if you would have a good appetite and live long. Narcotics are medicated death. Earn your night's rest by plenty of exercise in the open air, by the magic of the matutinal tub, and by moderation and temperance in all things.