

## THE THROAT, ITS TRIALS AND TROUBLES.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



NEARLY all medical men, in this country at least, are agreed that the terrible sufferings through fasting to which the would-be American martyr, Dr. Tanner, lately subjected himself have resulted in the elucidation of no new scientific facts. Nevertheless the great endurance of the man, and the extent to which insulted nature bore the trial, must have caused many thousands of people to ask themselves the question: "Do not most of us use more food and drink than are necessary to maintain our bodies in a state of health?" This question is one that can only be answered in the affirmative, for, as a general rule, people *will* call into requisition their powers of deglutition far too often during the twenty-four hours.

There is no nation whose sons are more healthy and hardy than one where abstemiousness is considered a virtue. Oatmeal is by many considered far from a dainty dish, yet the Scots, who live on little else, show well on it. The Arabs, who will live for days on a handful of dates, are sinewy, powerful, and hard as steel. And depend upon it, what is true in the aggregate is true as regards the individual.

My voice is but a feeble one to be lifted up against what I call the vice of over-indulgence in the dainties and delicacies of the table, so prevalent throughout the length and breadth of England; but just let me beg the reader to call to mind the admission of many of the most eminent men of my profession, that over-eating brings about just as many of the illnesses and sufferings of humanity as does over-drinking, and among them may be mentioned gout, rheumatism and rheumatic gout, liver complaints and kidney ailments, indigestion, which may lead to any disease, and brain enfeeblement, caused by non-refreshing sleep. Much evil is brought about by an over-refined cookery. The plainer the food we swallow the better, and the cruet-stand is often the curse of the table. A pretty ornament it looks, I grant you, glittering with cut crystal and silver, but its tempting sauces and finely-flavoured peppers may generally be looked upon as so much poison. A craving for condiments or hot stimulating dishes is a sure sign of debility of the digestive organs, which is one of the earliest forerunners of rapidly-advancing and probably premature old age.

People must eat to live, I admit; but I want to combat the idea, so prejudicially prevalent among Englishmen, that the more one can eat and the stronger the food partaken of, the healthier and heartier will the eater become. This belief does harm enough during health, but it becomes a still more dangerous and often deadly one during many cases of temporary illness. Think you it can do good to stuff down a patient's throat, at all hours of the day, messes of dainties to tempt the appetite, when the stomach is evidently out of sorts and needing rest? Often and

often a patient's chance of recovery would be greatly increased were the beef-tea basin pitched out of the window, and the port-wine bottle sent after to keep it company. A lesson might be learned from the following story of "Topsy." Topsy was lap-dog to a lady of high degree; but lo! and behold, long ere the poor animal had passed half the brief span of years allotted to the canine race, Topsy was a pitiful sight to see. Obese to a degree, it could take little save carriage exercise, its appetite was lost, the daintiest foods were refused, it screamed in its sleep, its happiness and joy of life were clean gone, and gone too was its good temper. Medical assistance was called in, and the dog was sent to hospital at the house of a well-known skilled veterinary surgeon—since dead. In one week Topsy was well. And what do you think cured her? Only a little judicious starving.

The first signs of coming dyspepsia from errors of the table, are those of a heated and partially dry condition of the mucous membrane, that delicate internal skin that lines all the air-passages and the digestive canal throughout its whole course. The tongue may be furred in the morning, one feels languid, not well-slept, and lacks appetite, while there may also be heat and dryness of the nasal mucous membrane, and perhaps constipation. For such a case I would simply prescribe a little judicious starving. The stomach needs a rest. Good pure water, either plain, aerated, or iced, taken little but often, will save one from the pangs of hunger, or at all events from the inconvenience of it. The liver will then have time to get quit of its bile, and both it and the stomach will be restored to tone. The blood will have time to get clear of its poisonous properties, whether acid or bile, and a newness of life and general freshness will be the happy result.

Many people lack the moral courage to go in for a day now and again of extreme abstemiousness. Such people, then, would do well to get away to sea for twelve hours or more: if they suffer from the motion all the better, they will not then think of eating much.

Could the throat keep day by day a list of the various articles of diet and drink which pass it, their quantity, quality, and times of passing, and present it to its owner at the end of the week, many of us, I trow, would have no cause to wonder that we sometimes feel somewhat "out of sorts."

But I must now say a word about the throat in other senses of the word, as it comprises not only the gullet, but the uvula and tonsils, as well as the organ of voice, and it is intimately connected, as will presently be seen, with the *internal ear*. This paper may therefore have some interest for those who are *deaf*, or partially so. In an article written by me in the April number of the Magazine for 1879, I gave the reader a pretty full account of the disease called quinsy, or acute inflam-



mation of the tonsils. I shall not, therefore, repeat here either its symptoms or treatment. Children that have been exposed to wet, damp, or cold winds are very subject to sore throats. There is usually much pain, swelling, and difficulty of swallowing. The disease, like most children's ailments, requires prompt treatment, the object being to prevent suppuration. You must keep the child in-doors, if not in bed, and give a cooling aperient. Children are frequently very persistent in their refusal to take medicine of any kind, and it is always better to coax than to force them. Indian senna tea, with a little Epsom or Rochelle salts in it, makes a nice easily-administered laxative. About a quarter of an ounce, or rather less, of the senna-leaves is infused in a wine-glassful of boiling water for half an hour, a pinch or two of salts added, the clear liquor is poured off, and coffee may then be added to help to disguise the flavour. It should be served up from a small coffee or tea-pot, and sugar and milk added, when it will seldom be refused. Cool soothing drinks should be given, and about twenty drops of the wine of ipecacuanha every four hours. Hartshorn liniment should be used on the neck and a strip of flannel worn. If this simple treatment should fail to remove the disease, it will be advisable to call in a physician.

The swelling may go away, and the pain externally, and the tonsils remain hard and big. In this case give the child from a tea-spoonful to a dessert-spoonful of cod-liver oil three times a day, and apply iodine liniment once a day externally. Just one hint here to mothers: the value of fresh air and exercise to young children who are unable to walk far cannot easily be over-rated, and the so-called perambulator is a blessing to thousands; but the danger of a child catching cold therein is very great indeed. See, then, that your infants are well wrapped up before they are sent out, and especially that their hands and feet be snug, and you will be well rewarded by having fewer medicines to use in the nursery.

Some people are very subject to elongation of the uvula, that little tongue-like thing that you see hanging down in the centre of the back part of the throat. Although not a dangerous it is a troublesome complaint, from the disagreeable tickling cough to which it gives rise, with sometimes an inclination to retch. There is usually relaxation of the throat along with it, and often the whole system wants bracing up. At the same time, therefore, that astringent gargles—say alum or chlorate of potash—are used, tonics should be taken; the best are those composed of iron, or iron and quinine, in some bitter infusion.

When the tonsils are ulcerated strong applications may be required, probably the solution of nitrate of silver, or solid caustic itself, and in these cases—and indeed I might say in nearly all cases of sore throat—great relief is obtained by inhaling the vapour of either plain or medicated hot water. The inhaler is a very simple contrivance, and can be bought for a few shillings. No family, in my opinion, should be without one in this uncertain climate.

It is often a sad affliction when public speakers,

actors, clergymen, and others are suddenly attacked with sore throat. To such as these the inhaler would indeed be a boon, as the trouble might be checked in the bud by its use. Hoarseness of voice is a disagreeable ailment for either speaker or singer to have. Those that are subject to it should never permit the state of their health to sink below par. Plenty of exercise in the open air is essential, good food, and the use of tonics, ferruginous or otherwise, according to the state of the blood.

In hoarseness after long speaking, I would suggest the following treatment:—Keep quiet, to give rest to the organ of voice; well redden the lower part of the front of the neck with hartshorn and oil liniment; take an aperient pill or two before retiring, and place the feet and legs in a mustard bath, about three ounces of mustard to a pail of hot water. People who speak or sing much in public should well exercise the vocal organs by daily singing or reading aloud in private. I dare say every great singer who ever lived has had her or his own way of clearing the voice, and keeping it clear during a long performance. Everything that can be chewed or swallowed has been tried, from a beef-steak to a bit of borax. The beef-steak would do good by strengthening the body, the borax lozenge sucked and the juice swallowed would act beneficially by removing or preventing relaxation of the throat and glottis.

There is a disease of the throat which I shall do no more than mention here. In medical parlance it is termed bronchocele, or goitre, but commonly swelled or Derbyshire neck. The swelling lies in the front of the neck, below the organ of voice, or Adam's apple. When large it gives rise to very distressing symptoms. A person so suffering should seek another locality wherein to live, and use internally cod-liver oil three times a day, with an iodide of iron and potassium tonic. As an application he will find great benefit from a liniment composed of the compound iodine ointment mixed with equal parts of cod-liver oil.

Inflammation of the tonsils often becomes chronic, or enlargement continues after inflammation has ceased, or the organs become hard and hypertrophied without any inflammation, and this state is a frequent cause of deafness. The *rationale* of this is that the tumours have a tendency to grow upwards and encroach upon the mouth of the eustachian tube. This tube it is that communicates with the drum of the ear and supplies it with air. It can easily be understood, then, that if it is not patent, if it is occluded in any way, either by slight inflammation, as during a cold, or by being pressed upon by a tumour, deafness may be the result. I do not mean to go into the subject of deafness in this paper, further than to say that the kind of enlarged tonsil which produces deafness is not usually visible to the sufferer himself, who may examine his throat at a looking-glass, nor even to the surgeon who merely trusts to inspection by eye alone, and not by finger. This fact ought, I think, to lead many, who have the misfortune to be deaf, instead of settling quietly down to the burden of so great an affliction, to visit some eminent aurist for examination, and mayhap for an operation which will bring relief.