

DR. DIET, DR. QUIET AND DR. MERRYMAN

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist
to the Department of Health.)

"THE best doctors in the world are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet and Dr. Merryman," so wrote Jonathan Swift in 1738. The same may be said with even greater insistence in 1941.

Dr. Diet would prescribe milk (at least a pint for adults; 1½ for children and adolescents), green vegetables; a little meat, liver or fish; potatoes; fruit (particularly citrus, black currants or tomatoes); vegetable salads, wholemeal or germ bread and other whole grain cereals; restraint with sugar and cakes; some butter; in winter, cod liver oil, and in summer, sunbathing in moderation. He would tell you to use iodised salt for all home use.

Dr. Quiet would say that he knows of people whose food enters into a body which is too upset to deal with it. The modern Dr. Quiet very strongly suspects that the development of gastric and duodenal ulcers and other stomach troubles is largely brought about by the failure to cultivate the contented mind.

Wrong Eating

Eating meals in a hurry, or allowing too long intervals between meals; arriving at the table with a sense of worry or agitation or emotional excitement, eating when fatigued by work or lack of adequate sleep—these are the things forbidden by Dr. Quiet. For it is known that the mind exerts a very potent influence over that part of the nervous system which governs the secretions and movements of the alimentary track.

Psychic factors are responsible for nervous dyspepsia which, according to an authority on this subject, is the "disease of the mother who prepares the meal and then wrangles with children or husband at the table; it is the disease of business men and women who gulp down some food at a counter and rush back to work; and it is the disease of the president of the luncheon club or of a travelling sales manager who gives 'pep talks' at luncheons and dinners."

The Proper Way

Dr. Merryman will have none of this. He says that meals should be attrac-

tively served, taken in a pleasant atmosphere accompanied by a clean cloth, a vase of flowers, and interesting conversation. He reminds us that the value of enjoying what you eat lies in the effect it has in promoting the proper flow of

digestive juices and normal movements of the stomach and intestines. He is aware also that if there is laughter and pleasure, there is less attention directed inwardly, less consciousness of the body, a tendency to forget about one's inside.

The ability to concentrate on things outside ourselves, to have hobbies and outside interests, to get away from thinking too much about the food we eat or the symptoms we imagine—that, too, is encouraged by Dr. Merryman. Thus, in the familiar saying "laugh and grow fat" there is good counsel.

(Next week: "The Night Air," by Dr. H. B. Turbott.)

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