

HEALTH PAPERS

(By Dr. J. P. HASTINGS, DUNEDIN.)

II.—The Digestion of Food.

'We eat to live,' says the wise man. I am sorely afraid the saying, 'we live to eat,' would very often come a good deal nearer the truth. Some philosophers have held the seat of the soul is the solar plexus. It is here that the nervous functions of the stomach are largely regulated. Poor solar plexus, too often has your importance been slighted! In order to comprehend the functions of the stomach we must know something about its structure. I would assure my readers that its lining membrane is very delicate—too delicate by far to tolerate with impunity the daily assault of hastily swallowed pieces of meat.

The stomach secretes various juices, which help in the digestion of the food. Its main function is to churn up its contents into a soft pulpy mass. The food so treated passes on into the intestine, and it is here that most of the absorption occurs. The question now arises, 'What happens to the absorbed food material?' The answer may be given under two headings—(1) It goes to build up the body; (2) it gives off energy and heat. Therefore, the best food is that which complies in the highest degree with these two conditions of utility. The human body has been often compared to a steam engine, but the comparison is not strictly correct. In the human body the same kind of food can at one time be used as fuel, and at another time for building up purposes. What engine is there which does not require constant attention? But if we only give our various parts a fair chance we need seldom, if ever, lie up for repairs. If we only give it a fair chance nature will, in most instances, do all this for us. Most people do not treat their bodies fairly. They discuss very learnedly the question of supply and demand in so far as it affects the labor or money market, but seldom do they apply the same principles to the political economy of their own physical states. Rarely do they stop to consider whether they are glutting their local stomach or liver market, at every meal they eat to full satisfaction. These are the people whose overgrown gastric organs may be three times the natural size. A schoolboy once went to visit his aunt, and during the dinner he displayed an amazing capacity for storing away food. At last, except a few tempting dainties, he had demolished everything. With an aspect of sadness he sat gazing silently on the dessert. His dear aunt contemplated with no small terror the idea of providing for such a voracious appetite during the remaining days of his visit. Yet the good woman mustered sufficient courage to murmur faintly: 'Are you quite sure you've had sufficient, Tom; couldn't you manage any more?' A sudden gleam of hope flashed from the youthful hero's eyes as he replied, 'Well yes, thank you, Aunt Mary, I believe I could if I stood up to it.' And the historian records he did so. It is a great mistake to eat to full satisfaction. Always rise from the table feeling you could eat more. Do not force yourself to sit down to a meal for which you have no appetite. If you have been feeling a distaste for food go without one or more of your usual meals. The rapidity with which your relish for food will return will surprise you. As far as possible take your meals dry; drink between meals. The practice of taking a bite followed by a sip of fluid is a very bad one, as the fluid so taken dilutes the saliva in the mouth, and the efficacy of this secretion is therefore considerably impaired. The food now passes prematurely from the mouth to the stomach. It has been neither sufficiently chewed nor insalivated; hence it is not in a proper condition to be treated by the stomach. Eat slowly and chew thoroughly.

Good digestion, necessitates the possession of a good set of teeth. Their value cannot be too strongly impressed upon the public. All parents should see that their children's teeth are kept in good condition. We take it for granted that every adult who possesses the fangs which nature adorned him with will, as far as possible, preserve them intact. It is a good general rule never to have a tooth extracted which can be saved by stopping. Carious teeth, if too far gone, must be removed. The foul matter from such teeth mingles with the food and passes on into the stomach, and good digestion is thereby impeded. Moreover, the poisonous products are absorbed into the blood, producing various constitutional diseases. If you have lost most of your teeth it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of your health that you have artificial ones supplied. With the spread of civilisation the teeth are being lost earlier in the life history of the individual. This is largely owing to the kind of food

taken, and the way in which it is eaten. Our meats and cereals are softened by prolonged cooking. We do not, like our ancestors, tear off with our teeth the half-cooked tough flesh from the bones. To do so would be considered highly improper. Hence we humor the whims of our age. Good breeding demands of us to use a knife and fork in preference to our teeth. But disuse is death. Therefore the human teeth of the present age die early. The constitutional vitality of the individual is also an important factor.

Centennial Celebrations in New York

The Catholic Church in New York on April 8 completed a hundred years of activity. It rounded out on that day a fruitful century. The completion of this hundred years of activity was made by the clergy and laity, headed by Archbishop Farley, an occasion for extraordinary rejoicing. The last week in April was set apart for that purpose. His Eminence Cardinal Logue and the Right Rev. Dr. Browne, Bishop of Cloyne, crossed the Atlantic to take part in the celebrations. A special steamer with Archbishop Farley and the reception committee on board met the vessel and gave the Irish prelates a cordial welcome to New York. The Cathedral was the centre of the formal religious ceremonies, and there, on Tuesday morning, April 28, the American hierarchy joined with Archbishop Farley and his people in a general thanksgiving. Cardinals Logue and Gibbons and the Papal Delegate, Monsignor Falconio, participated in the function. Huge crowds gathered round the Cathedral, and almost everywhere bunting and the Papal flag were displayed. The public procession to the Cathedral, formed by choirs, Catholic laymen, priests of the diocese, brethren of the various Orders, Monsignori, Bishops, and Archbishops, all in full canonicals, was a display of rich color and of pomp and circumstance without precedent in the religious events of the city.

At eleven o'clock a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving began, the celebrant being Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. America's only representative in the Sacred College, Cardinal Gibbons, delivered the sermon. The Papal Delegate assisted at the Mass and shared in the general rejoicing as the representative of the Vatican.

The Holy Father crowned the ceremonies with a special blessing, which was imparted in his name by Monsignor Falconio. In the evening at eight o'clock Pontifical Vespers were sung. The Papal Delegate officiated. Archbishop John J. Glennon was the preacher.

Wednesday, April 29, was the Children's Day. On that day delegations of little Catholics from every parish in the city marched to the Cathedral. There was a solemn Mass at ten o'clock, and a choir composed entirely of parochial school pupils sang the sacred music.

That night the most important of the public functions was held at Carnegie Music Hall. It was a general meeting of the citizens, to which distinguished non-Catholics were invited. Ex-Judge Morgan J. O'Brien presided. There were lay and clerical speakers. The principal addresses were made by Cardinal Logue, Archbishop Farley, Mr. W. Bourke Cockran, Mr. John J. Delany, and Dr. James J. Walsh. On April 30 there were Requiem services at the Cathedral for the deceased Bishops and priests of the diocese. In the evening the Catholic Club threw open its doors in honor of the visiting prelates.

HAVE YOU HAD

YOUR TUSSICURA TO-DAY

FOR THAT COUGH?

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