Evening Telegraph

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1864.

OBESITY.

LETTER ON CORPULENCE,

ADDRESSED TO THE PUBLIC.

BY WILLIAM BANTING.

[IN FULL FROM THE LATEST LONDON EDITIONS.]

Of all the parasites that affect humanity I do not know of, nor can I imagine, any more distressing than that of Obesity, and having just emerged from a very long probation in this affliction, I am desirous of circulating my humble knowledge and experience for the benefit of my fellow-man, with an earnest hope it may lead to the same comfort and happiness I now feel under the extraordinary change—which might almost be termed miraculous, had it not been accomplished by the most simple common-sense means.

OBESITY NOT APPRECIATED.

Obesity seems to me very little understood or properly appreciated by the faculty and the public generally, or the former would long ere this have hit upon the cause for so lamentable a disease, and applied effective remedies, whilst the latter would have spared their injudicious indulgence in remarks and sneers, frequently painful in society, and which, even on the strongest mind, have an unhappy tendency; but I sincerely trust this humble effort at exposition may lead to a more perfect ventilation of the subject and a better feeling for the afflicted.

It would afford me infinite pleasure and satisfaction to name the author of my redemption from this calamity, as he is the only one that I have been able to find (and my search has not been sparing) who seems thoroughly up in the question; but such publicity might be construed improperly, and I have, therefore, only to offer my personal experience as the stepping-stone to public investigation, and to proceed with my narrative of facts, earnestly hoping the reader will patiently peruse and thoughtfully consider it, with forbearance for any fault of style or diction, and for any seeming presumption in publishing it.

THE AUTHOR RESOLVES TO ASSIST THE AFFLICTED.

I have felt some difficulty in deciding on the proper and best course of action. At one time I thought the editor of the *Lancet* would kindly publish a letter from me on the subject, but further reflection led me to doubt whether an insignificant individual would be noticed without some special introduction. In the April number of the *Cornhill Magazine* I read with much interest an article on the subject—defining tolerably well the effects, but offering no tangible remedy, or even positive solution of the problem, "What is the cause of obesity?" I was pleased with the articles as a whole, but objected to some portions, and had prepared a letter to the editor of that magazine offering my experience on the subject, but again it struck me that an unknown individual like myself would have but little prospect of notice; so I finally resolved to publish and circulate this pamphlet, with no other reason, motive, or expectation than an earnest desire to help those who happen to be afflicted as I was, for that corpulence is remediable I am well convinced, and shall be delighted if I can induce others to think so. The object I have in view induces me to enter into minute particulars, as well as general observations, and to revert to bygone years, in order to show that I have spared no pains nor expense to accomplish the great end of stopping and curing obesity.

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION.

I am now nearly sixty-six years of age, about five feet five inches in stature, and in August last (1862) weighed two hundred and two pounds, which I think it right to name, because the article in the *Cornhill Magazine* presumes that a certain stature and age should bear, ordinarily, a certain weight, and I am quite of that opinion. I now weigh one hundred and sixty-seven pounds, showing a diminution of something like one pound per week since August; and having now very nearly attained the happy medium, I have perfect confidence that a few more weeks will fully accomplish the object for which I have laboured for the last thirty years in vain, until it pleased Almighty Providence to direct me into the right and proper channel—the "tram-way," so to speak—of happy, comfortable existence.

Few men have led a more active life—bodily or mentally—from a constitutional anxiety for regularity, precision, and order, during fifty years' business career, from which I have now retired, so that my corpulence and subsequent obesity was not through neglect of necessary bodily activity, nor from excessive eating, drinking, or self-indulgence of any kind, except that I partook of the simple aliments of bread, milk, butter, beer, sugar, and potatoes more freely than my aged nature required, and hence, as I believe, the generation of the parasite, detrimental to comfort if not really to health.

EXPERIENCES OF THE AUTHOR.

I will not presume to descant on the bodily structural tissues, so fully canvassed in the *Cornhill Magazine*, nor how they are supported and renovated, having no mind or power to enter into these questions, which properly belong to the wise heads of the faculty. None of my family on the side of either parent had any tendency to corpulence, and from my earliest years I had an inexpressible dread of such a calamity, so, when I was between thirty and forty years of age, finding a tendency to it creeping upon me, I consulted a most eminent surgeon, now long deceased—a kind personal friend—who recommended increased bodily exertion before my ordinary daily labors began, and thought rowing an excellent plan. I had the command of a good, heavy, safe boat, lived near the river, and adopted it for a couple of hours in the early morning. It is true I gained muscular vigor, but with it a prodigious appetite, which I was compelled to indulge, and consequently increased in weight, until my kind old friend advised me to forsake the exercise.

He soon afterwards died, and as the tendency to corpulence remained, I consulted other high orthodox authorities (*never any inferior adviser*), but all in vain. I have tried sea air and bathing in various localities, with much walking exercise; taken gallons of physic and liquor potassæ, advisedly and abundantly; riding on horseback; the waters and climate of Leamington many times, as well as those of Cheltenham and Harrowgate frequently; have lived upon sixpence a day, so to speak, and earned it, if bodily labor may be so construed; and have spared no trouble nor expense in consultations with the best authorities in the land, giving each and all a fair time for experiment, without any permanent remedy, as the evil still gradually increased.

I am under obligations to most of those advisers for the pains and interest they took in my case; but only to one for an effectual remedy.

CORPULENCE INCREASES WITH AGE.

When a corpulent man eats, drinks, and sleeps well, has no pain to complain of, and no particular organic disease, the judgment of able men seems paralyzed—for I have been generally informed that corpulence is one of the natural results of increasing years; indeed, one of the ablest authorities as a physician in the land told me he had gained one pound in weight every year since he attained manhood, and was not surprised at my condition, but advised more bodily exercise—vapor-baths and shampooing, in addition to the medicine given. Yet the evil still increased, and, like the parasite of barnacles on a ship, if it did not destroy the structure, it obstructed its fair, comfortable progress in the path of life.

ANNOYANCE OF PUBLIC NOTICE.

I have been in dock, perhaps, twenty times in as many years, for the reduction of this disease, and with little good effect—none lasting. Any one so afflicted is often subject to public remark, and though in conscience he may care little about it, I am confident no man laboring under obesity can be quite insensible to the sneers and remarks of the cruel and injudicious in public assemblies, public vehicles, or the ordinary street traffic; nor to the annoyance of finding no adequate space in a public assembly if he should seek amusement or need refreshment, and therefore he naturally keeps away as much as possible from places where he is likely to be made the object of the taunts and remarks of others. I am as regardless of public remark as most men, but I have felt these difficulties, and therefore avoided such circumscribed accommodation and notice, and by that means have been deprived of many advantages to health and comfort.

DIFFICULT LOCOMOTION.

Although no very great size or weight, still I could not stoop to tie my shoe, so to speak, nor attend to the little offices humanity requires, without considerable pain and difficulty, which only the corpulent can understand; I have been compelled to go down stairs slowly backwards, to save the jar of increased weight upon the ankle and knee joints, and been obliged to puff and blow with every slight exertion, particularly that of going up stairs. I have spared no pains to remedy this by low living (*moderation and light food was generally prescribed*, but I had no direct bill of fare to follow—what we eat is intended), and that, consequently, brought the system into a low, improved bed state, without decreasing corpulence, caused many obnoxious boils to appear, and two rather formidable carbuncles, for which I was slightly operated upon and *for info increased obesity*.

TURKISH BATHS.

At this juncture (about three years back) Turkish baths became the fashion, and I was advised to accept them as a remedy. With the first fee I found immediate benefit in power and elasticity for walking exercise, so, notwithstanding I had found the "philosopher's stone," persisted them three times a week till I had taken fifty, then less frequently (as I began to fancy, with some reason, that so many weakened my constitution) till I had taken ninety, but never succeeded in losing more than six pounds weight during the whole course, and I gave up the plan as worthless; though I have felt the benefit of their cleansing properties, and their value in colds, rheumatism, and many other ailments.

A SURGEON THRIVES WITH HIS CASE.

I then fancied increased obesity materially affected a slight umbilical rupture, if it did not cause it, and that another bodily ailment to which I had been subject was also augmented. This led me to other medical advisers, to whom I am also indebted for much kind consideration, though, unfortunately, they failed in relieving me. At last finding my sight failing and my hearing greatly impaired, I consulted, in August last, an eminent aural surgeon, who made light of the case, looked into my ears, sounded them internally, and blistered the outside, without the slightest benefit, neither imparting to any of my bodily ailments, which he probably thought unnecessary, nor affording me even time to name them.

I was not at all satisfied, but on the contrary was in a worse plight than when I went to him; however, he soon after left town for his annual holiday, which proved the greatest possible blessing to me, because it compelled me to seek other assistance, and, happily, I found the right man, who unhesitatingly said he believed my ailments were caused principally by corpulence, and prescribed a certain diet—no medicine, beyond a morning cordial as a corrective—with immediate effect and advantage both to my hearing and the decrease of my corpulence.

RULES FOR ABSTINENCE.

For the sake of argument and illustration I will presume that certain articles of ordinary diet, however beneficial in youth, are prejudicial in advanced life, like beans to a horse, whose common, ordinary food is hay and corn. It may be useful food occasionally, under peculiar circumstances, but detrimental as a constancy. I will, therefore, adopt the analogy, and call such food human beans. The items from which I was advised to abstain as much as possible were:—Bread, butter, milk, sugar, beer, and potatoes, which had been the main (and, I thought, innocent) elements of my existence, or, at all events, they had for many years been adopted freely.

These, said my excellent adviser, contain starch and saccharine matter, tending to create fat, and should be avoided altogether. At the first blush it seemed to me that I had little left to live upon, but my kind friend soon showed me there was ample, and I was only too happy to give the plan a fair trial, and, within a very few days, found immense benefit from it. It may better elucidate the dietary plan if I describe generally what I have sanction to take, and that man must be an extraordinary person who would desire a better table:—

DIETARY PLAN.

For breakfast, I take four or five ounces of beef, mutton, kidneys, broiled fish, bacon, or cold meat of any kind (except pork); a large cup of tea (without milk or sugar), a little biscuit, or one ounce of dry toast.

For dinner, five or six ounces of any fish except salmon, any meat (except pork), any vegetable except potato, one ounce of dry toast, fruit out of a pudding, any kind of poultry or game, and two or three glasses of good claret, sherry, or Madeira—champagne, port, and beer forbidden.

For tea, two or three ounces of fruit, a rusk or two, and a cup of tea, without milk or sugar.

For supper, three or four ounces of meat or fish, similar to dinner, with a glass or two of claret.

For nightcap, if required, a tumbler of grog—(gin, whisky, or brandy, without sugar)—or a glass or two of claret or sherry.

This plan leads to an excellent night's rest, with from six to eight hours' sound sleep. The dry toast or rusk may have a tablespoonful of spirit to soften it, which will prove acceptable. Perhaps I did not wholly escape starchy or saccharine matter, but scrupulously avoided those beans, such as milk, sugar, beer, butter, &c., which were known to contain them.

ALLOWANCES OF SOLIDS AND LIQUIDS.

On rising in the morning I take a spoonful of a special corrective cordial, which may be called the Balm of Life, in a wine-glass of water, a most grateful draught, as it seems to carry away all the drogs left in the stomach after digestion, but it is not aperient; then I take from 6 ounces of solid and 8 of liquid for breakfast; 8 ounces of solid, and 8 of liquid for dinner; 3 ounces of solid and 8 of liquid for tea; 4 ounces of solid and 6 of liquid for supper, and the grog afterwards, if I please. I am not, however, strictly limited to any quantity at either meal, so that the nature of the food is rigidly adhered to.

Experience has taught me to believe that these human beans are the most insidious enemies man, with a tendency to corpulence in advanced life, can possess, though eminently friendly in youth. He may very prudently mount guard against such an enemy if he is not a fool to himself, and I fervently hope this truthful unvarnished tale may lead him to make a trial of my plan, which I sincerely recommend to public notice, not with any ambitious motive, but in sincere good faith to help my fellow-creatures to obtain the marvellous blessings I have found within the short period of a few months.

I do not recommend every corpulent man to rush headlong into such a change of diet (*certainly not*), but to act advisedly and after full consultation with a physician.

HIS FORMER DIET.

My former dietary table was bread and milk for breakfast, or a pint of tea with plenty of milk and sugar, and buttered toast; meat, beer, much bread (of which I was always very fond), and pastry for dinner, the meal of tea similar to that of breakfast, and generally a fruit tart or bread and milk for supper. I had little comfort and far less sound sleep.

COMPARISONS.

It certainly appears to me that my present dietary table is far superior to the former—more luxurious and liberal, independent of its blessed effect—but when it is proved to be more healthful, comparisons are simply ridiculous, and I can hardly imagine any man, even in sound health, would choose the former, even if it were not an enemy; but, when it is shown to be, as in my case, inimical to both health and comfort, I can hardly conceive there is any man who would not willingly avoid it. I can conscientiously assert I never lived so well as under the new plan of dietary, which I should have formerly thought a dangerous, extravagant trespass upon health. I am very much better, bodily and mentally, and pleased to believe that I hold the reins of health and comfort in my own hands; and, though at sixty-five years of age I cannot expect to remain free from some coming natural infirmity that all flesh is heir to, I cannot, at the present time, complain of one. It is simply miraculous, and I am thankful to Almighty Providence for directing me, through an extraordinary chance, to the care of a man who could work such a change in so short a time.

AN APPEAL TO THE FACULTY.

Oh! that the faculty would look deeper into and make themselves better acquainted with the crying evil of obesity—that dreadful tormenting parasite on health and comfort. Their fellow-men might not descend into early premature graves, as I believe many do, from what is termed apoplexy, and certainly would not, during their sojourn on earth, endure so much bodily, and consequently mental infirmity.

THE CHANGES WROUGHT.

Corpulence, though giving no actual pain, as it appears to me, must naturally press with undue violence upon the bodily viscera, driving one part upon another, and stopping the free action of all. I am sure it did in my particular case, and the result of my experience is briefly as follows:—

I have not felt so well as now for the last twenty years.

Have suffered no inconvenience whatever in the probational remedy.

Am reduced many inches in bulk and thirty-five pounds in weight in thirty-eight weeks.

Come down stairs forward naturally, with perfect ease.

Go up stairs and take ordinary exercise freely, without the slightest inconvenience.

Can perform every necessary office for myself.

The umbilical rupture is greatly ameliorated, and gives me no anxiety.

My sight is restored, my hearing improved.

My other bodily ailments are ameliorated—indeed, almost passed into matter of history.

A THANK-OFFERING.

I have placed a thank-offering of £50 in the hands of my kind medical adviser, for distribution amongst his favorite hospitals, after gladly paying his usual fees, and still remain under overwhelming obligations for his care and attention, which I can never hope to repay. Most thankful to Almighty Providence for mercies received, and determined to press the case into public notice as a token of gratitude.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE.

I have the pleasure to afford, in conclusion, a satisfactory confirmation of my report, in stating that a corpulent friend of mine, who, like myself, is possessed of a generally sound constitution, was laboring under frequent palpitations of the heart and sensations of fainting, was, at my instigation, induced to place himself in the hands of my medical adviser, with the same gratifying beneficial results. He is at present under the same ordeal, and in eight weeks has pronounced himself more largely than I did in that short period; he has lost the palpitations, and is becoming, so to speak, a new-made man, thankful to me for advising, and grateful to the eminent counsellor to whom I referred him; and he looks forward with a good hope to a perfect cure.

I am fully persuaded that hundreds, if not thousands of our fellow-men might profit equally by a similar course; but, constitutions not being all alike, a different course of treatment may be advisable for the removal of so tormenting an affliction.

My kind and valued medical adviser is not a doctor for obesity, but stands on the pinnacle of fame in the treatment of another malady which, as he well knows, is frequently induced by the disease of which I am speaking, and I sincerely trust most of my corpulent friends (and there are thousands of corpulent people whom I dare not so rank) may be led into my train-road. To any such I am prepared to offer the further key of knowledge by naming the man. It might seem invidious to do so now, but I shall only be too happy, if applied to by letter in good faith, or if any doubt should exist as to the correctness of this statement.

WILLIAM BANTING, Sen.,
Late of No. 27 St. James street, Piccadilly,
Now of No. 4, The Terrace, Kensington.
May, 1863.

ADDENDA.

Having exhausted the first edition (1000 copies) of the foregoing pamphlet; and a period of one year having elapsed since commencing the admirable course of diet which has led to such inestimable beneficial results, and, "as I expected and desired," having succeeded in attaining the happy medium of weight and bulk I have so long ineffectually sought, which appears necessary to health at my age and stature, I feel impelled by a sense of public duty, to offer the results of my experience in a second edition. It has been suggested that I should have sold the pamphlet, devoting any profit to charity, as more agreeable and useful; and I had intended to adopt such a course, but on reflection feared my motives might be mistaken; I therefore respectfully present this (like the first edition) to the public gratuitously, earnestly hoping the subject may be taken up by medical men and thoroughly ventilated.

COMFORTING RESULTS.

It may (and I hope will) be as satisfactory to the public to hear as it is for me to state, that the first edition has been attended with very comforting results to other sufferers from corpulence, as the remedial system therein described was to me under that terrible disease, which was my main object in publishing my convictions on the subject. It has moreover attained a success, produced flattering compliments, and an amount of attention I could hardly have imagined possible. The pleasure and satisfaction this has afforded me is ample compensation for the trouble and expense I have incurred; and I most sincerely trust, "as I verily believe," this second edition will be accompanied by similar satisfactory results from a more extensive circulation. If so, it will inspirit me to circulate further editions, whilst a corpulent person exists, requiring, as I think, this system of diet, or so long as my motives cannot be mistaken, and are thankfully appreciated.

THE GRADUAL REDUCTION OF WEIGHT.

My weight is reduced forty-six pounds, and as the *very gradual reductions* which I am able to show may be interesting to many, I have great pleasure in stating them, believing they serve to demonstrate further the merits of the system pursued.

My weight on 26th August, 1862, was 202 lbs.

		lbs.		lbs.
On 7th September, it was		200,	having lost	2
27th "	"	197	"	3 more.
19th October	"	193	"	4 "
9th November	"	190	"	3 "
3d December	"	187	"	3 "
24th "	"	184	"	3 "
14th January, 1863	"	182	"	2 "
4th February	"	180	"	2 "
25th "	"	178	"	2 "
18th March	"	176	"	2 "
8th April	"	173	"	3 "
29th "	"	170	"	3 "
20th May	"	167	"	3 "
10th June	"	164	"	3 "
1st July	"	161	"	3 "
22d "	"	159	"	2 "
12th August	"	157	"	2 "
26th "	"	156	"	1 "
12th September	"	156	"	0 "
Total loss of weight				46 lbs.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE IMPROVES.

My girth is reduced round the waist, in tailor phraseology, twelve and a quarter inches, which extent was hardly conceivable even by my friends, or by my respected medical adviser, until I put on my former clothing over what I now wear, which was a thoroughly convincing proof of the remarkable change. These important desiderata have been attained by the most easy and comfortable means, with but little medicine, and almost entirely by a system of diet that formerly I should have thought dangerously generous. I am told by all who know me that my personal appearance is greatly improved, and that I seem to bear the stamp of good health; this may be a matter of opinion or friendly remark, but I can honestly assert that I feel restored in health, "bodily and mentally," appear to have more muscular power and vigor, eat and drink with a good appetite, and sleep well. All symptoms of acidity, indigestion, and heartburn (with which I was frequently tormented) have vanished. I have left off using boot-hooks, and other such aids, which were indispensable, but being now able to stoop with ease and freedom, are unnecessary. I have lost the feeling of occasional faintness, and what I think a remarkable blessing and comfort is, that I have been able safely to leave off knee bandages, which I had worn *necessarily* for 20 past years, and given up a truss almost entirely; indeed, I believe I might wholly discard it with safety, but am advised to wear it at least occasionally for the present.

HIS FORMER MEDICAL ADVISERS.

Since publishing my pamphlet, I have felt constrained to send a copy of it to my former medical advisers, and to ascertain their opinions on the subject. They did not dispute or question the propriety of the system, but either dared not venture its practice upon a man of my age, or thought it too great a sacrifice of personal comfort to be generally advised or adopted, and I fancy neither of them appeared to feel the fact of the misery of corpulence. One eminent physician, as I before stated, assured me that increasing weight was a necessary result of advancing years; another, equally eminent, to whom I had been directed by a very friendly third, who had most kindly but ineffectually failed in a remedy, added to my weight in a few weeks instead of abating the evil. These facts lead me to believe the question is not sufficiently observed or even regarded.

The great charm and comfort of the system is, that its effects are palpable within a week of trial, which creates a natural stimulus to persevere for a few weeks more, when the fact becomes established beyond question.

A FAIR TRIAL ASKED FOR.

I only entreat all persons suffering from corpulence to make a fair trial for just one clear month, as I am well convinced they will afterwards pursue a course which yields such extraordinary benefit, till entirely and effectually relieved, and be it remembered, by the sacrifice merely of simple, for the advantage of more generous and comforting food. The simple dietary evidently adds fuel to the fire, whereas the superior and liberal seems to extinguish it.

I am delighted to be able to assert that I have proved the great merit and advantage of the system by its result in several other cases, similar to my own, and have full confidence that within the next twelve months I shall know of many more cases restored from the disease of corpulence, for I have received the kindest possible letters from many afflicted strangers and friends, as well as similar personal observations from others, whom I have converse with, and assurances from most of them that they will kindly inform me the result for my own private satisfaction. Many are practising the diet after consultation with their own medical advisers; some few have gone to mine, and others are practising upon their own convictions of the advantages detailed in the pamphlet, though I recommend all to act advisedly, in case their constitutions should differ. I am, however, so perfectly satisfied of the great unerring benefit of this system of diet, that I shall spare no trouble to circulate my humble experience. The amount and character of my correspondence on the subject has been strange and singular, but most satisfactory to my mind and feelings.

A HAPPY, COMFORTABLE STATE.

I am now in that happy, comfortable state that I should not hesitate to indulge in any fancy in regard to diet, but if I did so should watch the consequences, and not continue any course which might add to weight or bulk and consequent discomfort.

Is not the system suggestive to artists and men of sedentary employment who cannot spare time for exercise, consequently become corpulent, and clog the little muscular action with a superabundance of fat, thus easily avoided?

TOASTED BREAD.

Pure genuine bread may be the staff of life, as it is termed. It is so, particularly in youth, but I feel certain it is more wholesome in advanced life if thoroughly toasted, as I take it. My impression is, that any starchy or saccharine matter tends to the disease of corpulence in advanced life, and whether it be swallowed in that form or generated in the stomach, that all things tending to these elements should be avoided, of course always under sound medical authority.

WILLIAM BANTING.

ANECDOTES OF FAT PEOPLE.

The Discomforts of Obesity—How to Reduce Excessive Flesh.

The recent publication in England of a pamphlet descriptive of Mr. Banting's successful plan for reducing fat people to a comfortable state of leanness has stimulated discussion. Mr. Banting, whose case has created a great deal of controversy, was Englishman, who gained the bulk of Falstaff by living chiefly on farinaceous food, and reduced his weight by taking up a meat diet. The success of his experiments has furnished topics for leading journals and magazines in England, and reminds the London *Sixpenny Magazine* of some remarkable cases of obesity, also prompting it to an explanation of them.

CAUSES OF EXCESSIVE FATNESS.

Various are the opinions concerning the cause of excessive corpulence. By some it is attributed to too great activity in the digestive functions, producing a rapid assimilation of our food; by others, to the predominance of the liver, while indolence and apathy, such as is commonly observed in the wealthy monastic orders, are considered as occasioning a laxity of fibre favorable to this *embonpoint*.

It is certain that exercise, anxiety of mind, want of sleep, and spare food are circumstances opposed to fatness. This fact is illustrated by Shakespeare, when "Cæsar" says to "Antony":—

"Let me have men about me that are fat—
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights.
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous."

Antony and Dolabella were both men of some corpulence. The Roman ladies decided above all things too voluminous a development of the bosom; to prevent it, they were to the habit of applying to their breasts the raw flesh of a fish called angel.

Fat is a fluid similar to vegetable oils, inodorous, and lighter than water; besides the elements common to water, to oils, and wax, it contains carbon, hydrogen, and sebacic acid, which is pretty similar to the acrid. Human fat, like that of other animals, has been frequently employed for various purposes. A story is told of an Irish tallow-chandler, who, during the invasion of Cromwell's army, made candles with the fat of Englishmen, which were remarkable for their good quality; but when the times became more tranquil, his goods were of an inferior kind; and when one of his customers complained of his candles falling off, he apologized by saying:—"I am sorry to inform you that the times are so bad that I have been short of Englishmen for a long time."

DISCOMFORTS OF FAT PEOPLE.

Obesity may be considered a serious evil, and has exposed corpulent persons to many *disagreements*. The ancients held fat people in sovereign contempt. Some of the Gentoos enter their dwellings by a hole in the roof; and any fat person who cannot get through it, they consider as an excommunicated offender who has not been able to rid himself of his sins. An Eastern prince had an officer to regulate the size of his subjects, and who dieted the unwieldy ones to reduce them to a proper volume. In China this calamity is considered a blessing; a man's intellectual faculties are esteemed in the ratio of corporeal bulk.

There are cases on record among ourselves, where unwieldiness led to estimation. The corpulent antiquary Grose was requested by his butcher to tell all his friends that he bought his meat from him; and the paviors of Cambridge used to say, "God bless you, sir!" to a huge professor when he walked over their work. Fatness has often been the butt of jocularity. Dr. Stafford, who was enormously fat, was honored with this epitaph:—

"Take heed, O good traveller, and don't tread hard,
For here lies Dr. Stafford, in *all this churchyard*."

And the following lines were inscribed on the tomb of a corpulent chandler:—

"Here lies in earth an honest fellow,
Who died by fat and lived by tallow."

Dr. Beddoes was so uncomfortably stout that a lady of Clifton used to call him "the walking feather-bed." At the court of Louis XV there were two lusty noblemen, related to each other; the king, having rallied one of them on his corpulence, added, "I suppose you take little or no exercise?" "Your majesty will pardon me," replied the bulky duke, "for I generally walk two or three times round my cousin every morning."

CORPULENT ACTRESSES.

Various ludicrous anecdotes are related of fat people. A scene between Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Pritchard, two corpulent actresses, must have been very amusing. They were playing in the parts of "Lady Easy" and "Edging," in the *Careless Husband*, when the former desires "Edging" to pick up a letter she had dropped; and Mrs. Clive, who might as well have attempted to raise a hundred-pound weight, exclaimed, "Not I, indeed; take it up yourself if you like it." This answer threw the audience into roars of laughter, when Mrs. Pritchard replied, "Well, if you won't take up the letter, I must find some one who will;" and so saying, she beckoned to a servant in the wing, who came forward and terminated the dispute.

ADMIRATION OF CORPULENCE.

In some countries, especially in the East, moderate obesity is considered a beauty, and Tunisene young ladies are regularly fattened for marriage—a different practice from that of the Roman matrons, who starved their daughters, to make them as lean as possible on such occasions.

Erasmus states that the Gorgh carried their admiration for corpulence to such an extent that they raised the fattest amongst them to the throne. It is well known that the preposterous size of some of the Hottentots is deemed a perfection, and one of their Venuses was some time since exhibited in London.

AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE.

There is no doubt that food materially influences this condition of mankind, although we frequently see enormous eaters who are miserably lean, and fat persons whose diet is most scanty. During the late war a ravenous French prisoner was known to eat four pounds of raw cow-udder, ten pounds of raw beef, and two pounds of candles per diem, diluting his meals with five quarts of porter; and yet this carnivorous brute was a perfect skeleton.

MEDICAL PUPILS.

Anatomical pursuits are also known to occasion *embonpoint*. This has been frequently observed amongst medical pupils. Professor Mascagni attributed his corpulence to his constant attendance on dissections.

CURE OF CORPULENCE.

For the cure of corpulence, diminution of food of a nutritious nature has been generally recommended; added to this, little sleep and much exercise are advised. Ands to reduce fatness are frequently administered, but have done considerable mischief. Amongst other wonderful accounts of their efficacy in such cases, it is related of a Spanish general who was of an enormous size, that he drank vinegar until his bulk was so reduced that he could fold his skin round his body.

For a similar purpose soap has been frequently recommended, particularly by Dr. Pomphey. He began this experiment with one of his patients, who weighed twenty stone and eleven pounds (Jockey weight); in July, 1775, he took every night a quarter of an ounce of common Castile soap. In August, 1776, his bulk was reduced two stone, and in 1780 he was brought down to a proper condition.

Darwin is of the opinion that salt and salted meat are still more efficacious than soap. All these experiments, however, are in general not only uncertain and dangerous, but for ultimately prevent fatness. Mr. Wright, from these patients who had corpulence much to contend with in their strictures, gives it as his opinion that "exercise and abstinence are the most certain means of health and exercise." Dr. Cheyne, who weighed fifty-two stone, reduced himself one-third, and enjoyed good health till the age of seventy-two.

In another case, attended by Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh, the patient weighed twenty-three stone, and by a regular system of diet was brought down to fifteen stone. In this instance brown bread, with a certain quantity of bran in it, was employed; and it is well known that the alimentary secretions are materially altered by the quality of bread. The article of drink also requires much attention. Corpulent persons generally indulge to excess, and in this case every endeavor to reduce them will be in vain.

We frequently see our jockeys reducing themselves to the extent of a stone and a half in the week. A lower scale of diet is by no means as injurious as it is generally supposed; the English prisoners made by Tippoo Saib, though kept upon scanty pittance of [illegible] and water, found themselves in better [illegible] than before, and some of them were cured [illegible] their captivity of liver complaints of long and severe duration.

CASES OF EXTREME CORPULENCE.

One of the most corpulent persons [illegible] was Mr. Lambert, of Leicestershire, who [illegible] fifty-two stone eleven pounds (fourteen [illegible] to the stone).

At Hainton there died in 1816 Samuel Sugars, aged fifty-two; and his body, with a single coffin, weighed fifty stone.

In 1754 died Mr. Jacob Powell, of Stebbing, in Essex; his body was above five yards in circumference, and weighed five hundred and sixty pounds, requiring sixteen men to carry him to his grave.

In 1775, Mr. Spooner, of Skillington, near Tamworth, weighed, a short time before his death, forty stone and nine pounds, and measuring four feet three inches across the shoulders.

Kessler mentions a young man in Lincoln who ate eighteen pounds of beef daily, and died in 1724, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, weighing five hundred and thirty pounds.

A baker in Pye Corner weighed thirty-four stone, and would frequently eat a small shoulder of mutton, baked in his oven, and weighing five pounds; he, however, persisted for one year to live upon water-gruel and brown bread, by which he lost two hundred pounds of his bulk.

Master Collett, master of the Evesham Academy, weighed upwards of twenty-six stone; when twelve years old he was nearly as large as at the time of his death. At two years of age he required two nurses to lift him in and out of bed, one of whom in a fit of anger he felled to the floor with a blow of his hand.

At Trenow, in Cornwall, there was a man known by the name of Grant Chillcot, who weighed four hundred and sixty pounds; one of his stockings could contain six gallons of wheat.

Our post Butler must have met with some such enormous creatures in the type of his Saxon Duke, who, in *Hudibras*

"— did grow so fat,
That mice (as histories relate)
Ate holes and labyrinths to creep in
The posterior parts, without his feeling."

JOKES UPON LEAN MEN.

If obesity has been the subject of ungenerous jokes, leanness has not passed unnoticed. An anecdote is related of a reverend doctor of a very ghastly appearance, who was one day accosted by a fellow with the following salutation:—"Well, doctor, I hope you have taken care of your health!" "Why, my friend?" said the divine. "Because," replied the impertinent interlocutor, "your body is not worth caring for."

A poor diminutive Frenchman being ordered by his Sangrado to drink a quart of ptisan a day, replied, with a heavy sigh, "Alas, doctor, that I cannot do, since I only hold a pint."

When the Duke de Choiseul, a remarkably meagre man, came to London to negotiate a peace, Charles Townshend being asked whether the French Government had sent the preliminaries of a treaty, answered, "He did not know, but they had sent the *outline of an ambassador*."

HOW TO GET FAT.

That change of spare diet to a more nutritious food may bring on some corpulence, is evinced in an anecdote of Colley Cibber, who relates that a poor half-starved actor, who used to play the "Apothecary" in *Romeo and Juliet* to the life, and with great applause, received an augmentation of salary in consequence of his popularity. Unfortunately, increase of wealth led him to increase his fare, until he gradually assumed a plumpness which unfitted him for the worn-out pharmacopolist; and not being able to perform in any other line, the poor man was discharged. However, poverty soon more brought him down to his original condition, when he reappeared upon the boards as triumphantly as ever.

If *embonpoint* is generally a sign of good humor and a cheerful disposition, leanness frequently betokens a sour, crabbed, and ill-natured character. Solomon has said, "A merry heart doeth good like medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones." This observation, however, cannot be considered a rule in forming a judgment of various tempers. This is by no means an easy attempt in our intercourse with the world, when physiognomy is not always a sure guide in the selection of our companions. Dr. Franklin tells a singular story on this subject:—

"An old philosophical gentleman had grown, from experience, very cautious in avoiding ill-natured people. To endeavor to ascertain their disposition he made use of his legs, one of which was remarkably handsome; the other, by some accident, crooked and deformed. If a stranger at the first interview regarded his ugly leg more than his handsome leg, he dismissed him; but if he spoke of it, and took no notice of his handsome leg, that was sufficient to determine the philosopher to have no farther acquaintance with him. Everybody has not this two-legged instrument; but every one, who is little attentive, may observe signs of this carping, fault-finding disposition, and take the same resolution of avoiding the acquaintance of those infected by it. I therefore advise those querulous, discontented, unhappy people, if they wish to be respected and beloved by others, and happy in themselves, *to leave off looking at the ugly leg*."

Various expedients, in addition to a better diet, have been resorted to to restore lean persons to a better case; but among the most singular that we have on record is that of flagellation. Galen says that horsedealers, having been observed to fatten horses for sale by flogging them, an analogous method might be useful with spare persons who wish to become stouter. He also mentions slave-dealers who employ similar means. Suetonius informs us that Musa, the favorite physician of Augustus, used to fustigate him, not only to cure him of a sciatica, but to keep him plump. Mebiomius pretends that nurses ship little children to fatten them—that they may appear healthy and chubby to their mothers. No doubt but flagellation determines a greater influx of blood to the surface, and may thus tend to increase the circulation, and give tone to parts which would otherwise be languid.

A HUMAN LATH.

A remarkable case of leanness is mentioned by Lory, in a priest, who became so thin and dry in all his articulations, that at last he was unable to go through the celebration of mass, as his joints and spine would crack in so loud and strange a manner at every genuflexion, that the faithful were terrified, and the faithless laughed. One of these miserable laths once undertook a long journey to consult a learned physician on his sad condition, and having begged to know, in a most piteous tone, the cause of his desiccation, was favored with the following luminous answer:—"Sir, there is a predisposition in your constitution to make you lean, and a disposition in your constitution to keep you so." Another meagre pale one being told that the celebrated Hunter had fattened a dog by removing his spleen, exclaimed with a deep sigh, "Oh, sir! I wish Mr. Hunter had mine."

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