becomes a great soul to be employed about. She has the laws of God and Nature, both to justify and enforce her. When she reigns, repletion, disorders, evil habits, superfluous humours, fevers, aches, and the fears of death, do not embitter our pleasures.

CHAP. II.

The method of correcting a bad Constitution.

SEVERAL persons whose weak constitutions required great care in the management of them, having been well satisfied with what I have written concerning sobriety; the experience which they have had of the usefulness of my counsels, and the acknowledgments which they have made thereof, encourage me to take up my pen again, that I may convince those who meet with no inconvenience from intemperance, that they are in the wrong in relying so much on the strength of their constitution.

Let it be ever so well composed, yet it holds not good but to such an age. These persons seldom arrive to sixty, before they decay all of a sudden, and perceive themselves loaded with a complication of distempers. Some are gouty, dropsical, and rheumatical; others are subject to cholics, the stone, and piles; yea, to abundance of distempers, which would never have happened to them, if they had been so wise as to have taken care of themselves in their youth. If they die infirm at fourscore years of age, they might have lived

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in health to an hundred, and to have run out the term of life which nature has left open to all men.

I was born very choleric and hasty; I flew out into a passion for the least trifle; I huffed all mankind, and was so intolerable, that a great many persons of repute avoided my company. I apprehended the injury which I did myself; I knew that anger is a real frenzy: that it disturbs our judgment, that it transports us beyond ourselves, and that the difference between a passionate and a mad man is only this, that the latter has lost his reason for ever, and the former only deprived of it by fits. A sober life cured me of this frenzy; by its assistance I became so moderate, and so much a master of my passion, that nobody could perceive that it was born with me.

A man may likewise with reason, and a regular life, correct a bad constitution; and, notwithstanding the tenderness thereof, may live a long time in good health. I should never have seen forty years, had I followed my inclinations, and yet I am in the eighty-sixth year of my age. If the long and dangerous distempers which I had in my youth, had not occasioned a loss which is irreparable, I might have promised myself to have lived a complete century. But, without flattering myself, I find it to be a great matter to have arrived to forty-six years more than I ever expected; and that in my old age my constitution is still so good, that not only my teeth, my voice, my memory, and my heart, are in as good a condition as ever they were in the days of my youth; but likewise my judgment has lost nothing of its clearness and force.

I am of the opinion this proceeds from the abridgment I make of my food, proportionably to my growing into years. Experience, which tells us, that children have a greater appetite, and are more often hungry than grown men, ought likewise to teach us, that in old age we have less need of nourishment than in the beginning of our life. A man who is very old, can

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hardly eat, because he can scarce digest what he eats; a little serves his turn, and the yolk of an egg is a good meal to him.

Since nothing then is more advantageous for a man upon earth, than to live long; he is obliged to preserve his health as far as possible, and this he cannot do without sobriety. It is true, there are several who eat and drink plentifully, and yet live to an hundred years. It is by their example that others flatter themselves with the hopes of attaining the same age, without any occasion of laying a restraint upon themselves. But they are in the wrong upon these two accounts: first, because there is hardly one in a thousand that has so strong a constitution. Secondly, because such men generally end their lives by such distempers as put them into great agonies by dying, which would never happen to those that have the same government of themselves that I have.

A man runs the risk of not attaining to fifty years of age, for not daring to undertake a regular course of life; which is no impossible thing, since it is what I, and several others have practised, and do practice.

A good regimen is necessary for the prolonging of our days; and it consists in two things: first, in taking care of the quality; and, secondly, of the quantity: so as to eat and drink nothing that offends the stomach, nor any more than what we can easily digest. Our experience ought to be our guide in these two principles, when we are arrived to forty, fifty, or three score years of age. He who puts in practice that knowledge which he has of what is good for him, and goes on in a frugal way of living, keeps the humours in a just temperature, and prevents them from being altered; though he suffer heat and cold, though he be fatigued, though his sleep be broke, provided there be no excess in any of them. This being so, what an obligation does a man lie under of living soberly! And ought he not to free himself

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from the fears of sinking under the least intemperature of the air, and under the least fatigue, which make us sick upon every slight occasion?

It is true, indeed, the most sober may sometimes be indisposed, when they are obliged to transgress the rules which they have been used to observe: but then, their indisposition seldom lasts above two or three days at most. And their weariness and faintness are easily remedied by rest and good diet.

Most old people excuse their high feeding, by saying, that it is necessary for them to eat a great deal to keep up their natural heat, which diminishes proportionably as they grow in years; and, to create an appetite, it is requisite to find out proper sauces, and to eat whatever they have a fancy for; and that without thus humouring their palates, they should be soon in their graves. To this I reply, that nature, for the preservation of man in years, has so composed him, that he may live with a little food, that his stomach cannot digest a great quantity; and that he has no need of being afraid of dying for want of eating, since, when he is sick, he is forced to have recourse to a regular sort of diet, which is the first thing prescribed him by his physicians.*

Others had rather be disturbed twice or thrice a year with the gout, the sciatica, or other epidemical distempers, than to be always put to the mortification of laying a restraint upon their appetites; being sure, that when they are indisposed, a regular diet will be an infallible cure.

But let them be informed by me, that as they grow up in years their natural heat abates; and that a regular diet, despised as a precaution, and only looked

* This maxim of Cornaro is not altogether correct. Though the quantity of food, with old persons, should be sparing; yet, as age advances, it is necessary, in some degree, to increase the stimulus; and if wine has not been used at a former period, it is requisite to take it in moderation now.

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upon as physic,* cannot always have the same force to repair the disorders which are caused by repletion.

O sacred and beneficent temperance! How much am I obliged to thee, for seeing the time which has so many charms, when one follows the maxims, and observes those rules which thou dost prescribe! When I deny my senses nothing, I did not taste such pure and refined pleasure as I now enjoy. They were then so troublesome, and mixed with pains, that even in the height of those enjoyments, the bitterness exceeded the sweetness.

O happy state of life! which, beside other blessings with which thou favourest an old man, dost preserve his stomach in so perfect a tone, as to make him relish a piece of dry bread,† better than the voluptuous do all their dainty morsels. The appetite which thou givest us for bread, is just and reasonable; since it is the most proper food for mankind, when attended with a desire of eating.

A sober life is never without such an appetite. So that by eating a little, my stomach is often craving after the manna; which I sometimes relish with so much pleasure, that I should think I trespass upon the duty of temperance, did I not know that one must eat it to support life; and that one cannot make use of a plainer and more natural diet.

My spirits are not injured by what I eat, they are only revived and supported by it. I always find myself in an even temper, always cheerful; and more so after than before meals. I use myself, presently upon rising

* Accustom yourself to little meat from youth, and little will suffice.

† A dissertation has been written on the good effects of a crust of bread taken in the morning, fasting. It can only act by eliciting a greater quantity of saliva, which passes into the stomach and thus increases the appetite.

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from the table, to write or study;* and never find, that this application of mind, after eating, is prejudicial to me: for I am equally capable at all times of doing it, and never perceive myself drowsy, as a great many people do. The reason of this is, because the little I eat is not sufficient to send up the fumes from the stomach to the head, which fill the brain, and render it incapable of performing its functions.

What I eat is as follows: viz. bread, soup, new-laid eggs, veal, kid, mutton, partridges, pullets, and pigeons. Among fish, I choose the pike.† All these

* If the stomach is not distended to repletion, a person would be more lively after than before a meal.

† Some remarks it is necessary to make here on Cornaro's articles of diet, specified as above:—

The first article, termed the staff of life, is bread, and, in proportion to its fineness, it is more indigestible and best calculated for strong stomachs: coarse or brown bread, made of the old wheaten flour unsifted, is preferable for delicate and weak stomachs; rolls and other bread, at breakfast, have all the bad effects of new bread, in producing fermentation and flatulency. A mixture of grains is generally the most wholesome in bread, as one kind of grain counteracts the bad effects of the other: forming grain into bread is absolutely necessary, in order to lessen its viscidity and render it digestible. Stale bread is the most wholesome; where bread is used fresh it is best toasted. Bread is a most essential article of diet, and should be at least in the proportion of one-third of what we eat. In France and Italy the proportionate quantity of diet is much greater. The best of unleavened bread is biscuit; fermentation is essential to the making of bread, as it renders it both light and tends to correct the putrescency of animal *diet*.

The next article in Cornaro's bill of fare is soup. This form of animal food is to be considered as intended to prevent its excess, and also to fill up the stomach; and as all *solid* must be converted into a liquid state before it passes into nourishment, so the action of the stomach requires to be less exerted where a proper supply of nourishment is taken in a liquid state; and the necessity of this form of nourishment will be evident, when it is considered that the fluids of the body are rated at 160, while the solids are only 60 pounds weight. Soups are much used in diet on the continent, but much more sparingly in this country. The proportion in which they are taken, must be regulated by

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aliments are proper for old men; who, if they be wise for themselves, would be contented with these, and seek no other.

the exertion to which the individual is subjected: but in this form some of the hardiest people have been brought up, particularly in Scotland; and the great attention paid by Count Rumford to this form of diet, for the lower classes, is a proof of his opinion of their nourishing quality.

The third article is new-laid eggs, which contain a large proportion of pure nourishment, and should be subjected, when used, to as little cookery as possible; they are best when soft-boiled, and equally useful when mixed with other articles.

Veal, the next article, though tender and nourishing, is not so easily digested, from its glutinous quality, to weak and indolent stomachs; it requires to be assisted by the addition of vegetable acids, as lemon and vinegar.

The fifth article enumerated by Cornaro is kid. The flesh is a great delicacy, and, in many countries, preferred to lamb; but the domestic goat is more indigestible, and resembles venison in many respects. In Italy, Portugal, and the southern climates, it forms a substitute for lamb.

The sixth article in the list is mutton, which is both highly nutritious, and more used and relished than any other animal food. The sweetest and most digestive kind is the wether, when fed on dry flowery pasture, and five years old. The best form is roasted, and the lean part most easily assimilated.

The seventh article recommended is partridge, which is certainly a delicate food, though not so highly flavoured as some other game; and, as exercise produces firmness of flesh, the legs of the partridge are tough, and its wings, on the contrary, tender.

The eighth article is pullets, or young fowls, a most delicate and wholesome food; they are nearly equal to vegetable aliment, and making them capons still more improves them.

The ninth article, pigeons, are a food of a high and heating nature, but, if used, are best when young.

The last article that is used, of animal food, is fish. The proportion of nourishment from fish has been doubted; and where a reduction of weight is wanting for horse-racing, this diet is preferred. It is a great recommendation, as it is of easy digestion, being therefore fitted for the inactive and sedentary; but it is a nourishment not so genial as animal food to the human frame.

The fish preferred by Cornaro is the pike, which is a fish of prey; if not too large or too old it is firm, palatable, and whole-

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A poor old man, who has not wherewith to purchase all these, should be satisfied with bread, broth, and eggs; and there is no man, how poor soever he be, that can stand in want of this food, unless they be downright beggars. But a man who has only bread, broth, and eggs, ought not to eat much of them at a time, but so to regulate himself, with respect to the quantity of his diet, as that he may not die but by a mere dissolution.

What difference then is there between a sober and an intemperate life! The one shortens, the other prolongs our days, and makes us enjoy a perfect health. How many of my relations and friends has intemperance carried off, who would have been still alive, had they followed my counsel. But it has not been able to destroy me, as it has so many others; and because I had the power of resisting its charms.

I cannot understand how it comes to pass that so many people, otherwise prudent and rational, cannot resolve upon laying a restraint upon their insatiable appetites, at fifty or threescore years of age, or at least when they begin to feel the infirmities of old age coming upon them. They might rid themselves of them by a strict diet, but become incurable, because they will not observe a regimen. I do not wonder so much that

some; but the greatest care ought to be taken to avoid swallowing the bones, which are sharp and pointed, and of a texture so peculiarly hard that they will not dissolve in the stomach, and are apt to occasion affections of the alimentary canal.

The rules with respect to eating of fish are, that they should be dressed as fresh as possible; they should be eaten quite hot, and, unless pickled, never in a cold state; neither should it be eaten too often, nor after solid food; its digestion should be promoted by acids and condiment. In proportion to its oil, fish is more indigestible; it is best used with vegetable food.

Cornaro has enumerated all these articles for rich old age, that can afford them; but the poor old man he confines to three articles, bread, broth, and eggs; out of which, certainly, ample nourishment may be had.

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young people are so hardly brought to such a resolution; they are not capable enough of reflecting, and their judgment is not solid enough to resist the charms of sense: but at fifty, a man ought to be governed by his reason; which would convince us, if we would hearken to it, that to gratify all our appetites, without any rule or measure, is the way to become infirm, and to die young. Nor does the pleasure of taste last long; it hardly begins, but it is gone and past: the more one eats the more one may; and the distempers which it brings along with it last us to our graves.

CHAP. III.

A Letter to Signior BARBARO, *Patriarch of* AQUILEA; *concerning the Method of enjoying Old Age.*

IT must needs be owned that the mind of man is one of the greatest works of God, and that it is the masterpiece of the divine architect. Is it not something surprising, to be able by writing to keep up a correspondence with one's friends at a distance? and is not our nature of a wonderful composition, which affords us the means of seeing one another with the eyes of our imagination, as I, sir, behold you at present? It is after this manner that I shall enter into discourse with you, and relate to you several profitable things.

It is true, that what I have to tell you is no news, with respect to the matter thereof; but I never told it you at the age of ninety-one years. It is somewhat

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