

Besides, men of leisure, by applying themselves to the mechanic arts, might improve them, to the great benefit of society.

Indolence not only occasions diseases, and renders men useless to society, but promotes all manner of vice. To say a man is idle, is little better than to call him vicious. The mind, if not engaged in some useful pursuit, is constantly in quest of ideal pleasures, or impressed with the apprehension of some imaginary evil. From these sources proceed most of the miseries of mankind. Certainly man was never intended to be idle. Inactivity frustrates the very design of his creation; whereas an active life is the best guardian of virtue, and the greatest preservative of health.

It is indeed evident, that the love of motion, as well as the love of food, so observable in every living creature from the moment of its birth, are wisely designed by nature as the means of its preservation. The indolent man is therefore a rebel to her laws, and will certainly provoke her severest punishment. In vain does he hope for enjoyment in the lap of sloth; its chilling influence poisons the source of every pleasure, and not only invites disease, but renders it almost incurable.

CHAP. VI.

SLEEP.

THE benefits resulting from sleep are sufficiently obvious, from the effects it produces. It restores both the powers of the mind and body, when exhausted by exercise, giving vigour to the one, and restoring the other to its accustomed alacrity. By means of sleep, the muscles are again rendered active and moveable; after they have become wearied, rigid, painful, and trembling, from hard labour and severe exercise. It moderates the quickness of the pulse, which usually increases at night, and brings it back to its morning standard. It seems also to assist digestive of aliment—it diminishes both excretions and secretions; and renders the fluids thicker than otherwise they would be, particularly in a body endowed with much sensibility or mobility. Sleep, therefore, is not only useful, but absolutely indispensable, for the preservation of life and health; and it contributes most essentially to the alleviation, as well as to the total removal of disease. The want of it is equally hurtful, and in many different ways, to the nervous system. Its absence renders the external as well as internal organs of sense, and those of every kind of motion, unfit for the performance of their offices.

Sleep, therefore, like diet, ought to be duly regulated. Too little sleep weakens the nerves, exhausts the spirits, and occasions diseases; and too much renders the mind dull, the body gross, and disposes to apoplexies, lethargies, and other complaints of a similar nature. A medium ought therefore to be observed; but this is not easy to fix. Children require more sleep than grown persons,

the laborious than the idle, and such as eat and drink freely, than those who live abstemiously. Besides, the real quantity of sleep cannot be measured by time; as one person will be more refreshed by five or six hours sleep than another by eight or ten.

Children may always be allowed to take as much sleep as they please; but for adults, six or seven hours is certainly sufficient, and no one ought to exceed eight. Those who lie in bed more than eight hours may slumber, but they can hardly be said to sleep; such generally toss and dream away the fore part of the night, sink to rest towards morning, and dose till noon. The best way to make sleep sound and refreshing is to rise betimes. The custom of lying in bed for nine or ten hours, not only makes the sleep less refreshing, but relaxes the solids, and greatly weakens the constitution.

Nature points out night as the proper season for sleep. Nothing more certainly destroys the constitution than night-watching. It is a great pity that a practice so destructive to health should be so much in fashion. How quickly the want of rest in due season will blast the most blooming complexion, or ruin the best constitution, is evident from the ghastly countenances of those who, as the phrase is, turn day into night, and night into day.

TO PROCURE REFRESHING SLEEP, &c.

To make sleep refreshing, *the following things are requisite:* First, to take sufficient exercise in the open air; to avoid strong tea or coffee; next, to eat a light supper; and, lastly, to lie down with a mind as cheerful and serene as possible.

It is certain that too much exercise will prevent sleep, as well as too little. We seldom, however, hear the active and laborious complain of restless nights. It is the indolent and slothful who generally have these complaints. Is it any wonder that a bed of down should not be refreshing to a person who sits all day in an easy chair? A great part of the pleasure of life consists in alternate rest and motion; but they who neglect the latter can never relish the former. The labourer enjoys more true luxury in plain food and sound sleep, than is to be found in sumptuous tables and downy pillows, where exercise is wanting.

That light suppers cause sound sleep, is true even to a proverb. Many persons, if they exceed the least at that meal, are sure to have uneasy nights; and, if they fall asleep, the load and oppression on their stomach and spirits occasion frightful dreams, broken and disturbed repose, the night-mare, &c. Were the same persons to go to bed with a light supper, or sit up till that meal was pretty well digested, they would enjoy sound sleep, and rise refreshed and cheerful. There are indeed some people who cannot sleep unless they have eat some solid food at night; but this does not imply the necessity of a heavy supper: besides, these are generally persons who have accustomed themselves to this method, and who do not take a sufficient degree of exercise.

Nothing more certainly disturbs our repose than anxiety. When the mind is not at ease, one seldom enjoys sound sleep. This greatest of human blessings flies the wretched and visits the hap-

py, the cheerful, and the gay. This is a sufficient reason why every man should endeavour to be as easy in his mind as possible when he goes to rest. Many by indulging grief and anxious thought, have banished sound sleep so long, that they could never afterwards enjoy it.

Sleep, when taken in the fore part of the night, is generally reckoned most refreshing. Whether this be the effect of habit or not, is hard to say; but as most people are accustomed to go early to bed when young, it may be presumed that sleep, at this season, will prove most refreshing to them ever after. Whether the fore part of the night be best for sleep or not, surely the fore part of the day is fittest both for business and amusement. I hardly ever knew an early riser who did not enjoy a good state of health.*

Early rising is the natural consequence of going to bed early; and this habit implies sobriety, good order, and an exemption from many fashionable follies extremely prejudicial to health. The man, who accustoms himself to go to bed at an early hour, can seldom join the revels of Bacchus, or what are improperly called the *amusements* of the gay world. His rest is not disturbed by the effects of unseasonable luxury. He knows, that temperance, moderate exercise, composure of mind, and external tranquillity, are the best opiates. His slumbers are sound and refreshing. The waste of spirits on the preceding day is fully repaired. Every muscle, every fibre, every nerve has *regained its proper tone*. He rises with cheerfulness and *vigour* to breathe the morning air, and to enter upon the duties of the day. In short, an attention to this single point of going to bed early, and of rising betimes, will be found to supersede a variety of other precepts, and may be justly called the *golden rule* for the attainment of health and long life.

CHAP. VII.

CLOTHING.

The clothing ought to be suited to the climate. Custom has, no doubt, a very great influence in this article; but no custom can ever change the nature of things so far, as to render the same clothing fit for an inhabitant of Nova Zembla and the Island of Jamaica. It is not indeed necessary to observe an exact proportion between the quantity of clothes we wear, and the degree of latitude which we inhabit; but, at the same time, proper attention ought to be paid to it, as well as to the openness of the country, the frequency and violence of storms, &c.

In youth, while the blood is hot and the perspiration free, it is less necessary to cover the body with a great quantity of clothes;

* Men of every occupation, and in every situation of life, have lived to a good old age; nay some have enjoyed this blessing whose plan of living was by no means regular: but it consists with observation, that all very old men have been early risers. This is the only circumstance attending longevity to which I never knew an exception.