

THE SENSE OF TASTE.

Some of its Peculiarities—Its Part in the System's Economy.

The tongue is not the only organ used in the enjoyment of this sense, and alone it is scarcely capable of appreciating delicate flavors.

The difference between salt and sugar when placed on the tongue is hardly perceptible, provided the tongue is not allowed to touch the roof of the mouth and the lips. Indeed, the act of getting the full enjoyment of a flavor, commonly called smacking the lips, consists in bringing the tongue into contact with the roof of the mouth and the lips. By this act the substance to be tasted is spread over the surface of these parts, particularly of the tongue, and mixed with the saliva.

How this act produces taste is not exactly known; but we do know that the tongue is covered with two layers of skin, the lower one thick and filled with nerves, and the upper one thin and porous. The nerves in the lower skin are the nerves of taste, and probably are set into vibration by the substance tasted, very much as the exquisitely sensitive nerves of the retina are affected by light, or the nerves of the ear by sound. At all events, the sense is conveyed to the brain, where we involuntarily distinguish between pleasant and disagreeable tastes.

The nerves, moreover, of the tongue are not all alike. In the tip of the tongue they are clustered together more closely than at the back, and transfer to the brain a different sensation. For instance, a little powdered alum placed on the back of the tongue tastes sweet, whereas on the tip it tastes acid.

The sense of taste is an almost certain guide to the wholesomeness of foods, and a monitor which warns us when we are in danger of swallowing any injurious or poisonous substances.

Poisons, as a rule, are extremely disagreeable to the taste, and it requires an effort to overcome the natural repugnance to them. Hence it is that accidental poisoning so rarely occurs.

In the case of foods we soon tire of a thing as a regular diet, and the taste craves a change. Here the whole system rebels against the monotony of diet, because no one food is likely to contain all the elements of nutrition required by the body for the exercise of its functions, and soon the elements which are in excess cloy upon the taste, because the system is already supplied with them, while we crave the foods containing substances which the system lacks. A change is then demanded by nature, and made manifest by the sense of taste. If the change cannot be made, nature shows her disapproval by causing a loss of appetite or a repugnance to the condemned article of diet.—N. Y. Ledger.

A Human Bone That Never Decays.

In olden times it was believed that the little triangular bone at the lower extremity of the spinal column in the human subject could not be destroyed. The old Jewish rabbis taught that it was "incorruptible," and, furthermore, that it was the seat of the soul! In other words, they believed it to contain the germ from which the "new man" (or woman) would spring at the time of the resurrection. There is an old Jewish tradition to the effect that Emperor Hadrian doubted that the bone was indestructible and incorruptible and demanded that a certain person who was teaching that doctrine should prove it. Lightfoot relates the result of the test in the following: "When Joshua ben Hananiah prepared to present his proof to the emperor he took the bone and put it into water, but the water did not affect it; he put it in fire, but the fire consumed it not. Next he put it in a mill, but the mill would not grind it. Then he laid it on an anvil, but no hammer could be found large enough to crush it." This superstition lingers to-day in the modern anatomical name of that bone, which is "os sacrum," meaning "sacred bone."—St. Louis Republic.

A Souvenir.

"I am in a dreadful fix. Do lend me \$20."
"But you own a diamond ring; why not go and pawn it?"
"I cannot find it in my heart to do so. The ring is a memento of my deceased aunt."
"Really? Well, then, my money is a memento of my deceased father."—Bay City Chat.

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LOOKED MEEK, BUT WASN'T.

How Old Mr. Graybeard Punished an Insulting Ruffian.

A gray-bearded man who appeared to be at least 65 years old stepped into an uptown Sixth avenue "L" train at Eighth street the other day. Taking a seat near the door, he adjusted his eyeglasses, unfolded a newspaper and began to read. The car was well filled, the majority of the passengers being women.

"Say, wot der yer want—all er der seats?"

It was a brawny fellow next to the gray-bearded man who put this question, and there wasn't one in the car who didn't hear it. Everyone looked. Mr. Graybeard smiled and replied good-naturedly:

"My friend, I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to crowd you."

Then he went on reading his paper, drawing his arms closer to his side. His neighbor, however, was not amiable. He was a "tough." There was a "scrappy" look in his eye as he turned and looked his neighbor full in the face.

"People like you dat wants de eart' ought ter travel in a private car," he sneered. Mr. Graybeard did not seem to regard this as an allusion to himself, for he did not interrupt his reading.

"Mebbe ye're der president o' der road."

Up jumped Mr. Graybeard, not to attack his tormentor but to take a seat on the other side of the car. "Now," he said, "I hope you've got plenty of room."

The tough man made another insulting and threatening remark.

"Surely these men here will not allow that brute to strike that inoffensive old man," said a motherly looking woman. The men were all deeply interested in their newspapers or closely studying the signs to be seen through the car windows, all except one athletic looking young man, who held onto a strap not many yards away from Mr. Graybeard and Mr. Tough. He looked significantly at the woman and she returned a glance that was full of gratitude.

Mr. Tough leaned forward in his seat, shot out his arm, and, pointing a huge index finger at Mr. Graybeard, cried:

"Say, I'm a-gittin' out at Twenty-third street an' if yer want ter make anyting out er dis all yer get ter do is git off wid me. I'll wipe de street wid you if you git off."

When the guard slammed back the door and called out the station Mr. Tough arose, and, snatching the paper from Mr. Graybeard's hands, he said:

"D—d if I don't tump yer now, you—"

The rest of what he said was drowned in a chorus of feminine shrieks. The train was at a standstill, and the athletic looking young man, his cheeks ablaze, was making his way toward Mr. Tough, when up popped Mr. Graybeard like a jack-in-the-box, out shot his right fist, it hit something and up against the end of the car went Mr. Tough. The guard grabbed him and yanked him out on the platform. Mr. Graybeard was after him in an instant. Biff! bang! biff! biff! The blows fell fast and furious. Each one landed in a place and in a manner that did not add to Mr. Tough's beauty. That terrible person was so shocked by this sudden display of ungentlemanly conduct that he did not even raise his hands in protest. Behind was the athletic looking fellow, dancing up and down and shouting:

"Give it to him, old man. That was a dandy! Soak him again!"

And Mr. Graybeard never failed to follow the young man's advice. Finally, two guards got between Mr. Graybeard and Mr. Tough.

"The train is late," said one guard, apologetically. "If you want to give him some more, get off here."

"I guess he's got enough," said Mr. Graybeard, walking back into the car.

Mr. Tough looked pained. His enormous hands were covered with blood he wiped from his face, and his hat was in the street. He offered no resistance as the guards pushed him off the car.

Mr. Graybeard sat down and resumed the reading of his paper. The athletic looking young man looked at him admiringly, and so did the woman. He folded his paper at Forty-second street and left the train.—N. Y. Herald.

Telling Stories Over the Wires.

"It seemed like a waste of time," said a gentleman who passed an evening with Mr. Edison in Norwalk, O., to hear Mr. Edison rolling off story after story and demanding of all his acquaintances to tell him more, when we knew how much information we might have received from him. I finally asked him how he got to be such a story teller. "Well," he replied, "when I was quite a young man I was a telegraph operator during the war. I was stationed at St. Louis, which was a sort of distributing point for a large district, and when we would get our batch of stuff off, and we had several hours to put in, I used to get pretty tired. Then we would begin to call up the operator at the other end of the line and gossip with him. I always liked stories, and if Chicago had a good one he would wire it to me. Then I would send that off to Louisville and New York and Cincinnati, and hear them laugh over it by wiring back 'Ha! ha!' over the wire. In this way we would get all the best stories there were going, and we would always write them out for the day men. It got to be a sort of passion after awhile, and has stuck to me ever since."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

GOLD IN ALASKA.

respecting is Done Amid Extremely Disadvantageous Circumstances.

The mineral-producing district of Alaska may properly be divided into two sections, namely, the coast country and the interior. The coast country includes that portion of Alaska bordering on the North Pacific ocean, and the interior all that section drained by the Yukon river and its numerous tributaries.

While almost every known mineral is found to exist in Alaska, comparatively little prospecting has been done for anything but gold. From 1888 to 1892 silver was discovered in several localities in the southeast portion of the coast country, but the depreciation of that metal discouraged investigation into the extent of the deposits, which in some instances were most encouraging. The largest deposit of this ore was found in what is known as Sheep Creek basin, about two miles north of the famous Treadwell gold mine, but on the opposite side of Gastineau channel.

In 1885, at Golofnin bay, an arm of Norton sound, just north of where the Yukon river pours its water into Behring sea, rich galena deposits were found, and it is undoubtedly a fact that it was of such easy access and so rich in silver that it proved profitable to mine and ship the ore to San Francisco, a distance of over 2,000 miles by water. Over \$60,000 was expended by the company operating this mine in 1892, but mismanagement and internal dissensions caused a cessation of work, the resumption of which would doubtless awaken an interest in the mineral prospects of that portion of Alaska.

In the coast country gold is principally obtained by crushing ore, while in the interior washing and sluicing are the only means employed.

It is doubtful if prospecting in any other country in the world is fraught with the obstacles and discouragements that are encountered in Alaska. The whole of the southeast coast country is covered with a dense forest of timber, and a thick growth of moss and underbrush is everywhere found among the sturdy hemlock, spruce and cedar trees; and many a miner has for this reason been deterred from pursuing his investigations very far away from the banks of the streams.—Harper's Weekly.

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— PORTRAIT OF WASHINGTON —

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