

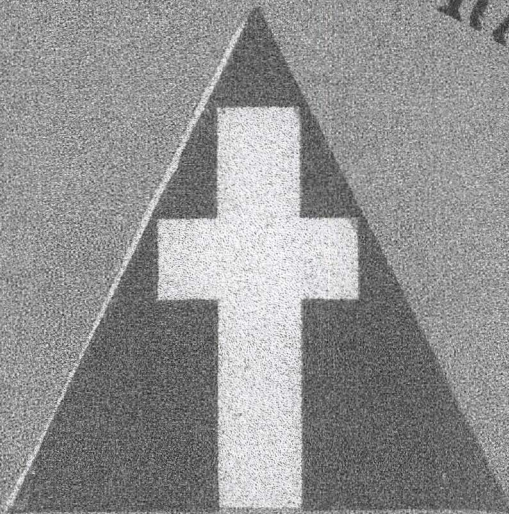
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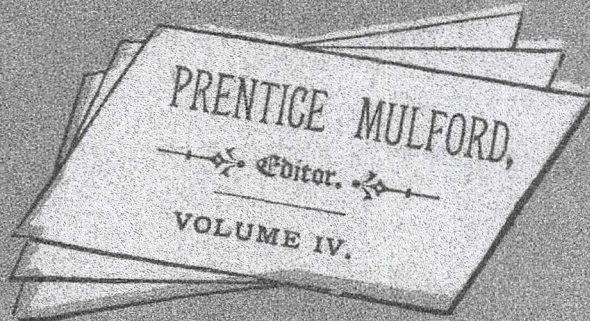
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Grace Before Meat; or, the Science of Eating.

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GRACE BEFORE MEAT; OR, THE SCIENCE OF EATING.

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The frame or mood of mind in which you eat is of far more importance than what food you eat, assuming of course, that your food is agreeable to your palate. Because in eating you take and incorporate into your spiritual self whatever thought occupies your mind while eating. If your thought at such time be irritable and peevish or gloomy, discouraged and despondent, or dwelling on wrongs or grievances, or you eat in hurry and impatience or anxiety, you are actually assimilating such injurious thought, element, and making it part of yourself. Your food then becomes the material agency or medium for conveying this injurious thought to you. It matters not how healthy or nutritious your food be, if you eat it in such frames of mind you are making it only the envelope for making these injurious elements a part of yourself.

To eat in a calm, serene, reposeful mind, dwelling in thought or conversation only on things pleasant, healthy and strength giving, is to bring that current

of thought to you. Then you consume in a sense such thought with your food and build it permanently into you.

There is a great and beneficial truth in the saying of "Grace before Meat." It is whether said aloud or in thought the calling to you of that thought current which will bring the mood of mind best calculated to make your food do body and spirit the most good. You can always put out this desire at any time or place, though you eat but a mouthful.

To think while eating of disease or any form of pain is to attract similar elements to you and build them into you. You may not suffer from the particular disease, thought, or spoken of, but if this is your mental habit while eating, you will in time suffer from it in some way.

You take in and assimilate during eating more of thought element, good or bad, than at other times, and for the following reason.

You are in a more negative or receptive state when you eat than at other times during the waking hours. That is, your spirit puts itself and the body with it in a condition to receive strength from the food taken. Your whole self, your mind and the body it uses is then as the open palm held out to receive a gift. This does not involve the putting out of so much force as the fist closed to strike or lift a heavy weight. It is in these receptive or force receiving states of mind and body that you receive easiest of anything good or bad in the shape of thought, and you may do this often unconsciously.

While spirit and body are receiving strength from any source they should not at the same time be giving it out, no more than the horse should be worked while eating. You give out strength if while eating your mind is unpleasantly affected in any manner, or if it is on a tension regarding any matter.

For this reason to study, while eating, will prove ultimately injurious to you.

A great deal of beneficial thought element may be brought you when you eat in a serene, easy, peaceful, undisturbed state of mind, a great deal of injurious thought element can be brought you if you eat in a hurried disturbed combative and uneasy state of mind. If you have long been in the habit of eating in the mental condition last spoken of, you cannot break it off immediately. Any mental habit which affects or rules us physically must be changed by degrees.

It will be so gradually changed for the better by the permanent desire or prayer for such change; you will be reminded from time to time, as you commence to eat, that a more reposeful mental condition while eating is necessary, although you may not be able at once to make your body conform to such repose. The body has had its way in this respect possibly many years. It has been fashioned, so to speak, through its habit to run in a rut. The rut cannot be reformed immediately. But your calm demand for the coming of the desirable mental condition to bring body and spirit—the most good is the force strong, slow moving, but sure, for reorganizing you,

and whatever injurious habit you may have. That desire brings to you a new thought current, and the continual and growing action upon you of this current must reform you in this particular, as it will reform every other defect.

There is a hurried fashion of eating which causes us often to swallow our food hastily and in too large mouthfuls, being possibly at the time beset by an unpleasant desire to get through the meal as quickly as possible—a desire or rather an influence which sometimes brings on often after partaking of a few mouthfuls a sudden loss of appetite and lack of relish for the food, no matter how hungry you were when you sat down at the table.

People who have long given way to this habit sometimes lose nearly all appetite. The whole time occupied by them in the day's meals may be embraced inside of twenty minutes. They know very little of the pleasure and rest to mind and body coming of eating in a calm reposeful manner. They realize also very little of the strength which comes of eating in this mood.

This hurried eating is a very dangerous habit. By it, the body is starved of food when plenty may be before it. There is given neither nutriment for body or spirit. Such person will waste away and weaken gradually without scarcely knowing it, until at last the unfed body drops from the spirit. He may become a martyr to dyspepsia, and attribute the ailment to this or that article fed upon. The food has very little to do with his distress. The state of mind in which he eats it has everything to do with it.

When we eat in the hurried and uneasy mental condition, we are attracting to us forces and intelligences having no pleasure in our eating, and who regard every meal an irksome process, wanting it finished as soon as possible. It is through these forces often unconsciously attracted that the whole organization can be turned against eating, so that it becomes, as is now the case with a great many people, a habit almost mechanical. This mechanical habit does the body great injury. Any service done the body needs to have taste liking life and spirit put in its doing. Otherwise it is a dead service, and will prove one cause bringing death to the body.

If you become so absorbed in your art or business that you begrudge time for leisurely eating and hurry back to your occupation after swallowing a few mouthfuls, you will surely in time suffer. We cannot replenish spirit and body as quickly as a locomotive may have its fuel shoveled in it, and keep ourselves in proper repair.

It is not a good sign for a person to say that he or she doesn't care what they eat or that "one thing is as good as another, so long as it fills up." It is the spirit that demands varying dishes and flavors. The spirit has reasons we cannot now explain for such demands. When the palate becomes indifferent in these respects, and one flavor is counted as good as another, it proves there is a deadening or blunting of the spirit. The higher the spiritualization of any person the more vigorous and appreciative becomes the palate. It is the spirit that re-

ceives the pleasure coming of eating through the physical sense of taste.

Your spirit demands to live and have expression in every department of your physical being. Of this the palate is one. If one department is shut up or closed by improper use, you are deprived of that particular expression of life and pleasure. You are also injured.

This is not to be confounded with gluttony. The glutton does not eat. He swallows. Proper eating dwells on every morsel with relish, and the longer it can be so dwelt upon, the longer it serves as the physical medium for the conveyance of life to the spirit. The glutton gets very little, real good from his food. It is as fuel put in the furnace at once in too great quantity, which does not burn and make force.

Half a dozen mouthfuls eaten in repose, chewed deliberately, and, it may be added, tasted deliberately, will bring you more good than ten times the quantity eaten in a hurried fashion. You are taking in with that food far more than you see with the physical eye. You are then taking in elements of health, strength and repose. The more we grow into this habit, the more will our power increase to bring these desirable elements to us.

Therefore, when at meal times, you have for company bright, cheerful people, not hurried or full of anxiety, or in a wrangling mood, or pre-occupied with business cares, who can eat and chat pleasantly or mirthfully, and whose talk has not the least flavor of rancor, ill-will or biting sarcasm

toward others, you have most valuable mental aids for making your food of the greatest good to body and spirit.

The entire company then concentrate on drawing to them a thought current of great power for good. It is the stronger in proportion to the number of minds which are pulling together in this mood.

A meal eaten in the proper mental condition of leisure and cheerfulness, though it last an hour, is a great rest for an hour. When you rest you are filling up with strength. Your spiritual force when you eat in the proper mind is working on others, possibly far from your body, as much and even more than at some other times. So no time is "lost" while we are engaged in any pleasure, so that we rightly use that pleasure.

Every effort, mental or physical, should give pleasure in the doing. Permanent pleasure, coming of our eating, our sleeping, our walking, our every daily effort, is the proof that life is rightly lived.

To eat and wrangle or engage in heated or angry argumentation is to draw a thought current on all so engaged which injures and tears the body to pieces instead of building it up. Every mouthful swallowed in this mood serves as a conveyance to body and spirit of this injurious force.

Do not before and during meals keep your mind in a fret and worry as to whether this or that food will agree with you. Do not in thought keep saying, "I expect this dish will disagree with me. I shall have to pay ten times over for the pleasure it gives me."

You are, in so thinking, making the proper conditions to have your food disagree with you. You are using your force persistently in the wrong direction to make exactly such a stomach as you are then figuring in mind.

Say or think instead and without irritation this: "My food will agree with me. It will give me nourishment and strength. The cheerful thought I now have, I am putting into myself with every mouthful, and the more leisurely I eat each mouthful, the more of cheer and strength in coming to me. I am eating to glorify God—the Great Supreme Power of which I am a part—a child."

This is a good "Grace before meat."

Then demand forgetfulness that you have a stomach. Don't think all the time of your stomach or digestion. Eat as a bird eats, knowing only that its food is going where nature intends it should, and that after being tasted, enjoyed and swallowed, it has no further concern with it. If you have an ailing stomach continually in your mind's eye, you will surely have one in the material. Because what you think you make. What you so much keep in mind you draw more and more to you.

What shall you eat? Eat what most pleases your taste. Nature has given you the sense of taste as a sentinel to guard your stomach. If you don't like any food, don't eat it. Eating food for strength, when it gives little pleasure to the taste—when it is eaten more from a certain sense of duty than with a keen relish does little of any lasting good. Eating that to which the taste is indifferent to if not absolutely

repugnant, is simply a forcing on both body and spirit of what they do not want. When they benefit at all it is because your mind is in a certain degree of faith that the diet you force on yourself is going to do you good. If you could eat in the same mind or mood of articles which have disagreed with you, you would find after a time their previous ill effects would gradually cease. You would not probably be able to have them so agree with you immediately, because no person who has for years believed that he or she could not partake of any dish without injury can immediately grow into a condition of absolute faith that it need not disagree with them.

The freshest meats, vegetables and fruits contain the most force. Eaten in the right mind they will add the most of their force or spirit to yours.

Salted meats and pickled vegetables have little force for you to absorb. What remains of them after the salting or pickling process, is the most earthy element. Their strongest life has gone. For fruit or vegetable no "preserving process" retains the life which belonged to them when first plucked or dug.

If you are hungry at night, before retiring, eat in moderation. If you go to sleep with the body craving food, your spirit is the more likely to go into the domain of food craving while the body is unconscious. As a result, it will not bring to the body such spiritual elements of strength as it would were the body satisfied.

You may have grown up with the idea that eating just before sleeping was very unhealthy. This

thought then becomes an actual part of yourself, and will make the practice a source of pain to you.

The animal eats and sleeps afterwards. Its digestion goes on as well when asleep as awake. So would ours did we give nature more her own way. In England millions eat a late supper at nine or ten in the evening. The average English health is as good as ours.

If an article of food disagrees with you once, that is no proof that it need do so again. Your real and only self is a bundle of beliefs, opinions and habits coming of such beliefs and opinions. Your stomach digests or does not digest in accordance with some possibly long cherished belief regarding its functions, which you may have held unconsciously and never questioned. You may have always believed that a certain food **MUST** not agree with you, or if eaten at a certain time **MUST** not agree with you. The force coming of that idea long held has made it disagree with you. When you reverse this mental error and make this idea work the other way you will gradually put its power in your stomach, improve your digestion and cease to be ruled or annoyed by an unruly organ whose whims you may have so long been nursing and encouraging.

If you crave meat, eat it. If you deny the body its demands you do it a wrong. True, meat is a food grosser and coarser than some others. But your body also is relatively gross as compared with your spirit. It is of the earth earthy. It demands

matter akin to itself and of the earth earthy to give it sustenance.

You can while eating meat desire the best and purest for body and spirit as easily as when eating fruit. If you do this you are making meat a conveyance to your spirit of such higher thought.

You can also, if in the wrong state of mind, put in body and spirit a great deal of wrangle, brutality and other lower passions even if eating cracked wheat and strawberries.

The spiritualization of the body, or in other words the making of the body the more willing and capable instrument to conform to the demands of the spirit and carry out its wonderful powers does not come from mechanical forms or forced methods. It does come from the earnest demand of the spirit or in other words from aspiration. Aspiration carries you gradually beyond the desire or demands of the grosser appetites. It enables you to use them if need be, but prevents their using you. If you starve the body in any way you do not lessen or destroy the appetite for the thing desired or craved. You may eat meat in mind, though you deny the body meat. This in its result is worse than if you ate meat, providing your body desires it. For in eating it there comes a temporary lull of the craving for it. In total denial there may be a perpetual craving. The mind is then continually consuming what is denied the body. This concentrates much of your power or thought on the thing denied when it might be placed elsewhere to better purpose.

The lower or grosser desires are not subdued by

the self-denial of a strong will. They are repressed but not destroyed. As repressed, they are ever ready to break out in some form. The person so harsh to his own body is often equally harsh and ugly toward all others who do not accept or practice his harshness.

You can in a sense "spiritualize your body by starving it." In other words you may make your self more sensitive to the thought about you.

You may feel the more acutely every mind about you. But you will recollect that you are in this way laying yourself open to both good and evil influences that the evil in some shape may be largely in the majority, and that if you make your body weak through excessive fasting you have the less strength or positiveness for resisting or throwing off evil thought.

There is in meat a positive element. Like pig iron it is heavy, strong, inelastic, blind and unyielding. It is the spirit of the stubbornness or ferocity of the animal. By its consumption we absorb of such spirit. But we can temper this the grosser quality, refine it and make it useful to us.

We must deal with the world and live with it. We cannot on this stratum of life shut ourselves entirely out and live away from it. Real happiness never is attained by such method. It is our business to deal with it, to see it and take it at its best and give it our best.

But in dealing with the world we may need a certain positive element given by and absorbed in part from animal organizations. We need it in the

assertion of our own rights. We may need it to keep ourselves positive and avoid absorbing the erroneous thoughts of others. We need not be gross blindly, stubborn or brutal. But our spirits can temper or refine the lower animal element of meat into a gentle firmness or a determination which is decided without being rude, violent or ferocious. The element derived from meat may be one aid to the spirit in the attainment of such qualities.

Our race will cease to eat meat in the future. It will grow gradually both out of the necessity of its use and the desire for it also. It is a cruelty and an injustice to take the life of the animal for our use. But the injustice is in a sense a necessity.

Our spirits are the product from grosser to finer. In other bodies ages since we were far grosser and coarser than to-day. In future ages our spirits and bodies will be far more refined than at present. So the gross material which is a necessity in one stage of being ceases to become so in another.

Aspiration will ultimately free the body of all excessive gross appetite. The unruly appetite will drop off entirely. There will be no temptation as formerly. That which tempted will lose its power, its fascination.

As your spirit refines so will all your physical tastes refine. You will naturally become more and more particular in your selection of food, and especially so in a leisurely method in partaking of it. This method itself will be a bar to all excess.

But this crucifying the body denying through our wills what it craves, and rigorously refusing its cravings, is not dependence on the Supreme Power. It implies lack of faith and trust in that Power. It is the faint and futile endeavor to do for ourselves—to make ourselves higher beings—when only that Power can so raise us.

If you will leave your body alone and put your faith and trust in the Great Spirit to lift it out of inordinate and excessive grosser appetite and all things which are crude, you will become virtuous and temperate through and through. If you try to root out the grosser by these external or physical methods, yours will be only an outside virtue with an inside of ever repressed but ever consuming desire.

This thought may occur to some: “But this may be made by others an excuse for every kind of excess.”

First, never mind what others may do or think. Your first consideration is for yourself. There is altogether too much solicitude for the reformation of others, while with every one of us are defects crying for cure and giving us pain while they so cry.

You will not become a glutton if your mind is turned against gluttony, or any excess. It is the mind bent on refinement that refines the body. But the body cannot reform the mind.

We are not to be reformed, or, in other words, re-organized spiritually and physically through proper eating alone. Our growth into the higher and

better will be a rounded but symmetrical growth not coming of a change or reform in any one thing or department of being. The whole (or holy) man and woman will grow as a perfect flower grows, every leaf and petal growing together and proportionately.

PRENTICE MULFORD.

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