

a healthy brain, and, according to Dr. Popper, talent and genius can in most cases be traced to these facts.

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Considerable excitement has been aroused in Paris by the question raised by Dr. Boiredon, of Brive, and taken up by his Paris colleagues, whether a doctor has a right, under certain circumstances, to take a man's life when he cannot be saved, and so spare him needless suffering. The Paris correspondent of the "Daily Express" says that Dr. Boiredon was the first medical man who arrived on the scene of the railway accident in Brive tunnel. The stoker of the engine, a man named Lefort, was caught under the wreck and slowly burnt to death. "When I reached him," writes Dr. Boiredon, "the man was screaming with agony, and begged me to kill him. There was no possible hope of saving his life. He was being slowly burnt to death, and his body was horribly crushed. I considered that my conscience permitted me to put an end to his agony, and asked a gendarme for his revolver. He said that he had none, and the stoker was slowly burnt to death, instead of being put out of his pain there and then." Dr. Boiredon's letter is widely commented on.

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It would appear as if one condition of greatness is a simplicity of life akin to asceticism. In fact, ascetical principles of life can be shown to have produced the great rulers of mankind, the greatest teachers, the greatest warriors, the greatest poets, the greatest thinkers, and, in fine, the greatest geniuses of history, in over ninety per cent of cases. Caesar, whom historians agree in calling the greatest human phenomenon the world has known, was most abstemious in respect of diet as well as heroic in the matter of training his body—in other words, in subjecting it to hardship. Alexander, like his tutor Aristotle, was an ascetic during the wonderful campaigns in Asia Minor and India by which he entered into history. Hannibal, the greatest military strategist of all time, was as ascetic as a hermit. Saint Augustine did not "find himself" till he adopted the ascetic life. Napoleon, like Caesar and Charlemagne, was excessively temperate in respect to his bodily cravings, and as Lord Rosebery points out in his masterly "Last Phase," despite all that has been said to the contrary, was, for the age in which he flourished, a distinctly clean-living man. Coming down to less illustrious beings, the money-makers of the present age have almost invariably shown that their energies were always tempered by a reasoned asceticism. In the athletic field, failure is the invariable result for the athlete who lapses from the ascetic or heroic regime, and the truth is beyond controversy that the man who governs his flesh is the man who helps to govern the world and make human nature respectable.

**What Some People Eat.**

When I was a small boy, and read how John the Baptist retired from public life and lived on locusts and wild honey, I felt great pity for him, says a writer in an American paper. It was not on account of the honey that I pitied him, for I had an infinite capacity for that myself; it was the locust.

The locust to me, then, meant that tuneful insect which in the summer-time hides itself in the trees and pipes in steady, never-ceasing shrill tones, until the sun goes down. I hated the creature for its incessant noise and its ability to hide from me, and I loathed it for looking like a fat cockroach. And that I thought was what the poor prophet had to spoil his nice honey with.

Later in life I learned that what I called a locust was in reality a cicada, and that what I called a grasshopper was in truth a locust. John the Baptist, then, like others of his time and of the present time, too, gathered the locusts in great heaps, parched them, and considered them as delicious as we hold shrimps and crabs.

And why not? A shrimp or crab or any other shell-fish will eat anything, while the locust is a clean and even fastidious feeder. It is all a matter of custom. We have not been brought up to eat grasshoppers, and therefore do not

like the idea of doing so. Our western Indians, however, look upon stewed or fried grasshoppers as a very near approach to ambrosia, while in northern Africa wagon-loads of "hoppers" are peddled on the streets, as strawberries are with us.

And just now I mentioned the cockroach in terms of contumely, as if it were certainly outside the pale of edibles. Yet a number of persons testify to their succulence, and wholesomeness. One young lady, in particular, is mentioned as being so fond of the brown bug that when the household was buried in sleep she would seek the kitchen and capture and munch the crisp insects as if they were so many freshly roasted peanuts.

Then there is the ant. In India the white ant is caught by the painful, parched on hot stoves, ground up into flour, made into cakes, and greedily eaten. Gluttony in this case carries its own punishment with it, for over-eating of ant-flour cakes will bring on sure death by cholera. In Africa the ants are merely baked, being then beaten like pop-corn. In Mexico the honey ant is a regular article of commerce.

We cannot understand how these things can be eaten, and yet we eat things which to some other people are an abomination. For example, some of these very Africans who revel in baked ants, look on in disgust at the sight of a white man eating butter. Butter! Ugh! Why, they use it to anoint their bodies with. And then let us consider a moment. Do we know anybody who eats a kind of cheese so strong that even the famous boxer Jeffries has been vanquished by it? Is Limburger, then, a dream? And how about the epicure who caves nothing for his cheese until it has experienced a new birth and gives visible signs of life.

The Frenchman, too, who causes his goose to have liver-complaint in order that that bile-producing organ shall become extra large. And the same gentleman's snail soup or fricassee. Frogs' legs, also. But here we come to a pure prejudice. Odoriferous or animated snail I am willing to condemn, though I will eat and like them, too; but for the frog-legs I will make a firm stand. For whiteness and delicacy the spring chicken is nowhere in comparison.

There is the Italian with his baked viper and the negro with his monster roker-snake. The Australian with his earth-worm, and the Chinaman with his *Pedicularis capitata* and *Pedicularis vestimentalis*. These long Latin names are merely synonyms for a little English word of five letters, beginning with l and ending with e, which my modesty will not permit me to write.

We may make faces at the Australian and the Chinaman, but in the matter of snake-flesh we had better be silent, unless, indeed, we be consistent and forego eels.

After all, what should be the test of propriety in selecting an article for food? I shall give it up without making a single guess for an answer. I see people eat crabs who would turn up their noses and stomachs, too, probably, at the thought of a spider, and yet the two are cousins. Not only that, there are whole tribes of people who look upon spiders as dainties. Such are the natives of New Caledonia, who feast on certain large spiders which they catch in large quantities and roast. Further than this, a celebrated naturalist tells of a lady of his acquaintance who was so fond of spiders that as she walked in her garden she would catch and eat them. She said they were better than hazelnuts.

For inconsistency again, see how fond we are of rabbits and squirrels, while we disdain their equally clean and equally tender cousin the rat. We laugh at the Chinaman for eating birds-nest soup, and at the same time we use gelatine, which is much the same material, as a great delicacy.

I suppose we might eat anything if we could only make up our minds to it. Chinamen eat cats, dogs, and horses; some of the Pacific Islanders eat butterflies. Australians eat caterpillars, Mexican Indians eat beetles, Esquimaux eat frozen, rotten meat; Americans swallow living oysters without even biting at them; the Turkish ladies eat the grub of a certain caterpillar, some South Sea Islanders eat missionaries, the Cingalese eat honey-bees, and no doubt there is nothing so nasty but somebody will eat it.

Why, I know persons who say birds are not fit to eat until they have hung by the head so long that the body drops off. The truth is, and I do not see how it can be honestly denied, that eating is entirely a matter of taste.

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