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that



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Among the great varieties of castes and tribes to be found in India, some are known to eat serpents, and one low caste devours greedily the flesh of cattle that have died of disease. The Chinese are said to relish rotten eggs, and they certainly regard soup made of a particular kind of bird's nest as a great delicacy.

The ancient Romans were fond of edible snails and highly esteemed fish that were caught in the Tiber where the main drain of Rome flowed into the river. In modern Europe the Frenchman's taste for frogs seems horrible and unnatural to the ordinary Englishman. If we now turn from the consideration of nations to individuals, we find the same diversity of taste in the matter of food.

What is harmless and nutritious to ordinary men act like poison upon some peculiar constitutions. Thus there are persons who have such a strong antipathy to butter and eggs, or mushrooms, or milk, that when they eat a dish partly composed of whichever of these is their particular antipathy they become sick, even if they do not know beforehand what they are eating. These strange antipathies may be regarded as exaggerated forms of the likes and dislikes that manifest themselves whenever a party of human beings sit down to a social meal, though they may all belong to the same country and the same class.

Some like highly-seasoned dishes, others prefer plain food. It is not every one who could relish boiled pork and veal pie with plums and sugar, although these were the dishes that Dr. Johnson was especially fond of. Nearly every man has his own favourite fruit, vegetable and drink.

Some are too fond of wine, whereas others regard wine as poison and enjoy a cup of cold water. There is the same diversity of tastes in a far more extended sphere than that of eating and drinking. The hunter delights in spending the whole day in the chase of wild beasts, and his pleasure is incomprehensible to those who have no natural inclination for the chase, and cannot understand why a man should go tramping over hill and dale in the hope of inflicting severe bodily pain on animals that have never done him any harm. Some have a taste for intellectual pleasures, others prefer active out-door games.

Some love public life, others are so constituted as to prefer to live in seclusion. Even where there is a general similarity of tastes, there are strongly marked special differences. What a variety of taste, for instance, we find among the lovers of books! A few great writers have won the need of universal admiration; but with regard to second-rate authors, numberless volumes have been written by critics in support of their own especial favourites.

Much of such controversial writing is wasted.