

poorly-balanced diet. Marasmus, rickets, and eczema are also of common occurrence. Food habits should be formed by young children under careful guidance. Until that is so, the child will grow up with whims and fancies which will prevent the best physical development. Hence the absolute necessity for every house-mother to know something of the science of nutrition.

The important relation of food to disease in regard to its quantity and composition, as well as the frequency and method of its administration, are becoming more and more thoroughly appreciated. This is owing, on the one hand, to improved methods of diagnosis and to modern means of clinically discriminating between different kinds of gastric and intestinal indigestion, and, on the other hand, to an increasing knowledge of the chemistry of food, of food preparation by cooking, and of artificial digestion. There is still much difference of opinion in regard to the best dietaries for certain diseases—such as, for example, gout and obesity—but the general principles of dietetics are to-day well established, and more widely understood and practised than ever before.

It may be asserted, Gilman Thompson says, that there is almost no disease of long duration and severity, and certainly no disease accompanied by grave constitutional disturbances, the course of which cannot in a measure be controlled or benefited by thorough study of the nature and uses of foods.

Such diseases as tuberculosis and diabetes, for example, are more successfully combated from the dietetic standpoint than from the medicinal. The aim of treatment in the first is to render "the soil" for the tubercle bacillus more resistant. It is, unfortunately, not yet positively known what substances are destructive of the life of the tubercle bacillus, but there is some reason to believe that fat is antagonistic to its life. It is suggested that the fat absorbs the oxygen required for the active multiplication of the micro-organisms. What is well-known, however, is that if wasting can be checked and the weight of the patient increased, the disease is held at bay, if not cured.

Carbohydrates, which ordinarily furnish a large proportion of the energy of the body, in tuberculosis appear to do so less readily than the fats and proteids. Young girls particularly, as a rule, crave sweets and confectionery, and despise the more wholesome animal food. If any gastric catarrh exist, such a diet only acts as an irritant. How important, then, to know the value of fat in the diet of such a patient, and to be able to administer it in tactful, palatable ways.

Again, in a state of health the starchy and saccharine substances which form important constituents of our daily food undergo complete conversion in the system, and then are wholly

appropriated and utilised in the body in the production of force. None, or practically none, passes out of the healthy body as sugar. In the disease known as diabetes it is otherwise. The liver, which exercises a sugar-detaining and sugar-assimilating function, has lost its power. A more or less notable quantity of sugar is excreted, and from observation the amount which escapes from the body unconsumed is usually proportioned to the amount of starchy and saccharine substances taken in the food. This universally admitted fact is the basis of all the dietetic rules which have been applied to the treatment of this disease—that is, the elimination, as far as is consistent with the due nutrition of the body, of all those articles of food that can be converted in the organism into sugar and the substitution of albuminous foods and fats. The absolute necessity for a knowledge of the composition of food materials is surely plainly demonstrated.

Sir Henry Thompson, the eminent English dietist, says: "It is certain that an adequate practical recognition of the value of proper food to the individual in maintaining a high standard of health, in prolonging healthy life (the prolongation of unhealthy life being small gain either to the individual or to the community), and thus largely promoting cheerful temper, prevalent good nature, and improved moral tone, would achieve almost a revolution in the habits of a large part of the community."

The Progress of State Registration.

An interesting correspondence is now going forward in the *British Medical Journal*, in which the question of State Registration of Nurses is being discussed.

We are glad to hear that the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association is keenly alive to the necessity for State Registration. A Victorian correspondent writes:—"We have had quite a little sensation here (Melbourne) over the Residential Club question, and many of us think that the Council of our Association would be much wiser to leave speculative questions alone, and stick to the true objects of the Association, namely, improving the education of nurses and obtaining their Registration by the State. So far, our State Treasurer is not in sympathy with legal status for nurses, but we console ourselves with the fact that if Victoria refuses us our just professional status we shall register in the sister State of New South Wales; they are sure to get it there long before we do, as Victoria is not nearly so progressive as the States where women have the suffrage."

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