common salt are dissolved ("Food in Health and Disease").

The great majority of patients find hot milk easier to digest than cold, and common sense teaches that it must be a saving in our internal economy to warm the milk outside the human body rather than at its expense.

Phthisical patients are particularly liable to a form of vomiting which occurs fairly regularly immediately after taking food, especially after breakfast; rest in bed is frequently a complete remedy. In all sanatoria great stress is laid upon a period of complete rest in a recumbent position before meals; many physicians advise the same after food, but opinions differ as to this. Here, as you all know, patients rest both before and after the principal meals of the day.

Besides vomiting, another trouble of which sanatorium patients are apt to complain is constipation, brought on in a great measure by the large amount of milk in the diet and lack of exercise.

To combat this we must daily give such articles of diet as porridge, brown bread, marmalade, and green vegetables of the cabbage tribe; these all contain a certain amount of quite indigestible food which mechanically irritates the bowel when passing through it. Oily foods, such as butter, cream (which is always added to our milk puddings), and cod-liver oil, are useful in this respect.

Occasionally you will find that patients, in their anxiety to get well, having heard wonderful stories of cures worked by "stuffing," will so overload their stomachs, especially with milk, that Nature at last rebels and a bilious attack ensues; in these cases the doctor will generally prescribe the customary blue pill, &c., and give half a pint of hot water instead of milk at the usual milk hours—7 a.m., 11 a.m., at the midday meal, 4 p.m., and 8.30 p.m. A couple of days will generally suffice for this treatment, and the patient can begin to take his milk again more cautiously.

It must have often struck you as curious that the temperature of a phthisical patient interferes so little with his capacity for taking food. Thus a patient, with an evening temperature of 100° Fahr. to 101° Fahr. and a normal or sub-normal one in the morning, does not as a rule suffer from loss of appetite, and there is no reason to lower his diet. Apparently his powers of digestion are unaffected, but the waste of tissue requires making up by large quantities of food, for, though these patients may eat well, they rarely gain much weight so long as the evening exacerbations continue; when, however, the fever is continuous the appetite more generally flags, and "stuffing" is of no avail to prevent wasting—indeed, it only produces nausea. These cases do best on a lighter diet of eggs, fish, milk puddings, and plenty of milk until the temperature quietens down a little.

All food given to consumptives must be of the best possible quality, and thoroughly well cooked. Some medical men especially condemn underdone meat, and advise only small joints of 6 to 10 lb., to ensure its thorough sterilisation. Some other authorities, however, recommend raw meat in the shape of sandwiches, on account of the extreme digestibility of the uncooked albuminoids. Where this is given the meat so served must be English, and freshly killed. Now that foreign meat is so largely imported, it is exceedingly difficult to be sure from whence comes your beef, no matter what price you pay, and, unless you can absolutely trust your butcher, it is better to point out the difficulty to the medical man who has ordered the raw meat.

The same remarks apply to raw beef-juice when made at home. The albuminoids of meat are also extracted and prepared especially by many firms, but in the great majority of cases the chemicals necessary to preserve them from putrefaction entirely destroy their usefulness, and it is better to avoid them altogether.

Such articles of food as plasmon, &c., are useful in cases where ordinary food cannot be taken, but are not necessary for phthisical patients who can enjoy and thrive upon good and nourishing food.

Poisons.

ORGANIC.

By Miss E. L. B. Forster,
Analyst to The Morgan Crucible Co.

No. IV.

Table I. (*continued*).

Strychnine and its Preparations.

The alkaloid strychnine is obtained from the seeds of strychnos (nux vomica), natural order Loganiaceæ. The tree is found growing in India, Burma, and several parts of the East. It does not appear that the natives knew of the poisonous nature of nux vomica, and, although it was introduced into England as far back as the sixteenth century, it was long before it was used in medicine. Previously to being applied to the use of man, it was resorted to for the destruction of animals, such as dogs or cats, which it was necessary to destroy. As the science of chemistry, especially organic chemistry, grew, so the value of this important drug was realised, but it was 1818 before the alkaloid strychnine was isolated. It was at that period when the alkaloids were first discovered, and their number rapidly grew.

The methods of extracting the strychnine from the seeds are many and various.

One way is to digest the seeds with alcohol, add water, distil off the spirit, evaporate and filter. When cold, add acetate of lead to the filtrate.

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