

ALIMENTARY ENZYMES.

The Physiology of Digestion, and the mechanical, chemical, and vital processes concerned, have of recent years been the subject of much study, resulting in discoveries of interest and importance; and a clear knowledge of the question of food values, and of the reasons underlying the diet of a patient, which is now frequently prescribed by the physician, should be part of the equipment of every nurse.

In this connection a book on "Alimentary Enzymes," in theory and application, with special reference to their use and application, published by Benger's Food, Ltd., Otter Works, Manchester, though intended primarily for the medical profession, is also of considerable interest to nurses.

Pioneer work in connection with digestive enzymes was done by the late Sir William Roberts, M.D., F.R.S., Professor of Medicine at the Victoria University, Manchester. These researches formed the subject of his addresses on Dietetic Preparations and Digestive Ferments, delivered before the Royal College of Physicians, as Lumleian Lecturer, and of papers which appeared in the proceedings of the Royal Society, and other scientific and medical publications.

In the practical work connected with his

researches, Sir William Roberts was assisted by the late Mr. Benger, and Benger's preparations of digestive enzymes and their food products were the practical outcome of this pioneer work.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF DIGESTION.

Concerning this important subject we are told that "under the term digestion are included

all those processes to which the food is subjected in the alimentary canal, and which have for their object the conversion of solid, insoluble, indiffusible food substances into soluble, diffusible food bodies, which are capable of being absorbed by passing through the wall of the alimentary canal into the blood or lymph.

"Broadly speaking, these processes are either mechanical or chemical in nature, the mechanical factors in digestion being essentially due to muscular action, and having for their objects:— (1) The breaking up of the solid or semi-solid particles of food; (2) the incorporation of the food with the digestive juices; (3) the propulsion of the digesting food along the alimentary tract.

"The motor mechanisms include such actions as mastication, insalivation, deglutition, and peristalsis &c., and are in some cases under the control of the will, in others involuntary and reflex. Roughly one may say that the food at the commencement and end of its journey



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COWS' MILK SETS IN SOLID CURD, AND HAS TO BE
BROKEN WITH GLASS ROD.

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