

POWELL (H.H.)

ANNUAL ADDRESS OF THE
RETIRING PRESIDENT
of the
Guyahoga County Medical Society.

subject
"Dietetics in Disease"

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CUYAHOGA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

BY DR. H. H. POWELL, CLEVELAND, O.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY:—A year ago it was your pleasure to elect me President of this Society. To-day, in accordance with our time-honored democratic custom, I am called upon to surrender the trust and honor to another and take my place in the ranks. When elected, I thanked you for the honor, now I desire to express my thanks for the uniform kindness you have shown me and for the leniency with which you have looked upon my short-comings.

We have an article in our Constitution which makes it obligatory upon the retiring president to address the society upon topics bearing upon the welfare of the society, or if he prefers, on some subject of professional interest. It is my purpose to take advantage of the last clause of this article, and discuss a subject upon which I have given much thought, and which I know is of great importance to the profession and of greater importance to all who may place themselves under our care. I have chosen for my subject, not Pyosalpinx, not Micrococci of ravenous fame and classic name, nor pedantic Hystero-Trachelorhaphy. These I commit to the tender mercies of a long suffering profession and ask you to bear with me kindly while I discuss the homely subject, "Dietetics in Disease." This subject is selected, not alone because I have given it much thought, but because this society embraces in its membership representatives of all specialties, as well as general practitioners. I know of no topic of more common interest to all medical men. There is no organ or tissue of the body that can be properly treated when in a state of disease, without a due consideration bestowed upon the food, from which alone the blood is to be made for the repair of the organ or tissue. It is as important for the oculist, the dermatologist and the gynecologist to bear this fact in mind, as it is for the surgeon and general practitioner. Success in any of the special departments of medicine often depends upon a judicious dietary. Dietetics can never be a specialty, although some recent enthusiasts have intimated that such a thing is probable in the near future. It is true, a retrospective view makes it difficult to tell what the ingenuity of the medical mind may do in the way of specialty making, but I am quite confident a halt will be cried when an attempt shall be made by any set of men to monopolize dietetics. Just here I might be interrupted by some one present with the question, why is it necessary to preach the doctrine of dietetics to us?

Is there one of us who fails in his duty in this matter? Do we not all emphasize the importance of proper food in every instance? Is there a doctor in the land worthy of the title who underestimates the value of suitable food? In reply to these questions I gladly admit that there are but few physicians who

are not prepared to acknowledge the paramount importance of "Dietetics in Disease." Since the days of Hippocrates medical men everywhere have made suggestions to their patients as to what they must eat or drink, but I believe it is equally true that as medicine has been largely administered empirically, so has it been with food, and very often I doubt not, with results fully as disastrous. It is also true that there are men who correctly estimate the importance of the subject theoretically, but rarely give practical proofs of their belief. They seem to fear the dignity of medicine will suffer if not their own dignity by elevating the product of the kitchen above that of the pharmacy. Many who have not as yet given this subject sufficient consideration will be obliged to do so from outside pressure, or what we may term fashion, for we do have fashion to contend with or acquiesce in, even in the treatment of the ills to which flesh is heir. The change in the treatment of disease has been radical when we compare present methods with those of the olden times. Active and often times injurious applications of so-called remedies have given place in latter days to a more intelligent appreciation of the salutary methods of nature, laboring under difficulties, the guidance of disease rather than attempts at garroting it. Heroic efforts have been replaced by mild though more certain and agreeable means. We now recognize more fully than ever a tendency towards recovery as well as a tendency towards death, and that often the principal duty of the physician consists in a judicious management of the patient, as regards food and air. Science has nothing to fear in being made instrumental in solving the food problem. Progress in physiological, anatomical and chemical researches can accomplish nothing grander than its solution.

Laboratory experiments have afforded us a scientific working basis, but nothing more. The provings at the bedside are of greater importance. The experiments of Beaumont upon Alexis St. Martin shed a flood of light upon the physiology of digestion and accomplished more in the way of affording practical suggestions for the physician than all the laboratory experiments made up to the time he gave the results of his work to the world. Since the main object of this paper is to bring

before you my views of certain articles of diet in disease, I will refrain from attempts at "glittering generalities," and confine my remarks to the few articles many of us rely most upon when making out the diet list. I will have nothing to say concerning the regulation diet long established in diabetes or Bright's disease. It may be stated in general terms that the articles of food from which we are to select must contain proteids, fat, and carbo-hydrates in varied proportions, according to the indications presented in each case. As a rule, no matter what may be the disease, a long continuance on any one class will be followed by malnutrition. Nor should the physician ever forget the value at times of complete abstinence from food. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not," for very often he shows his wisdom by such a course. By almost universal consent we have come to rely upon the following articles as appropriate food for our patients: Milk, eggs, beef tea, gruels, broths, and alcohol. We have in this list the necessary proteids, fat, and carbo-hydrates. We differ considerably among ourselves as to the relative value and appropriateness of these articles. Let us take up milk first, as it is beyond question of first importance. For one, I candidly do not believe I would care to practice medicine a day if obliged to give up milk. Whilst the majority of physicians are equally as enthusiastic over milk as a food for the sick, there are others who too quickly look about for substitutes for it, too quickly see contra-indications to its use or accept their patients' views as to its disagreeing with them. A physician often has it in his power to do an immense amount of benefit in overcoming prejudice against milk on the part of many. Lives have been sacrificed to this often baseless prejudice. A plain talk with a patient of average comprehension will often induce him to give up his opinions and accept yours. I have had a patient on milk say: "I don't see how I can get my strength back on such a watery food as milk." His mind was set against it. But when it was shown him that there was but 10 per cent. more water in milk than in the best beefsteak, the one containing 85 per cent., the other 75, he became reconciled. We must remove all such unfortunate prejudices. If we have good evidence in a given case that

milk does disagree, it must be respected, but not at once abandon it. Continue for a while to use it after changing it by chemical or mechanical means so as to adapt it to the case. I confess my heart sinks within me at times when milk must be abandoned. In the order of their use we come to beef tea, either made from fresh beef or from some one of the various extracts in the market. What a countless number of graves have opened to receive the victims of beef tea; how blindly the profession followed for years the teachings of the fathers in the administration of beef tea, under the impression they were giving concentrated nourishment. How many dogs have fattened upon the supposed refuse whilst the human victims have gone over to the majority—starved to death, though otherwise recorded on the mortality list. Beef tea is now known to be a stimulant and not a nutrient. It contains the products of muscular waste, and certain salts of value, with extractive matter, the whole making under certain conditions a suitable stimulant, and forming a good menstruum for administering proteids or carbo-hydrates. Eggs and certain starchy substances may be employed. For a few years past, with some other physicians, I have used in place of beef tea the expressed juice of the beef, and it is with great pleasure that I record the admirable results obtained by its use. For getting the juice I have used the small iron press known as Osborn's, with which many of you are familiar. The juice, when properly expressed, is highly nutritious, containing by actual test 10 per cent of albumen. A pound of good round steak will furnish on an average six ounces of the juice. If time would allow, I could relate a long list of cases successfully treated with meat juice—children and old people, young men and maidens. I have come to regard this meat press as almost an essential in many families. What a saving of work to a feeble stomach, what a safeguard against distress is afforded by this fresh, nutritious juice. For the benefit of any who have not been satisfied with the use of the press, let me say a few words. You must get one of your own and master the simple technique connected with it. Your beef must be free from fat and chopped by the butcher; it must be put into the inner compartment of a farina cooking

vessel; the water in the outer vessel may be brought to a slow boil. In this manner the meat may be heated thoroughly and start the juice. Then put it into the press, which has been dipped into boiling water and wiped. The juice is now quickly expressed, much to the surprise of one who has neglected the method described. The quantity to be given, of course, is regulated by the requirements of the case. If given in excess of demand lithiates will appear heavily in the urine. Alternating with milk or eggs, or malt or barley jelly, the condition of the patient must be exceptionally bad, which will not exhibit a favorable response.

On account of the satisfactory results observed in the use of the expressed beef juice, and because of the difficulty many seemed to experience in expressing it properly, I induced, some months ago, Mr. Frank Stewart, the well-known druggist of St. Clair street, to manufacture it for sale. He soon found it was necessary to increase the size of his press, finally arranging a small cider press for the work. He also experimented with preserving agents, and ascertained that brandy or whisky in small amounts acted admirably. This I have prescribed with satisfaction; it forms a first class food for feeble travelers, whether by sea or land. A tablespoonful put into half a cup of hot water can, as a rule, be taken by any stomach and repeated according to requirements. A. Mayell & Company, druggists, have also decided to manufacture this juice, and have imported an improved hydraulic press designed for such service. Whenever it is possible, I advise that the meat should be pressed at home.

It may not be amiss to allude in this connection to the numerous proprietary preparations now in the market professing to be far superior in their concentrated nutriment to any which can be prepared at the homes of our people. I allude to them simply to condemn them one and all; they are delusions and snares. It is time the profession fully realized these facts and acted accordingly. Rival drug houses, not satisfied with numerous useless new remedies, have entered the field of dietetics and propose finishing with their foods all who have survived their medicines. Each house is provided with an organ in the form

of a journal of dietetics or reconstructives; like street corner showmen, they shout, every one, the merits of his own exhibit, whilst denouncing that of his rival. It is lamentable that men, some of them high in the ranks of the profession, give countenance to these commercial enterprises, and by the great influence of their names increase the sales of these valueless and oftentimes hurtful articles. If it were possible to grant that some of these potted or bottled preparations equalled the home made articles, the extravagant cost of them should deter medical men from advising their use. This, I am sure upon reflection, will be admitted by most of you; but, to illustrate the full force of this point I will consider for a moment a product of beef regarded very generally as the best in the market. As it is not my purpose to make invidious distinction, if such a thing were possible, I will not mention the manufacturer's name. Fourteen years ago I introduced the agent of the manufacturer to this society. He distributed specimens. Since then, through active advertising, the civilized world has become acquainted with it. I hope to be forgiven for the small part I have had in giving it sale in this community. It is put up in bottles that hold four tablespoonfuls, and is retailed at the modest sum of one dollar per bottle—the price of six or seven pounds of the best steak or of four gallons of milk. I have at various times tested it with heat and nitric acid for albumen without finding any. The absence of albumen might perhaps be explained, if it were claimed, that it had been converted into peptones, but no such claim is made. It can be nothing more than an agreeable stimulant, utterly devoid of any nutritious elements. By united action we can do much to correct this widespread evil and thereby do much toward saving both the lives and money of our patients. I contemplated discussing some efficient methods of administering eggs, alcohol and malt as food for the sick, but am compelled, by the length my paper has attained, to postpone their consideration.

There is, however, one other article I wish to bring to your notice, a food to be sure not so well suited for the very sick, as for those who will soon become so if not aided by your suggestions. I refer to "White Rolled Oats," not oatmeal, the

latter may with propriety form a part of the diet of the robust with unimpaired digestive functions, or when the constipated habit must be corrected. It may suit the sturdy Scotchman, but the average American can digest but a small amount of it; it acts as a laxative by irritating the bowels and passing out undigested—with "White Rolled Oats" it is otherwise; the oats are exposed at the mill to a high degree of heat, the bran is thoroughly removed with all the indigestible parts of the grain, and then carefully rolled. We have here a farinaceous food of great value, where the digestive fluids have not been suppressed by febrile action or other contra indications do not exist. For a year or more I have been prescribing and using on my own table the brand known as the "Quaker Mill" of Ravenna. It has given me more satisfaction in every respect than any other in the market, and, as it is not kept in stock by the grocers in the city, I have gotten Mr. Frank Stewart to keep it. But I must not longer encroach upon your time; a volume of good size would be required to properly elaborate the hints expressed in this brief paper. If I read correctly the signs of the times, the day is not far distant when the physicians' first prescription will be the patients' menu, and perhaps in quite a large proportion of cases it will not be deemed necessary to write a second. The treatment and cure of many diseases by a carefully selected diet will be regarded as legitimate work for the most scientific and skillful of the profession. Polypharmacy is a curse to this country; careful observations of the influence of various articles of food upon the course of disease will put a wholesome check upon it, and at the same time rebound to the credit of the long tried, standard remedies of our materia medica. The banners of our advance guard must have emblazoned upon them "Preventive Medicine," "Natural Therapeutics."

