

## Selected Article

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### DIETETIC TREATMENT OF CHRONIC NEPHRITIS.\*

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The most reasonable hope of doing this lies in making a radical change in the proteids of the food.

Before going into this, however, I wish to make some brief statements concerning the employment of medicinal agents in chronic nephritis. I am led to do this for fear that it may be thought that I would discard all drugs as valueless, and this is far from my opinion. No one of experience can deny the value of digitalis in passive hyperemia of the kidney due to disease of the heart, and which is often accompanied by albuminuria and more or less extensive dropsy. Indeed, these are the cases of so-called Bright's disease that are so satisfactorily treated by the proper administration of heart tonics, the best of which, so far as these cases are concerned, is, in my experience, digitalis. Neither can one of experience deny that great and more or less lasting good is secured by the administration of hydragogue cathartics, such as elaterium. Under the proper employment of this drug and the subsequent use of heart tonics, I have seen extensive edemas of the lower extremities wholly disappear, and the patient able to return to his work and continue at it for years. Furthermore, the value of mercury in syphilitic diseases of the kidney and the benefit of quinine in malarial nephritis cannot be questioned. We must always strive in the treatment of any disease to find the causative agent, and direct our treatment accordingly. It is true that we may empirically discover a cure while the cause remains unknown, as has happened in the treatment of both malaria and syphilis, but happy hits of this kind are not to be expected to occur with any great frequency. However, just this thing has, if I may express it, partially happened in the dietetic treatment of chronic nephritis, inasmuch as the milk diet in this disease was tried with more or less success long before we knew anything of the differences between the proteids of milk and those of meat.

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