

depricate," says Dr. Watson, "what I would fain see altered, what it is one great end of this Society to do away with, is the vagueness of aim, the uncertainty of result, the merely tentative nature of too many of our prescriptions."

In no department of medicine is vagueness of aim, uncertainty of result, and consequently tentative practice, more conspicuous, and I may add, more disastrous, than in diseases of infants, and especially diarrhœal diseases. We lose our aim, first, by forgetting, or by never knowing, the anatomy and physiology of the infant; and we are forthwith environed by complications and inexplicable phenomena which befog every effort we make.

The digestive apparatus of the infant is, in some respects, like that of the carnivorous animals, arranged for highly animalized and easily assimilable food. This alone should teach us that the pharinaceous and vegetable substances should not enter the diet of young infants. Infants, like animals and like adults, require water; and while their proper food, milk, contains all the water usually demanded, any accident or disease which cuts off the accustomed supply of milk, as well as any circumstance which greatly increases perspiration, such as warm weather, is certain to induce thirst, for which water is the true remedy. The infant intestines, like the adult, are provided with a reservoir for the reception, detention, and absorption of the assimilable fluids. This organ is the *large intestine*, or *colon and cæcum* and the rectum included, and has not like the stomach, and a considerable part of the small intestine, any digestive function. No part of it, therefore, can perform digestion, from the anus to the caput coli—it can only absorb; and substances which are simply in suspension, not in solution, are not appropriated when introduced into this portion of the intestine. Substances, in short, which are not transmitted through membranes by osmosis, are not utilized by the rectum or colon. As an absorbing organ, however, the large intestine is very active. There can be no doubt, I think, that the digestive portions of the intestinal tube of the infant, as well as the absorbing portions, are liable to the same diseases that affect them in the adult; and as diarrhœa is one of the results of disease in both portions, in both adults and infants, we will make our classification upon this understanding. Commencing with the stomach, I will say that diarrhœa *from indigestion* is, perhaps, quite as frequent, if not much more so, in infancy as in adult age. It is very liable to occur in warm weather, to infants both breast and bottle-fed, on account of their taking more milk than the stomach can dispose of, and more than the system requires, the child taking it for thirst instead of for hunger. It is also liable to