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FOOD IN HEALTH AND DISEASE.*

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I have frequently endeavored to give prominence to the importance of diet in the prevention and treatment of disease. If you ask me how much we knew about proper methods of feeding in my student days I shall have to confess that our ideas on the subject were somewhat vague. We supposed, in a general way, that a milk diet was a proper thing in all cases of fever. We sometimes went a little further and varied our diet to some extent. We thought that beef tea might occasionally be added to our diet list. We did not believe in going into details to any great extent. A simple direction for the patient to take beef tea and milk, alternately, every two or three hours, was often deemed sufficient. On the other hand, we sometimes thought it well to limit special articles of food under certain circumstances. In accordance with this last idea we reduced the amount of meat, starch and sugar, in connection with such diseases as nephritis, rheumatism, diabetes, etc.

You have advanced to some extent in these modern days. You have studied physiology, under favorable circumstances, and have learned much about the phenomena of metabolism and the nutritive value of foods, but whether you will retain enough of this knowledge to apply it practically in the treatment of your patients in active practice, I know not. I fear that a large number of physicians in this and other countries have very crude, if not incorrect, ideas as to dietary. It is

* Portion of lecture to the student class of 1902-3.