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NOTE AND COMMENT.



If we may believe the statements of those who are in a position to know, the human race will doubtless, in the future, get its food and drink, its sustenance and stimulus, from an article that has been not generally esteemed at its true worth. It will be a very excellent thing too, in many respects, if ammonia does what is claimed for it. The *Scientific American* publishes the statement that common ammonia can be properly put to use as a leavening agent. The carbonate of ammonia is an exceedingly volatile substance. Place a small portion

of it upon a knife and hold it over a flame, and it will almost immediately be entirely developed into gas and pass off into the air. The gas thus formed is a simple composition of nitrogen and hydrogen. No residue is left from the ammonia. This gives it its superiority as a leavening power over soda and cream of tartar when used alone, and has induced its use as a supplement to these articles. A small quantity of ammonia in the dough is effective in producing bread that will be lighter, sweeter and more wholesome than that risen by any other leavening agent. When it is acted upon by the heat of baking, the leavening gas that raises the dough is liberated. In this act it uses itself up, as it were; the ammonia is entirely diffused, leaving no trace or residuum whatever. The light, fluffy, flaky appearance, so desirable in biscuits, etc., and so sought after by professional cooks, is said to be imparted to them only by the use of this agent. The bakers and baking powder manufacturers producing the finest goods have been quick to avail themselves of this useful discovery, and the handsomest and best bread and cake are now largely raised by the aid of ammonia, combined, of course, with other leavening material. If the use of the salt becomes general, in the preparation of our daily food, dyspeptics will hail its discovery as a boon. It is the practice, almost generally, among physicians, to prescribe whiskey as a stimulus to persons whose powers are waning, and in

times of crisis. A case is reported in a recent number of the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, where a woman was given whisky in repeated doses, but she gained no strength. The physicians were perplexed, and each moment was critical. At length one-sixteenth of an ounce of liquor ammonia was injected into a vein of one of her arms. The effect was plainly perceptible in a few seconds. The pulse, which, under the whisky treatment, had become so feeble that it could scarcely be discovered, could be felt at the wrist. The patient continued to improve and eventually recovered. Whisky is given for cold, for heat, for restlessness, for everything, or a few grains of some medicine in a pint of whisky are the remedy, and then more whisky. The fact that a quarter of an ounce of carbonate of ammonia dissolved in a pint of distilled water, an ounce of honey or loaf sugar added, and the whole thoroughly dissolved, taken in doses of from 30 to 40 drops for a child, up to a tablespoonful for a man or woman, will furnish positive stimulant of the most healthful kind to a deranged system, to the extent of many times that of the best wine or brandy, without any of the effects which invariably follow that of alcoholic mediums, is not generally practiced by our physicians; in fact, it is an old matter, and so simple that it has not always recommended itself to the M. D.'s, for with many of them, to depart from their books is to depart from all right. In view of the facts stated and the woman's experience the human race may be said to be in possession of another boon, the treasure in each case—food and drink—being furnished by a very humble cumberer of the drugman's shelf.

MONTREAL has been the scene during the past month of no less than three important meetings, of which one at least has created considerable interest outside the city in the Dominion. The session of the American Association for the Advancement of Science has given us much to think and talk about during the interval which separates us from the still greater honor which is in store for us in the visit of the British Association the year after next. We gave last month the names of a number of gentlemen who were expected to make the congress their excuse for a visit to our city, and almost the only disappointment to which we were obliged to submit was the absence of Mr. HERBERT