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**DIET OF CHILDREN FROM TIME OF
WEANING TILL END OF SECOND OR
THIRD YEAR.***

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Mr. President and Members: The proper food for babies just after weaning, and young children up to two or three years of age, is not a subject about which the general practitioner ever gives much thought. Indeed, he is not often consulted in regard to the subject. More frequently the grandmother or some elderly nurse suggests that the child should be fed on this and that or the other thing, and it is given. Probably more frequently still the child gets a little of everything at the table, neither father nor mother thinking that little children should not have the same diet as themselves. Frequently the parent's food is coarse and badly cooked, and when that is the case the baby must necessarily suffer accordingly. When one considers that the greater proportion of ailments among young children is due to digestive disturbances, and by far the largest number of these cases to improper feeding, I feel that I need no apology for bringing before this society a subject which may, at first thought, appear to be insignificant.

The time of weaning cannot be the same for

all infants. The majority of authorities agree that it should take place between twelve and eighteen months. It should never occur before one year except for some grave reason, and not then if that time happens to come during the latter part of the spring or at any time during the summer. We know that digestion is carried on with much more difficulty during the hot weather—that the system is then less able to resist the entrance of certain micro-organisms into the alimentary canal and their multiplication there. An effort should always be made to have the weaning take place a sufficiently long time before the hot weather, to enable the baby to get accustomed to the new food, whatever it may be. To allow a baby to be weaned deliberately during the summer months is almost criminal; it means that the baby has to run the gamut of all the intestinal diseases, and that, if it does survive, it will have received such a shock that it will take months, or possibly years to recover properly. The second summer is always a serious one for children. The laity have come to recognize this. The mother, if she be a wise one, will have accustomed her baby to take food out of a spoon or cup or bottle before weaning entirely; or she may have fed the baby during the day, reserving the breast-milk for the night time. By doing this the baby will have got accustomed to taking its food out of a spoon or cup, and thus one of the earliest lessons in feeding will have been learned.

Having weaned her baby at about a year old, what is the mother to feed him on? If, for any

* A paper read before Toronto Medical Society, May 20, 1892.