

In the great majority of cases the first point to which to attend is careful regulation of the diet; the food should be given at regular intervals, and nothing between meals, tea should be forbidden, and all cakes, buns, biscuits, sweets, jams, pastry, etc., these being the more pernicious because often given at odd times to tempt, as is supposed, a poor appetite. Potatoes should be allowed in very small quantity only. On the other hand, we may recommend an ordinary meal of fresh meat once a day, about noon, with green vegetables and a milk-pudding after. For the other meals, fresh fish, porridge, bread and butter, eggs, fruit, and milk in abundance, but as a food, not a beverage. There are, of course, some children, just as there are some adults, who have idiosyncrasies in not being able to digest some special article of diet; but these peculiarities obviously cannot be considered in a general statement—each case must be dealt with on its merits. The parents will often say that children will not take the plain, wholesome diet recommended, and can only be got to eat fancy things, sweets, etc. Owing to long-continued pampering and improper feeding this may be true, but no child will starve itself to death because it cannot get just what it wants, and when it finds its whims ungratified, in default of anything else, it will soon learn to partake of a suitable dietary.

Having regulated the food, the next important matter is to insure a full and regular daily action of the bowels; even though they are said to act every day, a mild aperient is usually desirable, in order to prevent any undue retention whatever of intestinal contents, or any accumulation of mucus, which is often produced abundantly in catarrhal conditions of the bowels in childhood. If there has been constipation and the tongue is much furred, one or two grains of calomel will be useful at first, otherwise rhubarb and soda, or gray powder and soda, should be given every other night. If either round or thread worms be present, a few grains of santolin may be added to either of the above powders, and given before breakfast for three or four mornings. When convalescence is well-nigh established, half a teaspoonful or so of the compound liquorice powder forms perhaps the most suitable and agreeable habitual laxative.

Thirdly, the child should be out in the open air as much as possible. There is great danger that when, as so often happens, these dyspeptic children suffer from cough they may be kept indoors either altogether, or at least on the slightest approach of cold or damp weather; nothing could be more injurious, and the reason why in large cities the poorest class of children, for whom the street is the habitual play-ground, are often more healthy than those of a slightly higher social scale, is probably the far greater amount of at least approximately fresh air which the former get. In many cases of town-bred children, in whom the dyspepsia is a part mainly of general debility and anæmia, a change to seaside or country air is the most rapid if not the only cure.