

## DIETARY IN TYPHOID FEVER.\*

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It is not my intention to discuss the views of the ancient masters in medicine on this subject—a subject upon which experienced physicians differ so widely—but to indicate briefly the general plan of treatment and dietary which I have found to be the most satisfactory for patients suffering from typhoid fever.

As I understand it, the cardinal principles of treatment in enteric fever are: (1) By free action of the bowels to remove all ptomaines and offensive materials. (2) By careful dietary to conserve the patient's strength. (3) By cautious use of antiseptics to keep the alimentary canal in as aseptic a condition as possible, and in a rational and conservative manner to treat symptoms and complications as they arise.

When the patient first comes under my care, it has been my custom to prescribe calomel in small doses in the evening and follow this up by a seidlitz powder in the morning in order to have a free alvine evacuation. If one seidlitz powder is not sufficient, a second one may be given two hours later. The patients are not purged, but it is well that there should be a free movement every second day at least, throughout the illness. I have found calomel the most satisfactory drug on account of its stimulating the flow of bile, thus assisting in making the contents of the alimentary canal aseptic; but it must be used with caution in anæmic cases.

Prior to the time of Graves and Trousseau enteric cases were sadly underfed, and though these eminent men ardently advocated a sufficient supply of nutriment, it was always nourishment in the liquid form. To quote Trousseau's words, "I am convinced that the starving system has in many cases been carried to dangerous excess, that many persons have fallen victims to prolonged abstinence in fevers," while Graves said to his pupils, "If you are at a loss to find an epitaph to inscribe on my tomb, you may use these words—'he fed fevers.'"

We find that Sir William Jenner, in an address at Birmingham, in 1879, stated that, "From the first the patients should be restricted to liquid diet with farinaceous food and bread in some form, if the appetite require it. The value of milk as an article of diet in fever, is generally admitted, but it requires to be given with caution."

Strümpell allows broth and soup thickened with sago or rice, and a role of rusk when softened by soaking. Briefly then it is seen that by rapid stages the dietary has advanced from water soup to thickened soup and a little bread.

In the journal of the American Medical Association of the 10th of February, I noticed that a gentleman reports a case of typhoid fever with a favourable termination as follows: "Diagnosis typhoid fever. Diet—ate beefsteak on the seventh and eighth days of treatment, milk diet on the ninth, and solid thereafter." And there is one prominent New York physician who is so generous as to allow when the patient so desires, a mutton chop, with potatoes and beer.

This, however, is, according to my view, carrying the matter to dangerous extremes.

The dietary which I have found most satisfactory and which has been allowed to my last thirty-five cases of enteric fever in private and hospital practice, has been almost uniformly the same, but governed by the feelings and wishes of the patient to a certain extent.

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