INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EXHIBITION, LONDON, 1884. FOOD AND COOKERY FOR INFANTS AND INVALIDS

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CATHERINE JANE WOOD & W. B. CHEADLE

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FOOD AND COOKERY

FOR

INFANTS AND INVALIDS.

BY

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WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE human body exists in a state of perpetual, unceasing change. It is built up of varied materials, some of which, indeed, as for example the mineral parts of bone, are fixed and enduring; but the majority—and these the most vital and important—brain, and nerve, and muscle, and gland, are delicate and unstable; constantly wearing away and as constantly repaired.

There is then ceaseless need for new matter to replace old and worn out matter as unceasingly removed.

The body, however, requires materials for other important purposes; as fuel for combustion, in order to keep the temperature of the body at the necessary heat, and for the supply of force or energy for every movement and action and operation of organic life.

There is, moreover, in young creatures a need of materials for another grand purpose in addition—the structure and development of new parts. Now the animal body can make little use of raw materials—of the primary elements in their simple form—either for building or repair. Muscle, for example, consists largely of nitrogen, combined with carbon.

oxygen, hydrogen and sulphur in definite proportions. Yet an animal although plunged overhead in an atmosphere four-fifths of which is nitrogen, has no power of taking so much pure nitrogen, and uniting it with the necessary proportion of the other elements to make muscle. This first step of joining the primary elements together is effected by plants, which take up the crude materials from earth, air, and water, and form them into definite compounds. These, fixed in their stems, fruit, or seeds and roots, are consumed by animals, and thus passed on to the higher organism. They are, however, not yet finally prepared for use in the animal body; they are not fit for absorption. They require to be rendered soluble, by digestion, so that they may pass easily into the blood, and be carried by the fertilising stream to every cell and tissue of every part of the structure.

The products thus originally manufactured by plants and used again by animals, are grouped into four chief classes, according to their composition and the purposes which they serve.

The first group is that of the nitrogenous materials, characterised by the presence of *nitrogen*, and styled also albuminates, or proteids. They form one of the distinguishing features of animal food, in which they are found more abundantly than in vegetable products; the albumen of white of egg, casein or curd of milk, the syntonin of muscle, and the gluten of wheat, are familiar examples of these elements.

The second group is that of the hydrocarbons, substances which contain *carbon* in high proportion. These are the fats, such as that of meat, butter and vegetable oils, found both in animal and vegetable substances, but more plentiful in the former.

The third group is that of the carbohydrates, also distinguished by the presence of carbon, but in less proportion. Starch and sugar are common examples of elements in this group, the abundant presence of which is as characteristic of vegetable as that of nitrogenous elements is of animal foods.

The fourth group is that of inorganic or mineral elements—such as the salts of lime, especially the phosphates and carbonates; potash, soda, iron and—one of the most important and largely-used of all—water.

From numerous observations and experiments it would appear that, in order to afford perfect nourishment to the body, food should contain materials drawn from each of these four groups. And it has been ascertained further, with great accuracy in the case of healthy adults, that ingredients from each of these classes should be mingled in the following proportion.

Proteids (Nitrogenous elements)	1 part.
Hydrocarbons (Fats)	0·6 „
Carbohydrates (Starch, sugar, etc.)	3 „
Salts (Mineral)	0·23 „
Water, about	15 parts.

In the case of little children, where the body is still in process of construction, and its power, as yet imperfectly developed, and in that of invalids, where the machinery is deteriorated or enfeebled or injured by disease, these standard proportions require to be modified in many important particulars.

We may consider first the modifications required in the case of infants, and the principles upon which their dietary should be based. And this question of children's food is one of the greatest moment. It is not merely a question of present good, and of transient importance, but one which affects their whole future. There is no doubt an infinite variety in the constitution of individuals. In some the machinery is weak and faulty in construction, without capacity for development into any high degree of strength and perfection.

The peculiarities of original constitution can, however, be largely modified by external influences; the feeble and imperfect body, which under adverse circumstances would dwindle and die, may be fostered by favourable conditions into some degree of vigour and stability: the well-made body of rich possibilities, which under evil