

DISEASES
CAUSED BY
SUGAR POISONING

by

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It has lately been urged, and from a medical standpoint, that everyone could eat any amount of sugar, saccharine foods, candy, and starchy foods, not only without harm to health, but with positive physiologic advantage. In view of the five hundred millions of dollars said to be expended annually in sugar by the United States, and in view of the little known---probably more suspected---as to the evils and causes of the prevalence of diabetes, such nonsense should need no argument to make its fallacy evident.

Almost every second store and shop in our villages and cities is a candy store, and common sense and common observation knows well enough the morbid results. Out of the American debauch in candy and sweets, breakfast-foods and sugar, wheat-cakes and molasses, we shall later have to win our way to health and good dietetic sense with painful experience.

The exacting questions, of course, remain: As to long-continued morbid habits of diet, especially in the case of children and city-dwellers; with the sedentary, in those with weakened nervous and nutritional systems, when coexisting with other diseases, or in the cases of other active and co-operating causes of disease.

For several years it has been growing clearer to me that many patients do not get well because they live too exclusively on sugary and starchy foods. With greater activity and the resisting power of youth, children exhibit the morbid tendency by excessive "nervousness," denutrition, ease-of-becoming ill, and by many ague and warning symptoms. I have asked the parents of such children to stop them in their use of all sweets, and most starches and almost immediately there was a most gratifying disappearance of the "nervousness," fickleness of appetite, "colds," and vague manifold ailments.

In another class of patients it was this way: There was only an incomplete disappearance of those symptoms generally due to eyestrain or back strain. With the correction of eyestrain, for instance, there was a sudden disappearance of the chief complaints, but followed by a provoking return of some of them. There was only, say, a three-fourth of non-cure remaining to torment. In such cases I exact a promise that for one or two months sugar and sweets shall be absolutely discontinued, and of the starches, the least possible use (no potatoes, surely)---a little toasted brown bread only, for instance.

How many patients have blessed me for the suggestion, and have traced to the continued rules, their reinstated health and enjoyment of life. Those who have learned to recognize the value of such

hygienic preventions of disease will test the suggestion; those who observe only the organic end-products in aberrant physiology and morbid function. Fashionable pathology concerns itself only with terminal disease, apparently oblivious of pathogenesis, and most of all, careless of the early and slight origins which led to mortem and post-mortem. It is left to chance and to faddism to make scientific the infinitely more important function of prevention.

But the evil effects of sugar-drowning will sometimes be recognized as still more important and varied than I have said. Among others, I have had two cases in which it was clear that a too exclusive or an exaggerated diet of sugary foods was a cause of epilepsy. The first was that of a boy of nine years of age in which correction of eyestrain brought no relief of both petit and grand mal attacks. Then by diligent inquiry I learned that the boy (who was morbidly nervous...almost insanely active) ate no meats, eggs, vegetables, etc., and lived, practically, on "cakes," a little breakfast food, etc., with enormous quantities of sugar, syrups, etc. Recovery followed a diet list which excluded the sweets.

Another patient, aged fifty-five, has been having many petit mal attacks for thirteen years, with occasional, typical grand mal seizures. He was a watchmaker, and wearing no correction of his compound hyperopic astigmatism. I found that he ate sweets inordinately, which, upon being interdicted, the attacks immediately grew less in number and severity, with no major ones, and the rare minor ones scarcely noticeable, until they disappeared and there was a return of hope, a zest in life; as he enthusiastically says, he "Feels like a new man now." In consideration of his age, the results are noteworthy.

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