A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

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EXCESS OF SACCHARIDE IN MODERN DIET

BY HARRY CAMPBELL M.D., F.R.C.P.
PHYSICIAN TO THE WEST END HOSPITAL FOR NERVOUS DISEASES, LATE PHYSICIAN NORTH-WEST LONDON HOSPITAL, ETC.

WITHIN RECENT TIMES the supply of vegetable food has increased more than that of animal food, and inasmuch as the softness of modern vegetable food favours its excessive consumption, and inasmuch as enormous quantities of pure sugar are accessible, it follows that modern man is more likely to suffer from an excess of highly saccharide food than from an excess of animal food.

As a matter of experience we can, on the whole, do more good by curtailing saccharides than by cutting down animal food, and this even in such diseases as gout and migraine.

"Before man learnt to till the soil his supply of pure sugar was limited to wild honey. Now he extracts thousands of tons from artificially grown sugar-cane and beet. The consumption of sugar has within recent times increased enormously in our country"

The like is true of sugar in the pure form: it is not an essential article of diet at any period of life. Before man learnt to till the soil his supply of pure sugar was limited to wild honey. Now he extracts thousands of tons from artificially grown sugar-cane and beet. The consumption of sugar has within recent times increased enormously in our country, and many people eat much more than is good for them.

At one period of the war, fear was expressed lest the people would suffer in health from the dearth of sugar. The belief was widespread that sugar in the pure form is necessary to health, but seeing that all the digested starch enters the blood as sugar, this view is manifestly erroneous. Hence bread-and-jam, so largely consumed by the poor, is not a physiological combination, since the bread consists mainly of starch, all of which is digested into sugar. The poor should be encouraged to take butter, margarine, bacon-fat, or dripping with their bread.

The practice of eating sweets should be discouraged. They should certainly never be taken between meals, but at meal-time just before the last course. The worst time to take sweets is at bed-time. This is a sure way of setting up dental caries. If eaten between meals they should be followed by fruit to cleanse the mouth, or the mouth should be well rinsed out with water.

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It would be a good thing for the health of the country if all sweet-stuff shops were done away with; not because sugar is in moderation harmful, but because these shops encourage its consumption at injudicious times.

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A sufficiency of saccharides is provided by the starch we consume and, therefore, sugar can quite well be dispensed with, though in moderation it is a good food.

Butter, margarine, dripping, bacon-fat are preferable to jam as adjuncts to bread.

Sweets should only be allowed in moderation, if at all, and under conditions which leave the mouth and teeth clean.

Modern differs from primitive diet chiefly in respect of starch and sugar. Among the poor, especially, the indication generally is to diminish starch and sugar and to increase animal food. Only in the case of the rich gourmandizer are we called upon to reduce the animal food.

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