

EGGS IN THE DIET OF INFANTS.

SIR—I have frequently used eggs as a diet for young infants as recommended by Dr. Midelton in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 1st, 1907, when suffering from digestive troubles, but in rather different proportions, and I should like to add my testimony to Dr. Midelton's as to their value.

I would, however, suggest that Dr. Midelton's mixture is too weak in fats and carbohydrates for a young infant to commence with.

The percentage of proteids, fats, and carbohydrates as given in each feed—that is:

White of egg	...	...	1 drachm (about)
Cane sugar	...	...	5 grains
Raw meat juice	...	...	5 minims
Cod-liver oil emulsion	...	...	5 minims
Water added to make 1 oz.			

are approximately as follows:

Proteid	...	...	1.3 per cent.
Carbohydrates	...	...	1 "
Fats	...	...	0.8 "

If 30 grains of sugar-of-milk take the place of 5 grains of cane sugar and 15 minims yolk of egg be given instead of 5 minims we get the following percentage:

Proteids	...	...	1.6 per cent.
Carbohydrates	...	...	6 "
Fat	...	...	2.4 "

And a food very nearly approximating the correct proportions of nutriment and a valuable substitute for milk.—I am, etc.,

T. CLIFFORD LAST, M.D.Brux., M.R.C.S.Eng.
New Milton, June 3rd.

HEALING SILENCE.

SIR,—Your leader on "Healing Silence" in your issue of June 22nd directs attention to the very favourable results obtained by Drs. Bardswell and Adams in the treatment of laryngeal tuberculosis by enforcing absolute silence. The fullest credit for these good results and for the employment of this method is rightly accorded to those whose names are mentioned in your article, but I venture to point out that we owe it to Dr. StClair Thomson more than any one else that the value of this enforced silence has become recognized. In the Laryngological Section at the Cheltenham meeting of the Association in 1901 I and others emphasized the importance of "silence," but it was Dr. StClair Thomson who first proved that silence, in association with suitable surroundings, alone suffices to cure many cases of laryngeal tuberculosis.—I am, etc.,

Bristol, June 25th.

P. WATSON WILLIAMS, M.D.

THE REFERENDUM WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSED ROYAL CHARTER.

SIR,—Members will see by consulting the SUPPLEMENT for June 22nd that the Central Council at a small meeting and by small majorities has determined on a Referendum with regard to several clauses in the Royal Charter.

The expense of this use of the power given in the Articles is at any time very great. Every Division throughout the empire is asked to hold a meeting to consider the questions referred, and has to report the numbers of votes given thereat for and against. The cost, if thoroughly carried out, could not be under £200. It will probably directly and indirectly come to £100 in this case. Will the Central Council pay it, or are the Divisions out of their small grants to meet the expense?

The necessity for the decision in view of the present state of the finances of the Association must have been overwhelming.

The Charter itself and the Ordinances, if at a future date any alteration should be contemplated, would have to be submitted to the Privy Council for approval. It is, therefore, most desirable to get a definite opinion now in favour of these, so as to save future expense and delay.

The only Referendum the Central Council has determined on with regard to these two sections of the Charter appears to refer to the Ordinance giving the power of Referendum.

The By-laws, on the other hand, do not require to be submitted to the Privy Council after the Charter has been granted, and can come up for revision annually, without

practically any expense to the Association. Then for what purpose is the Association about to spend this £100? for, having determined on a Referendum, it would seem that the Central Council has brought itself within the Articles of Association and Standing Order 51, and must proceed within four months, in spite of Dr. McKenzie Johnston's resolution suggesting the contrary. The primary reasons for this Referendum seem to be contained in contemplated changes in the By-laws. How, then, did the Representative Meeting vote on these By-laws which the Central Council is referring for further consideration?

Two By-laws were "carried"—that is, by cries of "Agreed"; two were carried *nem. con.*; two were carried by 68 constituencies voting for to 5 voting against; two were carried with only 5 dissentient constituencies; two were carried with only one dissentient constituency.

And yet a small majority in a small meeting of the Central Council has decided that these decisions do not properly represent the wishes of the Association. What are the feelings of the "Representatives" when they read that?

It is to be hoped that the memorandum accompanying the reference will give weighty reasons for the conclusion thus arrived at, which on the face of it seems extraordinary; and many would be glad if those members of the Council who will decline to sign this memorandum will feel it due to themselves and the Association to circulate to the Divisions their opinion on the various points to be considered. Thus the members will have both views before them when they discuss the *pros* and *cons* at the several meetings that have to be called.

Very little change will probably take place in the ratio of votes as given at a Representative Meeting and on a Referendum. Only the same members of a Division will attend a Referendum meeting as attended a meeting held to instruct their Representative how to vote at the May meeting.

It should not be concluded by the Colonials or others from the way the members of the Central Council returned from the Metropolitan Branch voted at the last Council meeting on this subject that they represent the opinion of the 2,700 odd members in London. It is an additional reason for congratulating that Branch Council that they have now decided to ask for annual reports from these members, as in this way only can we hope to arrive at true representation on the Central Council. Under the present constitution the members of the Central Council, with few exceptions, never consult nor receive instructions from their electors; they never report to them, nor see them; and they therefore represent only themselves when speaking on the policy of the Association.

This trial of the Referendum will be helpful to the Representatives in making up their minds as to how to vote at a later date when a suggested amendment to Ordinance 17 is placed before them, whereby a full Council meeting, with either a two-thirds majority of those present, or on a card vote, shall be assured before a Referendum becomes possible; especially when the decision of the Representative Body has been so clearly given. Under the Charter, as drafted at present, a majority of one in a meeting of fifteen of the Central Council can involve the Association in what might prove to be a needless expenditure of anything up to £200.

The criticism of the details of the Referendum can well be deferred until the promised memorandum has been circulated.—I am, etc.,

Southfields, S.W., June 22nd. E. ROWLAND FOTHERGILL.

EXAMINATION OF SEAMEN UNDER THE NEW COMPENSATION ACT.

SIR,—A movement is on foot to extract a sum of money from the medical officer before he is appointed under the Shipping Department. The amount is to go to swell the Sailors' Reserve Fund. The demand varies from £25 upwards according to the importance of the port or ports. The cheque must be paid, and a contract signed for seven years—no guarantee whatever as to the amount of remuneration, which is only to be the bare legal fees on all cases examined, and court fees. This is only an attempt at sweating the medical profession. Many, I fear, will be taken in.—I am, etc.,

June 26th. ONE WHO REFUSED A CHEQUE FOR £50.