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ON THE ABSENCE OF COW'S MILK FROM JAPAN: ITS BENEFICIAL CONSEQUENCES.

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BY ALBERT S. ASHMEAD, M.D.,
OF NEW YORK.

One of the most striking features of that most curious of countries, Japan, is the singular scarcity of domestic animals. There you will never find the fields dotted with oxen or horses drawing the plough, for the Japanese are hardly acquainted with that time-honored tool and symbol of agriculture. Even to serve under the saddle does not come natural somehow to the Japanese horse—"a grudging, ungenerous animal, trying to human patience, with three movements (not by any means to be confounded with paces), a drag, a roll and a scramble."¹ Horses and cows are only seen in cities and on the roads, as pack animals; there are no pastures sweet. Silence is here really a striking, magnificent feature of the *rus beatum*. The cone-shaped Mystic Fusiyama rises, dimly seen, in the midst of an awful quietness. No lowing herds wind o'er the lea; the barnyard fowl's is almost a voice *clamantis in deserto*; he reminds the farmer, but only in the morning, that even under these stagnant circumstances, time flies. Here and there, however, a dog howls; that is all. The animal life of the land is set apart, concentrated and taken care of, as in a kind of common preserve, general park or reservation in the interior of the land, where it browses and prances and bellows and reproduces itself, contaminating as little as possible that high type of Eastern humanity which is now making ready for the baptism of Western civilization. But let it be said in passing, what the European in Japanese fields misses, I believe, more than anything else, is

"The music of those silver bells,
Falling at intervals upon the ear,
With cadence sweet."

I intend here only to speak of one of the consequences of this quaint absence of animal features, of something not poetical at all, but practical in the highest degree. The cow in Japan is not wanted for her milk; otherwise she would lift her voice more loudly in the landscape. Milk being an animal product, falls under the general condemnation which excludes everything that has pertained to a living body from the alimentation of man. Now, it is true, this latter rule has a strange exception, for the animals of the chase are eaten. Let us not shrug our shoulders at the apparent inconsistency; the Oriental mind understands itself. Thus it happens that, as

Japan may not use cow's milk, the Japanese mothers are compelled by stress of circumstances to suckle their babes themselves—and these delicate dwarfs have become the most perfect, the most successful *Almæ Maters* of the world. Artificial lactation is altogether unknown. The children are suckled until the sixth year, and you may hear them ask for the breast in a language as correct as that of adults. But it must be said that the mother's milk is not the only food of the little Japanese. River fish enter for a large part into their diet; after the first year, some other elements of general alimentation are added to their bill of fare. But the mother's milk always remains the *plat de résistance*.

Nature and society have endowed this notable mother with some great and peculiar advantages. Here menstruation returns only a year and a half after birth. Moreover, rules dating back to time out of mind insure the young mother a long period of especial attention on the part of the husband and the whole household. The existence of the concubinate is also, strange as it may appear, a considerable relief to the Japanese matrons. All that must tell favorably on the health of the children. Even the infantile minds find themselves in a wholesome, pleasant medium. Nowhere are children so constantly, so lovingly taken care of. Japan, it has been said, is the very paradise of childhood. Nowhere are the adults so well qualified to enter into the nascent ideas of the infant, to play with him—for the nature of the Japanese contains an extraordinary proportion of simplicity and childishness. The principal food of the mothers is, besides the everlasting rice; fish, shells, seaweeds and other products of the sea. No wine or beer enters into the diet of a lactating woman.

The great reward which Japan reaps from this meritorious care of motherhood and childhood, is the absence of rachitism. All observers have referred to the fact, and to the absence of rachitic pelvis which is the consequence of it; hardly any difficult confinement, and a very small percentage of deaths in childbirth. Now I think I am not wrong in affirming that the chief and central source of these great sanitary blessings is the absence of cow's milk.

It is a remarkable fact that Japan, which according to Dr. Brush ought to be exempt from tuberculosis, is very far from being so. It is probably well known to you that, according to this observer, tuberculosis passes from the cattle into the human organism. In Japan, this disease exists mainly in the upper classes, where evidently cow's milk has nothing to do with it, and where it is easily explained by a systematic custom of close intermarriage, a system of, according to our ideas, incestuous inbreeding, which has endured for many centuries. This is the same process by which the disease is developed in cattle, according to Dr. Brush. It seems therefore, that there is no

¹ Miss Bird, Unbeaten Tracks in Japan.

necessity of transmission, and that the human organism worked upon by the same causes, will show the same effects. Strange to say the mountaineers, who have the most intimate relation with the isolated Japanese cattle, on their breeding-ground, are practically free from tuberculosis. There is also an historic fact which goes much against Dr. Brush's theory. The cattle were introduced into Japan from China, in the third century, and tuberculosis is known to have existed there, in that same high bred class, from times immemorial. The aristocratic disease, tuberculosis, was certainly communicated to the common people through a very extensive concubinate. And I am equally convinced that it was the milk of the mothers that preserved the lower orders from destruction.

Thus it would appear that the absence of cow's milk, though not a blessing in the sense of Dr. Brush, has had, in another way, an exceedingly beneficial influence on the general health of the race.

Racial immunities or the natural resistance of a race to certain diseases, are, at least partly, transmitted by the mother's milk. It is thus, as I said, that this race is free from rachitism. And there is another privilege of the same kind transmitted through the milk to the suckling. The iodized sea-foods, more especially sea-weeds, and the fats and oils of fishes, which have for so many centuries formed a considerable proportion of the diet of nursing mothers, have, without doubt, helped to build up the racial resistance to their national inheritance, syphilis and tuberculosis. In the case of tuberculosis this resistance is so efficient that even the child of a tuberculous mother, fed on what might be supposed to be tuberculous milk until the sixth year, in the majority of cases remains unaffected. Now, if a tuberculous cow's milk transmits the disease to the human organism, why should not this tuberculous mother's milk transmit it? Even we do not object to the suckling done by our own tuberculous women, which indeed extends generally over but one year; yet their offspring, for the most part, are unaffected by the disease, at least in childhood. Now it is more than likely that if there were a contagion through milk, its effects would be apparent in the children.

All these benefits would, of course, be cut off by the substitution of a foreign element for the natural means of transmission.

I have, while I was in Japan, conceived an idea, quite satisfactory at least to my own mind, of the manner in which the iodized food renders its great service to the Japanese race. It is generally supposed that the contagium of tuberculosis is communicated by the inhalation of particles of dried sputum, disseminated in the air. It is my firm conviction that this is not so. I believe that these germs of disease are swallowed with the saliva, and alter the nutrition through the chyle and mesenteric glands. In an organism fed directly or indirectly by iodized substances, the poison meets and is neutralized by its own antidote. The Japanese mother, as by an instinct, never kisses her child on the lips. Indeed, the whole institution of kissing is practically unknown in Japan (except in the sexual act). It is even formally condemned, because the Japanese *know* that the kiss is the carrier of tuberculosis and syphilis. I have no doubt but that the caresses of the sick have added enormously to our own statistics of tuberculosis, and have caused much of the mischief which Dr. Brush would attribute to cow's milk.

I do not know whether the following has struck any other observer, or if I am the first to call attention to it. There is another, an occult and insidious danger which Japan escapes by letting cow's milk alone. If they drank it, as we do, it is very probable that they would drink it as we do, *volentes volentes*, mixed with a nobler fluid. Now, thanks to the rice plantations, the water of Japan is by no means *the best of things*; it is even the worst, for it is pregnant with typhoid germs, being continually polluted with human excrements, and swarming with the brood of the distoma. Total abstinence from cold water—an inverted tee-totalism—has been the salvation of Japan. Water is only drunk boiled with tea; the boiling kills the typhoid germs and the eggs of the distoma.

4 King St., New York.

A CASE OF TUBERCULAR SYPHILIS.

From the Clinic of

JOHN V. SHOEMAKER, A.M., M.D.,

PROFESSOR OF SKIN AND VENEREAL DISEASES, IN THE MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA.

[REPORTED BY DR. GEO. HEWITT.]

Gentlemen:—Mr. S., 35 years of age, a stonemason by trade, was admitted to the Medico-Chirurgical Hospital, Dec. 15, 1892. In the year 1878, the patient contracted gonorrhœa. Being at that time of wild and reckless habits, addicted to drink, he was careless as regards treatment. As a consequence the disease was not readily cured and he suffered from it for at least four months. During this period he was not aware of any chancre upon the penis or elsewhere, nor does he remember any enlargement of the inguinal glands. He at length recovered from the gonorrhœa and remained in good health for ten years. For the last six years he has been strictly temperate. During the interval he never had any eruption upon his body except small papules which came out upon the face especially after he had been drinking. He does not know that he ever had any general eruption. He has been subject from boyhood to occasional attacks of sore throat. With this exception he has not experienced any difficulty in the mouth or throat. In November, 1888, he had a bad fall from a railroad car; he struck heavily upon the right hip and was rendered almost insensible. In the early autumn of 1889 he noticed a swelling over the tuberosity of the right ischium. At first it was very small, it enlarged very slowly, but finally attained the size of a pigeon's egg. Painless in the beginning, it ultimately caused him a great deal of suffering, particularly at night. On September 23, 1890, the swelling spontaneously opened, and gave exit to a considerable discharge. He was then confined to the house for twelve days and his attending physician trimmed away undermined or sloughing edges, and dusted the surface with iodoform. The ulcer, however, did not heal. A similar, though smaller, lesion had made its appearance upon the right buttock and had pursued the same course. On Feb. 7, 1891, the ulcerated areas upon both buttocks were excised and the edges of the wound drawn together by stiches. It was about five weeks after this operation before he was able to resume his work. He had not been at work more than three weeks before a third tumor made its appearance a little below the left clavicle near the costo-sternal articulation. Like the preceding swell-