

by mail ballot counted on February 2, in order to constitute an acting executive committee conforming in organization with the statutes, to prepare the way for the first annual meeting. As a result of that election the following acting chairmen were elected:

Section (a) William Bowie, Section (b) Harry Fielding Reid, Section (c) C. F. Marvin, Section (d) L. A. Bauer, Section (e) G. W. Littlehales, and Section (f) H. S. Washington.

HARRY O. WOOD,

Secretary, American Geophysical Union

SPECIAL ARTICLES

IS UNPALATABLE FOOD PROPERLY DIGESTED?¹

It is well known that different psychic stimuli promote or retard the secretion of digestive juices. The following experiment was conducted to determine whether the ultimate return to the body from unpalatable food was different from that of the same food palatably served.

dirty dishes. A little indol was sprinkled about under the table. The subjects were kept in ignorance of the constituents of the unpalatable mixture. The food was so unpalatable that one subject vomited his first meal shortly after he had eaten it.

The table shows the finding, on the other subject.

The differences in utilization of the palatable and unpalatable foods were quite small as were the variations in nitrogen retention. This short test indicates that flavor is not the outstanding dietetic asset that some people would have us believe. If the stomach and intestine can only be cajoled into making the proper effort, the unsavory concoction can be digested just about as satisfactorily as can the food mixture which makes a stronger appeal. If the things we eat have proper food value, we need not worry unduly as to their digestion, absorption, and utilization by the normal body. This ought to be good news to millions of people who eat unpalatable food in untidy surroundings, in spite of the fact

Period	No. of Days	Nitrogen							Percentage Utilization
		Ingested		Excreted			Balance		
		Daily, Grams	Period, Grams	Urine, Grams	Feces, Grams	Total, Grams	Period, Grams	Daily, Grams	
Palatable	7	10.75	75.25	62.95	10.06	73.01	+2.24	+0.32	86.7
Unpalatable	2	10.75	21.50	17.03	3.09	20.12	+1.38	+0.63	85.7

The experimental procedure was simple. A 7-day period during which the subjects were on a uniform diet, served palatably and amid pleasant surroundings, was followed by a 2-day period during which the same diet was fed in an unpalatable condition and in dirty and unpleasant surroundings. The food was rendered unpalatable and unappetizing by the following treatment. All the food ordinarily used for each meal (meat, biscuits, jelly, cornstarch, pudding, oleomargarine, etc.) was stirred together in a large, flat porcelain dish. The dish itself was smeared with animal charcoal, as was the beaker used as a drinking glass. The table was dirty and strewn with

that one of our leading physiologists says "What man likes best he digests best." This experiment simply shows how insulting we can be to the normal stomach and get away with it but does not necessarily prove this to be the wisest policy.

RALPH C. HOLDER,
CLARENCE A. SMITH,
PHILIP B. HAWK

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THE WESTERN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS

THE Northwestern Division of the Western Society of Naturalists held its holiday meeting on January 2, in Portland, Oregon.

¹ From the Laboratory of Physiological Chemistry, Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pa.