

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?<sup>1</sup>

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

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE,  
PHILADELPHIA

### THE WESTERN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS

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

<sup>1</sup> From the Laboratory of Physiological Chemistry, Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, Pa.

There were present delegates from the states of Oregon and Washington. The afternoon program was taken up with a discussion of "The Rôle of Research in the Development of Northwest Colleges" and also with a discussion of special papers. The evening program was given over to a symposium on pre-medical education. The following papers were read:

"The premedical education as a surgeon sees it," by Dr. Richard B. Dillehunt, of Portland.

"The premedical education as the medical school would like it," by Dr. H. B. Myers, University of Oregon Medical School.

"A premedical education and chemistry," by Dr. W. C. Morgan, of Reed College, Portland.

"A premedical education and biology," by Dr. H. B. Torrey, of Reed College, Portland.

"A premedical education as a university course," by Dr. J. F. Bovard, University of Oregon.

The papers were followed by a general discussion. At the business meeting Dr. G. B. Rigg, of the University of Washington, was elected Divisional Secretary for the ensuing year.

JOHN F. BOVARD,  
*Secretary*

### THE AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

THE two hundred and eighth regular meeting of the American Mathematical Society was held at Columbia University on Saturday, February 28, 1920, extending through the usual morning and afternoon sessions. The attendance included twenty-eight members. Vice-president R. G. D. Richardson occupied the chair. The following new members were elected: F. J. Burkett, Pennsylvania State College; A. D. Campbell, Cornell University; Y. R. Chao, Cornell University; R. E. Gilman, Brown University; D. C. Kazarinoff, University of Michigan; Norman Miller, Queen's University; G. M. Robison, Cornell University; Jung Sun, Pekin Academy; W. H. Wilson, State University of Iowa; S. D. Zeldin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Six applications for membership were received.

Professor Oswald Veblen, of Princeton University, was appointed to succeed Professor E. W. Brown, resigned, as representative of the society in

the division of physics of the National Research Council.

Steps were taken to submit the question of the incorporation of the society to the vote of the members at the April meeting.

The following papers were read at this meeting:

Joseph Lipka: "On the general problem of dynamics."

A. R. Schweitzer: "On the iterative properties of the algebra of logic."

A. R. Schweitzer: "On improper pseudogroups, with application to the abstract field."

G. H. Hardy: "On the representation of numbers as sums of squares and in particular of five and seven."

J. W. Alexander: "On the representation of any  $n$ -dimensional two-sided manifold as a generalized Riemann surface."

J. W. Alexander: "On the equilibrium of a fluid mass at rest."

T. H. Gronwall: "Qualitative properties of the ballistic trajectory (second paper)."

T. H. Gronwall: "On the distortion in conformal mapping."

A. A. Bennett: "Fictitious matrix roots of the characteristic equation."

Pierre Boutroux: "On multiform functions defined by differential equations of the first order."

B. H. Camp: "The significance of a difference, and the value of a sample."

J. H. M. Wedderburn: "On division algebras."

Edward Kasner: "Geodesics of surfaces and higher manifolds."

The next meetings of the Society will be at Chicago, April 9-10; San Francisco, April 10, and New York, April 24. The summer meeting and colloquium of the society will be held at Chicago.

F. N. COLE,  
*Secretary*

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## SCIENCE

A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, publishing the official notices and proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science

Published every Friday by

## THE SCIENCE PRESS

LANCASTER, PA.

GARRISON, N. Y.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Entered in the post-office at Lancaster, Pa., as second class matter