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High Points of the Boston Meeting

An Informal Symposium*

CHAIRMAN, DR. R. M. ATWATER: I wish you to know that this is not a rehearsed program, but one which brings you, in a conversational tone of voice as it were, the experience of those who attended each of the sessions and who have been in a position to watch for highlights as they came along. Each of these persons has been asked to present what in his opinion are the highlights of the Section or special interest with which he is identified, and we are going to begin with a representative of the Food and Nutrition Section. The speaker is Dr. Stare, Professor of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health here in Boston.

DR. F. J. STARE: In my opinion, the *pièce de résistance* in the meetings of the Food and Nutrition Section was a symposium yesterday morning on Nutrition and Resistance to Disease, and I think the highlight of that Section was the paper by Dr. Howard Schneider of the Rockefeller Institute.

The nutritional state of the host plays a significant rôle in determining resistance or susceptibility to infection, but it is difficult to demonstrate such effects experimentally or to attribute unequivocally the effects observed to specific nutrients. For the last several years, Dr. Schneider has been doing excellent work on the problem, using mouse typhoid as a test problem. Well aware of the many environmental patterns and characteristics which might tend to condition the results of his experiments, he has painstakingly used extremely rigid controls. He has demonstrated that mice receiving a "natural diet" were more resistant to mouse typhoid than those receiving a so-called "synthetic diet," in which all nutrients were well defined. Survival rates ran as high as 25 per cent higher in the animals receiving a natural diet.

Increased resistance to infection in Dr. Schneider's mice was reproducible in groups of mice receiving the diets containing whole wheat only if the mice were derived from strains which were genetically heterozygous, in other words, mixed strains. Such resistance could not be demonstrated in mice which, by strict in-breeding, had been made more nearly homozygous.

Continuing his studies further, Dr. Schneider has shown that the character of the bacterial population is also im-

* A slightly condensed transcription of informal oral presentation at a symposium held at the meeting of the American Public Health Association in Boston on November 12, 1948.
The speakers have not had the opportunity of correcting their statements in final form.

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