

CALIFORNIA

OLIVE INDUSTRY.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE OLIVE GROWERS' CONVENTION, HELD UNDER
THE AUSPICES OF THE STATE BOARD OF HORTICULTURE,
AT SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 8, 1891.



SACRAMENTO:

STATE OFFICE, : : : : A. J. JOHNSTON, SUPT. STATE PRINTING.

1891.

V.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE USES OF PURE OLIVE OIL AS A
FOOD AND AS MEDICINE.

Essay by P. C. REMONDINO,* M.D., San Diego.

The olive has been among the ancients the emblem of chastity, wisdom, and excellence, as well as a sign of prosperity and abundance. The wreath of olive twigs was the crown placed upon the brow of the victor in the olympic games. The hardness of its fiber, and fineness and closeness of the grain of its wood, has adapted it to many uses. At one time it occupied the place now given to marble and bronze in statuary, idols and images, as well as ornamental carvings, being made of its wood. The sacred cherubims and the doors of the Holy Tabernacle of the Temple of Solomon were made of olive.

Aside from the above, the olive has been a food producer of the greatest value, and Palestine in its palmiest days received the major part of its regal revenues from the product of its olive groves, the oil being then exported into the countries to its north, where it went to form a large part of their dietary. Tyre was a large consumer of olive oil, as we may well infer from the fact that King Solomon furnished to the mechanics sent to him by King Hiram, one hundred and fifty thousand gallons of that article for their food supply. Among the ancients oil entered largely into their fare.

ITS VALUE AS FOOD.

What the ancients knew by taste or by instinct, the moderns have in a great measure lost, and neither the discovery of the telephone, telegraph, celluloid collars, parlor match, peptonoids, nor the delightful torpedo, can in any way or by any odds replace what man has lost by the neglect of the use of olive oil. The modern American, with all his patent contrivances, from patent corkscrew and keyring, electric lights and dynamite guns, will never know a slick and unruffled skin and a healthy optimistic, full-fledged primitive and natural digestion, with its full tide of health, until he returns to the proper admixture of olive oil in his diet. Until he again recognizes the value and uses of olive oil, he will continue to drag his consumptive-thinned, liver-shriveled, mummified-skinned, and constipated and pessimistic anatomy about in vestibule cars in a vain search for lost health.

In Braithwaite's second volume for 1868 the reader will find an interesting article on the influence of the digestive habit in producing consumption, by Dr. Brakenridge, of Edinburgh. Space will not permit a reproduction of the article, but it is a subject which, above all others,

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Americans should thoroughly comprehend; it shows the necessity for fatty foods to the system, and explains how much consumption is generated in England during the summer by the actual lack of fats and oils in the diet of that season. He fully explains how the disease then develops in the fall and winter owing to this lack in the summer. His grounds are well taken. Where Americans are particularly interested in the proposition lies in the fact that they live in a much more trying climate than the English, a climate of greater variability and of a peculiar meteorological composition, alike trying to the lungs, liver, kidneys, teeth, nerves, skin, and temper, as well as to the hair and nails. Any one who has ever seen a rosy-cheeked Dutch, German, Norwegian, or French girl land at Castle Garden, with a complexion of white and pink, firm, creamy-colored teeth, luxuriant and glossy hair, firm contour of body and limbs, and eyes so laughing and bright that they would seem by a single glance capable of bringing life back to a desiccated Egyptian mummy, and who has seen the same girl in the course of six months, pale, dried haired, thin, hollow-eyed, and nervous, need not be told that our eastern and western climates are not trying. What Dr. Brakenridge says of the needs of oils and fats in the climate of Great Britain applies tenfold more to that of the United States, especially those portions bordering on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and lying in the great valleys of the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri, or on the shores of the great lakes.

There is no doubt but that that disease known as American nervousness, so graphically described by Beard, as well as the great prevalence of what might also be termed our American consumption, and the still wider spread condition known as American dyspepsia, would all be greatly lessened by a proper use of olive oil and a proper appreciation of the facts set out by Brakenridge. The writer has no doubt that had the old round-headed, broad-brimmed-hatted, long-visaged, and blunderbuss-carrying Puritans used more olive oil and less unnutritious slapjacks and apple dumplings, America would to-day be less affected with that leaven of pessimism which is such a prolific source of ill health, moral and mental, as well as physical. In other words, had some philanthropists gotten hold of poor old John Knox and given him a daily greasing of oil and made him breakfast on an optimistic salad with a parsley omelet and a generously sized trout, done brown in sweet oil, I don't think that the following century would have seen so much of sorcery, witch-burnings, and mental sufferings, nor the succeeding ones as much dyspepsia, nervousness, or consumption, as olive oil is as much required to form a healthy mind as it is a healthy body. American dentistry, of which we are justly proud, is only a result of a neglect of proper diet observances, of which we should be as justly ashamed. Nations who use a sufficiency of fats and oils are proverbial for their sound teeth, as well as for their clear complexion and beautiful hair. Madame Recaimer did not owe her beautiful complexion and prolonged health to any specific face powder or skin wash, as the manufacturer would make you believe, but rather to the artistic and scientifically prepared and well oiled salads which she ate at her *dejeuner*, as well as at her dinner. Cleopatra and Zenobia were indebted greatly to olive oil for their beauty and complexion, and Lucretia Borgia was said to eat salad three times a day.