

**THE INFLUENCE OF
CORRECT
FOOD QUANTITIES
UPON HUMAN LIFE**

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The Influence of Correct Food Quantities Upon Human Life by Theron C. Stearns

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INTRODUCTORY

The aim of this work is to present in the fewest possible words, and in the simplest possible manner, the essential facts concerning food, and especially with reference to the effect of too much or too little food upon normal development, health and longevity.

The entire subject in its present accepted form, has been developed within the past fifty years. Within ten years higher efficiency has been shown to follow the use of food quantities greatly less than was formerly thought necessary, and within three years of the date of this writing it has been shown that life is distinctly limited through the use of too much food after full bodily growth has been attained. Within the past year the probability has been indicated that at least one form of feeble mindedness is dependent upon too little food during infancy. A large number of people, therefore, had left school long before this subject had reached the present stage of development, and the object of this work is to make possible the utiliza-

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TO WHAT AGE SHOULD

tion of the available facts for such persons, as well as to furnish a practical method for instruction in the schools for the ages in which such instruction should begin.

The utilization of this knowledge, under ordinary conditions of life, is difficult because of the problems connected with the correct estimation of food values. Methods in use are quite simple under laboratory conditions, but impossible for general home use. The simple method here proposed has been found easy to apply, and to render general utilization of the valuable knowledge possible. All that is necessary is to master the simple elementary facts, and to practice weighing ordinary foods as supplied at the table, for a brief period, when it will be found easy to estimate, with sufficient accuracy, the total values of a given meal, without the use of scales. Since it is certain that observation of the necessary conditions will result in rearing children of higher mental and physical standard, in the development of greater efficiency, in the prevention of sickness, and in the prolongation of life, it is

equally certain that the use of this knowledge as a matter of daily routine will become general.

Until very recent years it was believed that the differences between individuals of higher or lower order was dependent almost entirely upon education. Perhaps this is true, if we assume that correction of the conditions upon which the development of individuals of low order depend is a matter of education. Certainly it is true if we admit that we can convert a feeble minded child into a normal one by intelligent application of modern rules of nutrition, as has been certainly done. The real truth is that, leaving out of consideration those who will come well within the definition of feeble minded, we have differences in individuals due to relatively smaller numbers of nerve cells in the brain, to imperfect development of such nerve cells and to toxie conditions due to over feeding. The rule among these persons is that they are well developed, bodily, and therefore more fit, perhaps, than their superiors in mind, for physical work. Frugality, either in the use of food or in handling it is unknown amongst them.

The still lower strata, exemplified in crowded localities, barely exist, and the majority of them are close to the line of so-called feeble minded persons.

Under conditions of living as existing in the past, these classes were unavoidable. About the close of the 8th century, Muni Btsan-po, King of Thibet "being determined to raise all his subjects to the same level, enacted that there should be no distinction between poor and rich, humble and great. He compelled the wealthy to share their riches with the indigent and helpless, and to make them equals in respect of all comforts and conditions of life. He repeated this experiment three times; but each time he found that they all returned to their former conditions, the rich being still richer, and the poor still poorer."

General conditions hitherto existing, and which still exist, could result in no other way. Improvement has been made, almost invariably through the efforts of individuals or groups of individuals. The time has now arrived when improvements are due from universal study of the factors upon which normal individual de-

velopment depends. Therefore the study of this subject should be methodically begun at the correct age, and the precepts of correct living should be observed. In childhood the individual is dependent upon parental care, but at fifteen, or thereabout the question of how to live should take precedence over all other subjects of learning, for all other subjects are dependent upon how well this is learned and practiced.

Closely allied to welfare of the individual, is communal welfare. With this idea in view, we have given a considerable portion of our limited space to directing attention to the responsibility of the individual for public conditions affecting health and longevity, and have reprinted a portion of the publications of the Board of Health of the State of New Jersey, and of Kansas. It is believed if each pupil would make such investigations of local conditions as would make it possible to comply with the proposed requirements for a paper on local conditions of sanitation and health, not only valuable information would be gained, but interest would be aroused in movements in these lines, which would make desirable improvements much more possible.