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Advice on Health (No. 84)

TWO EXPERIMENTS

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Department of Health)

IN an article summarising a discussion that was held in the Royal Society of Medicine on the requirements for a war-time dietary, a medical journal which has just come to hand quotes a well-known authority's contribution to the discussion, that of Dr. Leslie Harris of the Dunn Nutritional Laboratory at Cambridge. Dr. Harris spoke on the "reality of partial deficiencies," giving many illustrations to show that, even when no actual symptoms are visible, there may yet be a condition of nutrition which is short of optimal. There was the example

with which we are by now all familiar—the experiment of Dr. Corry Mann, who gave extra milk to children who were believed to be receiving a diet which was adequate or normal; the children having extra milk acquired a better state of nutrition than the supposed "normals," as shown by their increased high spirits, glossier hair, better finger-nails, etc. The conclusion was that the average is not necessarily the normal; and thus we have to use a new yardstick in measuring health—we apply the test that finds out whether any improvement can be made by an addition to the diet.

Two new experiments were quoted by Dr. Harris, when he was talking on the subject of the likelihood of deficiencies of vitamin C in war time. He was discussing the effect of extra vitamin C on resistance to infection on wound healing, and on physique. The first experiment was done in Germany, where 1,600,000 children were given 50 milligrams of vitamin C per day in addition to the ordinary war-time diet; the children having the extra vitamin C showed improved annual gains in weights and heights and a diminished rate of incidence of infections.

The second experiment was conducted in Britain. Extra vitamin C was given to 1,500 adolescent naval trainees. Comparing this group with another unsupplemented group, it was found that though the number of cases of tonsillitis was not diminished in the supplemented group, the length of time for which they suffered from the tonsillitis was lessened, as was also the number of complications, as compared with the unsupplemented group. No single case of rheumatic fever or of pneumonia occurred in the group receiving the extra vitamin C, whereas in the control group 16 cases of rheumatic fever and 17 cases of pneumonia occurred.

These are telling figures. It is not easy to carry out experiments of a magnitude sufficient to be telling; too often we in New Zealand have studied too small a number, drawing unwarranted conclusions when we should be realising that human beings are very variable, and should be studied in large numbers before we are justified in drawing inferences from our findings.

Carrots in Cellophane

Here is one experiment at least that can be tried; it is quoted by the same authority, who refers to it as a "surprising observation"—that in England, raw carrots in cellophane wrappings are supplied by tuck shops and relished by the children in the absence of the wonted sweets and chocolates. Really an excellent substitute, because it contains sugar. And instead of being bad for the teeth as the dentists tell us is the case with sugar, the raw carrot is just the thing that the developing jaw needs to give it exercise, and that the teeth need to cleanse them.

A hint: the housewife should preserve as many gooseberries and black currants and red currants as she can—for they can be preserved without sugar, and they are rich in vitamin C.

Stockings last longer

IF

you buy the size that is ample for your feet
(err on the big size. For shoes up to size

3 buy 8½ inch stockings, for size 4 buy 9 inch, for size 5
buy 9½ inch, for over size 5, buy 10 inch stockings).

IF you wash your new stockings before wearing.

IF you ease the foot and the heel into the stocking and then ROLL the stocking up the leg (never pull them on).

IF you always fasten the suspender on to the special reinforced top, known as the welt. NEVER fasten the suspender BELOW the welt.

IF you buy Bonds Symetra—the ankle-slimming Full Fashioned Stockings of quality.

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