

SCIENCE

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SOME PROBLEMS OF NUTRITION IN THE ARMY¹

Food has been defined as a well-tasting mixture of materials, which, when taken in proper quantity into the stomach, is capable of maintaining the body in any desired state. The choice of these mixtures in the form of menus, their preparation for the plate, their digestion and fate in the body, is the science of nutrition. If we had a complete knowledge of every food substance and the transformation it undergoes in the body; how it is prepared for usefulness, just what purpose it fulfils, how it fulfils this purpose and what becomes of it afterward—if we knew all this for every food-stuff; every class of substance we can use as food—we should have a *completed* science of nutrition.

A person is satisfactorily nourished when he is maintained in a physical and mental status—and we all know that food plays a part in maintaining mental as well as physical status—best fitted for the task he has to perform. We can begin now in view of the military situation in Europe to grasp the size of the task our army is destined to perform. What is the most desirable status, physical and mental, for our army? Very few of our soldiers have been in a fight, and none practically speaking, have lived the trench life—the life of the modern soldier. We have now under arms well on to a million and a half men who, six months ago, were leading peaceful pursuits—the majority of them, perhaps, sedentary, or at least unmuscular pursuits. In spite of

¹ Address delivered before the College of Physicians, Philadelphia, April 3, 1918.