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EDITORIAL.

A NATIONAL STANDARD OF COOKING.

The efficiency of a nation depends to a great extent upon its physique, a notable instance of which is the splendid development of the Scotsman, who reared in pure air on porridge and oat cake has developed a hardiness and endurance which has carried him to the ends of the earth, and a mentality which has enabled him to maintain his position with distinction. Nothing is more marked than the deterioration which is taking place when white bread and tea are substituted for the staple national diet.

The problem of maintaining those workers who are producing the munitions of war, whose efficiency is so vital to the nation, in a condition which will enable them to meet the strain upon their endurance is one which concerns not only abstemiousness from alcohol, but careful and nutritious dieting.

In this matter we have much to learn from our continental neighbours. While we have the finest food supply in the world, many, perhaps the majority of workers are poorly fed because their food is badly and unappetizingly cooked and presented, and there is no doubt that across the Channel there is not only a much greater knowledge of food values, but much more time is spent in preparing and serving nutritious food in an easily digested form than is taken by the average English woman. This has been endorsed quite recently by many nurses working in France who in writing home have mentioned the wholesome commissariat. In many English hospitals the cooking of food is crude, scamped and tasteless.

The same applies to food prepared for industrial workers, and we are in cordial

agreement with a proposition made in the press by Professor Howard Marsh that non-alcoholic buffets shall be established for their benefit such as have already justified themselves in numerous centres where soldiers are quartered, on the lines of those in which the services of the Y.M.C.A. have been of the highest value. Such buffets are not only popular but paying concerns, and Professor Howard Marsh maintains that what has been done in a large number of cases for soldiers, would be equally sound and beneficial in the case of men who are turning out war material, and doing other heavy work.

The provision of wholesome, appetizing, nutritious food is work of the very highest value, and those who understand the strain involved in constantly putting out strength realize that the only scientific way of meeting it is to supply nourishment, at frequent intervals, to meet the waste. Otherwise it is inevitable that the tendency will be to combat fatigue and exhaustion by stimulants, which are in no way a substitute for food.

As has well been pointed out, the oxidation of the food not only generates heat to keep the body warm, but also liberates the power or energy which enables the body to perform the work just as the combustion of coal in a furnace will produce heat and force to propel an engine.

It therefore behoves us as a nation to consider the food and the drink problem conjointly realizing how intimately they are connected. The more widespread is the adoption of a national standard of cooking, which it should be a point of honour with every individual to attain, the better. And in conjunction with this there should be an elementary knowledge of food values, and the principles underlying scientific catering and cooking which should be taught in every school throughout the country.

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