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EDITORIAL.

GOOD MOTHER EARTH.

Those of us nourished in youth on home-grown food realise in vigorous old age what we owe to fresh food grown in fertile soil, and that until our people are able to procure home-grown nourishment they will continue to deteriorate physically, mentally and, we fear, morally. We are thankful to turn from foreign affairs in the Press, and to catch under "Agriculture" such headings as "Doctors and Farmers," "The Essentials of Nutrition," "Use of Fresh Food," as if we are ever to tackle dictators we shall not get far on white bread, tinned salmon and dried milk, and *The Times* does well to stir up our politicians on the "Use of Fresh Food." To quote a most enlightening article we read:—

"In this artificial age people are apt to forget how closely agriculture, nutrition, and disease are linked together, and it is hardly surprising that a group of Cheshire doctors, the members of the local medical and panel committees who are in touch with 600 family doctors, have been moved to produce a medical testament pointing out that much of the sickness they are called upon to cure would be prevented by proper feeding and the general use of fresh food grown in fertile soil.

"The Cheshire doctors say the better manuring of the home land so as to bring an ample succession of fresh food crops to the tables of the public, the arrest of the present exhaustion of the soil, and the restoration and permanent maintenance of its fertility concern them very closely. 'For,' they say, 'nutrition and the quality of food are the paramount factors in fitness. No health campaign can succeed unless the materials of which the bodies are built are sound. At present they are not. Probably half our work is wasted, since our patients are so fed from the cradle, indeed, before the cradle, that they are certain contributions to a C3 nation. Even our country people share the white bread, tinned salmon, dried milk régime. Against this the efforts of the doctor resemble those of Sisyphus.'"

Cereals and Milk.

"At a recent meeting at Crewe, Sir Robert McCarrison told the meeting that those races whose diets are made up for the most part of whole cereal grains, legumes, milk and its products, green leaf and root vegetables, fruit and meat in moderation are of fine physique and healthy. Those whose diets are made up for the most part of denatured foodstuffs are of poor physique and subject to disease in many forms.

"There are, in his estimation, four chief faults in the

diets of the great mass of the people in this country. First, the use of denatured wheat flour in preference to the whole wheat flour. Secondly, there is the excessive use of carbohydrate foods and the inordinate use of sugar, sweets and sweet cakes, which is one of the outstanding dietetic vices of the day. Thirdly, there is the insufficient use of fresh green vegetables in the form of salads. Fourthly, there is the insufficient use of safe milk and the large consumption by many people of meat and other animal foods, a practice as unnecessary as it is uneconomic. This is not, Sir Robert McCarrison made clear, to decry meat, which is an excellent food-stuff, but to decry the excessive and wasteful use of it.

Faulty Choice.

"Malnutrition due to faulty food is widespread. Poverty, ignorance, indifference, and prejudice are responsible for it. While not attempting in any way to minimise the baneful influence of poverty, Sir Robert McCarrison suggested that much can be done to ensure an adequate diet by the right choice of food, and at relatively little cost. Much can be done with little to ensure a properly constituted diet if people get rid of the idea that they are starving unless continually fortified by 'baked meats, sugar, and spice and all that's nice.'"

Sir Albert Howard, who also addressed the Crewe Conference, contended that soil fertility must be the basis of the public health system of the future, and that agriculture must be given its place as the foundation of preventive medicine.

"It is encouraging that these ideas are gaining ground and that medical men as well as nutrition experts are realising that a fertile and productive soil is an asset which should be developed more fully in the nation's interest."

Magnificent muscular men made Scotland and Ireland renowned throughout the world in the past, their physique and alertness were proverbial—and they were often nourished on poor man's diet, porridge and milk, potatoes and vegetables both natural products of the soil.

It is to be hoped that the Nursing Profession will realise its duty in this question of national health—in which their interest based on sound knowledge would have far-reaching influence.

Mother Earth.

Such knowledge must include a thorough course on dietetics, *rooted in the soil*, than which nothing could be more enlightening and wholesome. The children of our cities have far too long been severed from the love of Mother Earth—let them handle it, learn to cultivate and love it.

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