

is a tremendous amount of work to be done, and I put to you the need for this agro-medical type of ecological research and ask you to support it whenever you get the opportunity.

DISCUSSION

Dr Playfair: I am left with a slight feeling of depression. What can one do immediately about this, in one's home life? As cardboard packets come out at the breakfast table containing cardboard cornflakes and plastic things and one is surrounded by this sort of medium, how can one within one's own family do anything about it?

Lady Eve Balfour: Dr Playfair's question is a comparatively easy one, because I expected the very opposite, "What can we do collectively?" If he had said to me: "What can we do about all of our patients?", that would be a very difficult question, because it is a slow educational job to a large extent, but individually I think there are few of us who cannot do something if we want to. One could certainly get less processed and debilitated food and more whole food. Even if you do not want to go to the labour of making your own bread, it is fairly easy nowadays to get quite good kinds of wholemeal bread. There are certain shops that specialize in organically grown food, but one can avoid the worst sinners, the refined carbohydrates, even if one uses the ordinary goods of commerce. You could make an extraordinary difference to your state of health by substituting fruit, fresh vegetables, salads, and raw food for some of the sugars and other debilitating foods so many of us eat. I believe that, even without the introduction of my own hobby-horse, the organic treatment of soil, we could aim at having 25 per cent of our food intake raw and whole, and would find an astonishing difference in standards of health. I believe that there is invariably an increase in the leucocyte count following the ingestion of a cooked meal but that no increase in leucocyte count takes place after a raw meal, and that if a meal starts with one good course of raw food and thereafter goes on to cooked food there is still no increase in the count; which is something which might give one cause to think.

Question: Our criterion of health is longevity, and we are living longer and longer. Why?

Lady Eve: First of all, it is doubtful whether our criterion of health should be longevity, but that is a different subject. Is it not a fact that our expectation of life has enormously increased up to the age of 50 or 60, but that it has not increased at all beyond that stage? That is to say our chances of not dying before 50 are greater, but having reached 50 our chances of not dying before 60 or 70 are

no more than they were before? Surely the explanation of that is the enormously greater knowledge of the control of infectious diseases, epidemics and the major deficiencies, hygiene, and so on. I do not think there is much evidence that genuine stamina is all that much better. Many factors are involved. We now keep alive people who would have died, and therefore it is natural that the general stamina of those surviving should be lower. You have to look very carefully indeed at the fact that nowadays so many of the degenerative diseases once associated with old age are now happening to children; I cannot help remembering both the experience with cats and other work of that kind, and my own experience with plants. It is a rather terrifying thought that it may take three generations of wrong feeding before you really begin to get conditions such as cancer in children, and that it might take three generations of right feeding to get back again. The human life-span is such a long one compared with animals that we can go a long way down the wrong road before we see the red light.

Question: I should like to ask Lady Balfour if she has any link with health shops.

Lady Eve: Our organization is an all-embracing one. We have always tried to be inclusive and not exclusive, and we welcome all categories of opinion, and certainly support any people who are trying to produce healthier food. We have a lot of members who are concerned with health food shops, and we are very much in favour of them. As an organization we are not strictly any one thing or the other. Health food shops tend to be wholly vegetarian, and whilst we have a great many members who are vegetarians, the organization does not preach vegetarianism. The only direct connection is between our organization and the Organic Food Society which has one food shop in Baker Street in London. It is unique because it is the only one which is supplying as far as possible a hundred per cent of all its foods that have been unsprayed with chemicals or poisons, and that have in most cases been grown without chemical fertilizers. We are very much aware of the increasing hazards to human health caused by the endless accumulation of small quantities of toxic chemicals used in ever-increasing degree in growing and processing food.

There is a great deal of difference between being really well and not being clinically ill, and between general unfitness and being ill enough to go to the doctor. We have reason to believe that one of the important factors in unfitness is the residue of toxic chemicals in insecticides and other things used today, and that one shop is trying to supply *only* that food which is guaranteed not to have any of these on it.