

THE RELATION OF FOOD TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF CIVILIZATION

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This is an age of industrial and political reform just as truly as the period of The Reformation and the French Revolution, though unaccompanied with the inhumanity and carnage which attended these upheavals. The Caucasian race is far in advance of the barbarious methods of progress. In the future the reforms will be brought about gradually, and the word reform will loose its terror and be changed to a word meaning simply advancement only. Science is quietly revolutionizing the world by exploding many of the old theories which have stood for decades. The search for truth is growing more and more zealous and extensive. It is revealing more and more of the fundamental principles of life, and the extensive studies in Physiology and Psychology are permitting a keen insight into the laws governing the mental and moral habits of man. Not satisfied still, he has penetrated the bowels of the earth, and explored the mysteries of the heavens with the gigantic telescope.

The chief end of all this research is to benefit and uplift man. Experience long has taught us that all races are not alike susceptible to learning, nor is it confined to any one. Caucasian race includes the the most civilized people in the world, and it occupies the most desirable portions of the globe. This people is characterized by its industry morality and brain energy. Their history has been one of progress and triumph, which is manifested in many ways, viz. intellect, mode of living, surroundings, food, soëial and political relations, and morality. To treat these fully, would require many volumes or to treat any one accurately would fill a large book. In the following one will confine ourselves to the discussion of the food of a nation in regard to its degree of civilization.

Before going farther, it is well to know what is exactly meant by the term food, and what is meant by the term civilization. Food as defined by Mary Green, in her "Food Products of the World", "is that substance which is capable of sustaining an organism in a state of health, and that which makes possible the continuing of all forms of life, both animal and vegetable". Authors on the subject divide food into four great classes, the carbohydrates, albumens, fats and oils and the mineral matters. All of these food principles are necessary to the life and health of an individual. To maintain health, they must be used in the proportion required by nature. The three sources of food are the vegetable, mineral, and animal. A class of people called vegetarians refuse to eat animal food, condemning it as unwholesome, they think that one life should not be sacrificed for another. The cereals and nuts furnish the nitrogenous principle and the fat, which largely compose the meat for the vegetable eaters of the world. The majority of the writers think that both animal and vegetable life is required by man, especially those living in the temperate zones. People living in cold climates consume large quantities of animal fat, as it is necessary to keep the temperature of the body normal in the extreme cold atmosphere. In order to digest these foods, a large amount of energy must be spent in preparing them for assimilation, and the people usually make very little progress for the physical call for energy is so great that there is none left for the brain. In sufficient supply of any one food principle will produce disease, or an over-supply will cause suffering.

Political Economists have had some difficulties in determining what what is meant by civilization. Guizot, a Frenchman, defines it as "the pro-

gress of the developement of society". The progress of a nation depends on the developement of civilization, and the developement of society and the developement of the individual . A nation never advances above the homes of its people, for the homes depend directly on the civilization and culture of the home makers so a nation cannot rise above the individuals which compose it, Man cannot develop without raising the standard of society. He has a social nature which, when he learns a new truth or virtue prompts him to share it with his fellow creatures.

The earliest food of man was shellfish, clams, fruits and nuts, The difficulty in obtaining it made it impossible for many to live in the same community, Hunger led him to devise surer means for getting his daily food. Hooks were used to catch fish, and snares were made in the bushes to obtain the birds. By the increase of skill, the food supply became larger and more were enabled to live in the same vicinity. Then, in order to improve the flavor of the food, our early ancestors began cooking it over the hot coals. This is one of the best or the best method of cooking meat, and we have learned to go back to a modification of this method, and broil our most palatable meat over the live coals. Cooking is one of the distinguishing features which separates man from the animals, and he is often called a "cooking animal". Necessity led to the invention of cooking vessels, though we doubt whether in all cases cooking vegetables in the hot ashes and meat over the coals was not better from the stand point of economy or palatibility.

When excavating a fallen city, the archaeologist depends greatly on the cooking utensils to determine the scale of civilization. The buried city of Pompey is, perhaps, the best example of this. The hot lava cover-

ed the city like a coating of plaster, preventing decay and disintegration. In these ancient kitchens, are found in the various stages preparation with the conveniences for cooking and the mode of partaking of it revealed in the tables for serving.

For the best development of man, the primary requisites are a sound body and a sound mind. A strong physic is the result of proper nourishment and moral ways of living. Not only must the food be sufficient in quantity, but it must also contain the principles in the required proportions, properly prepared. A nutritious food may be made worse than worthless by being imperfectly prepared, and instead of building up the body, it will be a positive injury to the delicate organs. The various brands of cereals used all over the United States are causing intestinal troubles, because of lack of cooking the starch until the starch grains are broken so that the digestive fluids will act readily. The cereals require long cooking at boiling temperature, while food containing a large percent of nitrogen should be cooked at a low temperature so as not to destroy its food value. The change from the diet of bread and fruit and nuts to one of animal food with an excessive use of fat which robbed the brain of its necessary supply of blood there by dulling their sense of purity. Hannah More has said that "Sin and bile are the only bad things in the world." Bile is the cause, and sin the effect. Go a step farther back, and we find that poor food is the cause of bile. The excessive secretion of bile has led to crime, and no nature, however sweet, can withstand the pains and melancholia of dyspepsia and not grow morbid. Carlyle, with his deep intellect and wide sympathies with mankind because his stomach took the liberty of carrying on a long war, became narrow, and extremely criti-

cal, and, it might be said, disagreeable . "Old friendships are often destroyed by toasted cheese; and hard salted meat has often led to suicide. The high temperature to which cheese is subjected toughens the albumen and casein and renders them almost indigestible. It not only fails to nourish the body, but it is an injury to the system. Salt will dissolve the myosin the muscle forming principle in meat, and harden the fibers. These articles of food, if intelligently prepared, are very nutritious; but ignorance in cooking them has impoverished the blood. (Many a divorce is caused by the lack of knowledge in selecting a suitable diet and preparing it so as to bring out the food value.) There is a vital connection between the material self, and what the impairment of the one dulls the other. Weak digestion dulls or depraves the moral sense, and leads to sin.

Twenty years ago, few people realized these great mistakes in the ways of cooking; but great efforts are being made by the leading educators and moral writers of today. The preparation of food has long been considered an important factor in civilization, and the question is gathering interest. The increase of the dyspeptics in the United States has started many investigations. A large part of the nervousness and nervous diseases is due to imperfect nutrition. The habit of hurrying has led the American woman to use the frying pan largely, especially for supper and breakfast and as a result, we are a nation of dyspeptics. The frame of mind also influences the action of the stomach. If the brain is constantly on duty, the supply of blood which should go to digesting the food is in mental activity. European nations laugh at the American husband and father for they say he is so engrossed in his money that he never takes time to eat. The inhabitants of foreign countries throw aside their business

cares and enjoy their dinner, and leave the table rested.

The fall of the Roman Empire, according to historians, was the result of numerous political changes; but back of all this, was the degeneration of the Roman people, physically and morally the "Athletic Greece" achieved her greatest culture on two meals a day consisting of maise and vegetables steeped in oil. The decline of a nation when gormandizing begins. Rome collapsed was well under way when slaves were thrown into the eel pots to increase gammy flavor of the eels when they came upon the table.

The moral ideas of the Anglo-Saxon race are undoubtedly due to the food eaten and their vigorous life. They consumed large quantities of vegetables and meat; yet the temperate climate and great activity required much energy. In Germany, the high standard of morals may rest on the fact that they eat so many fresh vegetables, and thoroughly and habitually cook them correctly. The energy and advancement of Great Britain is the result of the variety and sufficient quantity of its food products. A great political economist once remarked that Ireland was oppressed by the English, because the Irish had nothing but Irish potatoes to eat, and that as soon as there is an improvement in the quality of the food, they will demand a better form of government. Then the Queen will deem it the best policy to grant a home rule at once. The Irish men on leaving their native country, become energetic citizens and leading statesman.

Go to Arabia, where the food is scarce and of a poor or indifferent quality. It stands where it did when ^{the} Great Divine Teacher was on earth; while nations near them have advanced and are still progressing. China could not have held her subjects under the iron rule of Confucism,

if they could have obtained the more nutritious cereals and meats of the United States, instead of dulling the intellect and deadening the senses by the excessive use of tea. Most nations prefer not to have the stomach tanned at all, but will remonstrate less if it is done after death.

If we are patriotic, our country must not only be defended from foreign armies, but it is vastly more important to defend also the honor and purity of our people. It is the object of our public schools and colleges to make men and women first, then doctors, lawyers, farmers and statesman. We must better the sanitary conditions of the homes, and instruct the people in the science of cookery and home sanitation, if we wish to see the nation advance; for the progress of the mind and body and soul depend greatly upon health and nutrition, the general care we take of the entire physical being.