

THE PRESERVATION OF FOOD.

WHOLEsome, suitable, and varied food is essential to efficient life. Imperfect nutrition from defective, not deficient, food is the unsuspected source of a large amount of ill-health, unhappiness, and crime.

DESIRE FOR FOOD A FUNDAMENTAL INSTINCT.

To desire and seek food is an instinct common to every type of life. The kind of nourishment necessary to maintain life in its countless forms is, of course, widely varied. The dietary of plants (gases from the atmosphere, salts from the soil, moisture from dew and rain) is obviously unsuited to insects, for instance, or fish. The ox is a strict vegetarian; the cat is an equally consistent consumer of animal food. With few exceptions, notably the domesticated pig and dog, the diet of all types of life other than human is monotonous; limited to a few kinds of food, of one class; in the absence of which the creature dies, being unable to adapt itself to any decided change in its food. On the other hand,

MANKIND THRIVES ON VARIED FORMS OF FOOD

and benefits by change of diet. Indeed, if human life is to be vigorous, efficient, and prolonged, a combination of animal, vegetable, and mineral foodstuffs is essential.

Efforts have been made by individuals, in the interests of convenience or economy, to limit their diet to bread or oatmeal over a given period, or otherwise to restrict their daily meals to one or two of the simplest forms in which food can be obtained—eggs, for instance; but the end has been invariably disaster. Appetite fails, energy suffers, illness, even death, results.

Some of the reasons why variety of food is so important to human health will be supplied in the bulletin on "Food and Diet." The point which now claims our attention is this: If a sufficient quantity of wholesome, suitable, and varied food is essential to well-being, upon what does the supply depend?

THREE FACTORS IN HEALTHFUL DIET.

Briefly, it depends upon three factors:—

- (1.) Ability to produce, purchase, or otherwise procure the food material necessary;
- (2.) Knowledge to guide the selection, preparation, and service of this material;
- (3.) Intelligence to direct and control the amount and character of the food prepared.

At first sight factor (1) might be dismissed as dependent upon income only. A little consideration, however, will suffice to show that it underlies the whole question of food preservation. Some kinds of food can be grown only in certain latitudes; as, for example, wheat and corn, which must be transported long distances to millions of consumers. Most fruits and vegetables can only ripen in certain climates, and unless preserved in season would even then be enjoyed over a very short period of each year; while to thousands their beneficial influences would be entirely denied.

Again, the population of the world is either closely concentrated in huge cities or widely scattered over districts often remote from markets. In either case people depend upon other sources than their own produce for a part at least of their food-supply.

Factor (2) calls for that knowledge which raises housekeeping to the rank of a profession. Training is necessary to understand why food which is wholesome in winter