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How Life is Influenced.

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MANY forces—some slight, some strong—are always at work making changes in both plants and animals. Some of these influences we can control; others we cannot. Some of them promote growth and strength; others retard, or even mar healthy growth and vigor of mind and body. We should try, therefore, to realize what these forces are, and avoid placing ourselves under the control of those of them which would destroy our health and strength.

Of all the influences that affect human life, perhaps the most powerful is that of food. Next to food, may be placed the influence of air, sunshine, climate (that is heat and cold), occupation, clothing, rest and exercise. Besides these, there are the slighter influences of recreation such as we have in reading, music, scenery, pictures, poetry, the society of home, and the society of those whom we love. While these influences do not strongly affect our bodily health, yet they do act upon the mind, and through the mind and nervous system, affect the general health to some extent. Sometimes the health is improved through these influences, sometimes it is hurt by them. The young, however, are not usually harmed by such subtle influences, and therefore we shall not dwell upon them. Rather let us try to realize clearly how good food, fresh air, bright sunshine, healthful occupation, proper clothing, with plenty of rest and exercise, may promote health; whereas, bad food, impure air, close confinement, unhealthy occupation, improper clothing, and lack of rest and exercise, may stunt growth and lay the foundation of life-long ill-health. Young people cannot choose the influences which shall affect them. Their parents choose the house, climate, clothing and air space for the children. They choose also the food that shall be placed upon the family table. All this quite right. But in the matter of a life occupation, most young people are free to choose for themselves. And sometimes they choose very badly, because some occupations are healthful and some are harmful. Now it often happens that boys make choice of their trade, calling, or profession, without considering whether their life-work will be good or bad for their future health. The fact that some occupations are more healthful than others may easily be seen from looking at the following table. It shows how many persons die from consumption in certain occupations out of every 1,000 persons who die from