Food Facts- or Fairy Tales

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Gullible, credulous, all-believing—American people are victims of extensive dietary rackets. Men and women, being consciously or subconsciously interested in prolonging their life spans, are dangerously susceptible to such remarks as, “Eat seaweed, sleep in the moonlight, walk sideways, and you’ll live to be a hundred.”

Though it may mean disillusioning an individual about his favorite food myth, groundless fallacies must be undermined. Therefore in the heterogeneous mass of fads and follies where is the middle path on which we may tread sanely.

Food fairy stories are traditional favorites, however; the individual who eats milk and fish together will supposedly never see the day end; but whoever heard actually of a fatality from this combination? World-renowned chefs use milk sauces for their daintiest fish dishes.

Orange juice and milk will not kill a baby. The fear of milk curdling in the stomach when scientifically thought out is foolish. Physiology teaches us that milk curdles the moment it reaches the stomach as a result of its combination with the hydrochloric acid of stomach gastric juice. Without this activity normal digestion could not proceed.

The reputation of the banana has been slandered bitterly and unfairly, for research shows us that it is an excellent source of energy. The meat of the banana can be tolerated safely by children with delicate digestions when other forms of starch cannot. The true cause of trouble with bananas is that they are often eaten too green or too ripe. Eliminate that difficulty and the banana is an important food.

Tomatoes suffer from gossip about being too acid, that they thin the blood and are generally undesirable. On the contrary, tomatoes are a useful food. If you don’t like them raw, cook them.

Some natural foods, such as bran, are supposed to be a panacea for all ills, but surprisingly bran is really not a food. It is the indigestible hull of cereal grains and is absolutely unfit for consumption in large amounts. A limited amount of roughage is fine for a strong digestive tract, but can create havoc in a weak one.

Meat is taboo for that type of individual called a vegetarian. Some are vegetarians from choice, others because it is too far to the nearest meat market. Man has not evolutionized sufficiently yet to be entirely removed from carnivorous longings. Meat is good for the human body, for it furnishes us much of our needed protein. Too much protein is too much protein, of course, but too high a percentage of the substance is never reached by the average meat eater. You can safely satisfy your appetite for meat—unless it is too expensive.

There is another dietary racket based only on apparent truth. Many long years ago in some far off place people grew bored with potatoes and decided rice was a splendid substitute. For many ages they blissfully served chicken with potatoes one day and chicken with rice another. Then it was discovered that the minerals in the two products were different, those of potatoes being alkaline, and those of rice acidic. Thus potatoes and chicken neutralized each other, but rice and chicken were both acids; immediately it was assumed that to eat them meant suicide. The rice industry suffered a decline because nature had made minerals chiefly acidic. To eat another vegetable or drink a glass of milk would have corrected the matter. Our digestive systems are quite able to resist safely a temporary swing to acidity.

There are a few people who think it is dangerous to eat meat and potatoes together, for one is a starch and the other a protein food. The digestion of the meat stops the digestion of the potatoes in the stomach, they reiterate. A novel theory, but the human body does not do all its digesting in its stomach. Beyond that organ are thirty feet of intestine into which pour starch and protein digesting fluids that can work simultaneously. So one can eat beef steak and mashed potatoes together with an easy conscience.

The part-truth of these unscientific assertions are more dangerous than never giving food a thought.