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SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKean Cattell and published every Friday by
THE SCIENCE PRESS
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Annual Subscription, $6.00 Single Copies, 15 Cts.
SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the Association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

SOME OBSTACLES IN THE PATH TOWARDS AN OPTIMUM DIET

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War, by interference with agriculture and commerce, as well as by direct destruction of foods, brings on starvation and the hosts of human ailments that sprout on malnutrition. Hence, in a world-wide violence, like our present war, the ancient problems of individual and national diets requisite for health and efficiency become both a national and an international concern of nutrition experts, physicians, statesmen and captains of industry. These imperative problems compel the biologist to re-examine the known and the unknown in the field of food and fitness, food and life, food and victory, so that the obstacles in the path towards an optimum diet for optimum health may not trip us in the dark. Such re-examination of the nutritional history of man (and other mammals), past and present, reveals as of today much new and reliable information, much innocent ignorance, many faulty food habits and unwise individual and commercial food practices of today, unwise practices in the light of present knowledge and past experience. There appear to be even questionable building stones in our scientific edifice. Such dilemmas as the recent assertion by Surgeon General Dr. Thomas Parran, of the U. S. Public Health Service, that, in our own country with its abundance of excellent foods, and in times of peace, "one third of our people is getting food inadequate to maintain good health, and less than one fourth of the American people are getting a good diet." This is perplexing, especially in view of the more recent assertion (November, 1942) of Sir John