ES& to the NEWS

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DIET & EXERCISE

Although a sensational new record for running the mile and many new swimming records were set this year, the more important athletic news comes from new diet and exercise discoveries benefi cial to the middle-aged and the elderly.

Last month, Jack LaLanne performed another of his amazing annual swimming feats. While handcuffed and with his feet tied, the 61-year old LaLanne swam a mile and a half across the chilly San Francisco bay while towing a 2,000-pound rowboat. On reaching the shore, he did ten quick pushups. LaLanne is a living demonstration of his theory that, with proper diet and exercise, human beings can increase their strength and endurance long past middle age.

If Jack LaLanne keeps going, he may someday surpass the re

markable vigor of my late friend Larry Lewis, the San Francisco waiter who ran six miles before reporting for work every day, until his untimely death at the age of 106.

Recent nutrition research indicates that improper diet results in coronary heart disease, which causes one-third of all adult deaths, in the United States. Improper diet also causes cancer of the colon and rectum, which is the number-one form of lethal cancer in the United States, and likewise causes diverticulosis and hemorrhoids which afflict so many older Americans.

The interesting part of this research is that the natives of Africa and Japan rarely suffer from these diseases. The reason ap-

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pears to be that their diets are high in natural roughage such as vegetable fiber, bran from the wheat berry, and the skins of apples and potatoes. Unlike Americans, the Africans do not have a diet rich in white flour, white sugar, and white rice from which the bran husks and cane fibers have been removed.

The British scientists who uncovered these interesting facts about diet may be on the way to proving that the rural Africans, whom many Americans consider disadvantaged, may actually have a more healthful diet than we do. Coronary heart disease is virtual ly unknown there, cancer of the colon and rectum is extremely rare, appendicitis is almost never encountered, hemorrhoids and diverti culosis are almost non-existent, and varicose veins and phlebitis are highly unusual. When black Africans come to the United States and adopt an American diet, they succumb to all these ·western diseases.

Those Americans who exercise vigorously and work hard every day, and follow diets high in roughage and low in fats, sugar and alcohol, seem to _age very little. They seem to be able to perform amazing fe·at·s of strength and endurance beyond the traditional close of· active life at three score years and tlen.

Four hundred years ago, the Italian Luigi Cornaro used a policy of abstinence to prolong his life to 98 active years. With today's scientific knowledge about diet and exercise, we should be able to improve on his record.

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