

# DEWEY EDWARD HOOKER

THE NO BREAKFAST PLAN  
AND THE FASTING-CURE

Edward Dewey

**The No Breakfast Plan  
and the Fasting-Cure**

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**Edward Hooker Dewey**  
**The No Breakfast Plan and the Fasting-Cure**

**TO**

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**AND**

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**WHO HAVE COMMENDED THE WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR**

**IN THEIR OWN PUBLISHED WORKS,**

**THIS BOOK IS**

**GRATEFULLY DEDICATED**

## PREFACE

This volume is a history, or a story, of an evolution in the professional care of the sick. It begins in inexperience and in a haze of medical superstition, and ends with a faith that Nature is the all in all in the cure of disease. The hygiene unfolded is both original and revolutionary: its practicality is of the largest, and its physiology beyond any possible question. The reader is assured in advance that every line of this volume has been written with conviction at white heat, that enforced food in sickness and the drug that corrodes are professional barbarisms unworthy of the times in which we live.

*E. H. DEWEY.*

Meadville, Pa., U. S. A.,  
*November, 1900.*

## THE NO-BREAKFAST PLAN

### I

A hygiene that claims to be new and of the greatest practicality, and certainly revolutionary in its application, would seem to require something of its origin and development to excite the interest of the intelligent reader. Methods in health culture are about as numerous as the individuals who find some method necessary for the health: taking something, doing something for the health is the burden of lives almost innumerable. Very few people are so well that some improvement is not desirable.

The literature on what to eat and not to eat, what to do and not to do, on medicines that convert human stomachs into drug-stores, is simply boundless. If we believe all we read, we must consider the location we are in before we can safely draw the breath of life; we must not cool our parched throats without the certificate of the microscope. We must not eat without an ultimate analysis of each item of the bill of fare, as we would take an account of stock before ordering fresh goods; and this without ever knowing how much lime we need for the bones, iron for the blood, phosphorus for the brain, or nitrogen for the muscles. In short, there is death in the air we breathe, death in the food we eat, death in the water we drink, until, verily, we seem to walk our ways of life in the very valley and shadow of death, ever subject to the attack of hobgoblins of disease.

How many lives would go down in despair but for the miracles of cure promised in the public prints, even in our best journals and monthlies, we cannot know. It is the hope for better things that sustains our lives; suicide never occurs until all hope has departed. Even our medical journals are heavily padded with pages of new remedies whose use involves the most amazing credulity. Perhaps it is well, in the absence of a sound physiological hygiene, that the people who are sick and afflicted shall be buoyed up by fresh, printed promises. Perhaps it is also well for the physician to be able to go into the rooms of the sick inspired from the advertising pages of his favorite medical journals.

Are they not new stars of hope to both physician and the people? Why should we not hope when new remedies are multiplying in such infinite excess over newly discovered diseases? *New diseases?* What is there essentially new that can be treated with remedies, in the coated tongues, foul mouths, high temperature and pulse, pain, discomfort, and acute aversion to food, that is to be found in the rooms of the sick? Are there really specifics for these conditions?

The hygiene to be unfolded in these pages is so new, so revolutionary, that its first impress has never failed to excite every form of opposition known to language, and yet its practicality is so great that it is rarely questioned by those who fairly test it. It has not been found wanting in its physiology, nor has it failed to grow wherever it has found lodgement.

The origin and development of this new way in health culture seem to require something of professional autobiography, that it may be seen that it is a matter of evolution and not of chance, not a fad that has only its passing hour.

After receiving my medical degree from the University of Michigan, and serving a term as house physician to the U. S. Marine Hospital at Detroit, Michigan, I entered one of the large army hospitals at Chattanooga, Tenn., at the beginning of the Sherman campaign in Georgia, where I found a ward of eighty sick and wounded soldiers fresh from the battle of Resacea. My professional fitness for duties so grave and so large in extent was of a very questionable order, and I did not in the least overestimate it.

It had not escaped my notice, even before I began the study of medicine, that whether disease were coaxed with doses too small for mathematical estimate, or whether blown out with solid shot or blown up with shells, the percentage of recoveries seemed to be about the same regardless of the form of treatment.

I was reared in a large family in a country home, several miles from a physician, where all but the severest sicknesses were treated with herb-tea dosage, and this was true of all other country homes. With all this in mind I had begun the study of medicine with a good deal less than the average faith in the utility of dosage, and it was not enlarged by my professor of materia medica.

I entered upon my serious duties as did good, rare, old Bunyan into his pulpit, with a feeling fairly oppressive that I was "the least of all the saints." My materia medica was in my vest pocket; my small library in my head, with its contents in a very hazy condition. With a weak memory for details, and marked inability to possess truth except by the slow process of digestion and assimilation, my brain was more a machine-shop than a wareroom; hence capacity of retail dealing was of the smallest. I was not in the least conscious at this time that a large wareroom amply stored by virtue of a retentive memory was not the most needed as an equipment for all the practical affairs of life. I have ever found it necessary to dodge some memories, when there was lack of time to endure a hailstorm of details.

That I did not become a danger to the hapless sick and wounded only less than their diseases and wounds, was wholly due to my small materia medica, to utter lack of pride in knowledge that had not become a power with me, and to that lofty ambition for professional success which moved me to seize aid from no matter where or whom, as the drowning man a straw.

It was my great professional fortune that the medical staff of this hospital of more than a thousand cots was of a very high order of ability and experience, and that I entered at the beginning of a campaign in which for more than three months there was a fitful roar of artillery and rattle of musketry every day; hence a continuous influx to cots vacated by deaths or recoveries.

In all respects it was the best equipped hospital for professional experience of any that I knew anything about. There was one rigid rule that I believe was not carried out in any other hospital: post-mortems in all cases, numbering from one to a dozen daily, and all made with a thoroughness I have never seen in private practice.

The features of my hospital service that impressed me most were the post-mortem revelations and the diverse treatments for the same disease. I soon found that, no matter what the disease, every surgeon was a law to himself as to the quality, quantity, and times of his doses, with the mortality in the wards apparently about the same.

Post-mortem examinations often revealed chronic diseases whose existence could not have been suspected during life, and yet had made death inevitable.

Another advantage in army hospital practice was the stability of the position and the absence of the harassing anxiety of friends, thus affording the highest possibilities of the judgment and reason. And still another advantage was the high social relations existing between the medical officers, due to the absence of all causes for jealousy, neither the position nor salary depending on superior endowments or professional success.

I was aware that, in spite of my lack of experience and the presence of a most painful sense of general insufficiency, my sick and wounded were about as safe in my hands from professional harm, even from the first, as the patients of the most experienced medical officer in the hospital.

With high professional ideals, with no ability to make use of hazy conceptions or ideas, having no pride in knowledge that had not become my own, I began at once to reinforce myself from the experience and wisdom of my brother officers, whose advisory services were always readily and kindly rendered.

From the first and all through my military service my severely sick had the advantage of all the borrowed skill and experience I could command. As for surgical operations, they were all performed in the presence of most of the medical staff, some of whom were of great experience.

The surgery of the army hospitals of 1864 was of the highest character in skill and in careful attention to all the details involved, and the fatalities were generally due to the gravity of the wounds requiring operations and lack of constitutional power for recovery, rather than to the absence of the



germ-killer. At that time the microbe was not a factor in the probabilities of life or death. In all else the care of the wounds could hardly be surpassed.

As for the medicinal treatment of my sick, it was unsatisfactory from first to last. After all the years since I cannot believe that, except for the relief of pain, any patient was made better by my dosage; and in all fatalities the post-mortem revealed the fact that the wisest dosage would have been without avail.

But in the study of the history of disease as revealed by symptoms my hospital experience was invaluable. I have since found that my greatest service at the beds of the sick is as an interpreter of symptoms rather than a vender of drugs. The friends of the sick read indications for good or bad with wonderful acuteness, as a rule; and I have rarely found myself mistaken in my ability to read the condition of patients in the faces of the friends, even before I enter the rooms of the sick.

As my experience enlarged so did my faith in Nature; and, since there was no similarity in the quality, sizes, and times of the doses for like diseases, my faith in mere remedies gradually declined.

After a year and a half of large opportunities to study the diseases of men in the early prime of life, in the care of the simple surgery of shot and shell, I left the army with such familiarity with grave diseases and death in various forms as to enable me ever after to retain complete self-possession in the presence of dying beds in private practice.

I began the general practice of medicine in Meadville in the autumn of 1866. Among the many physicians located in the city at that time were men of ability and large experience. There were those who administered with sublime faith doses too small for mathematical estimate; those who with equal faith administered boluses to the throat's capacity for deglutition; those who fully believed in whiskey as nourishment, that milk is liquid food, and who with tremendous faith and forceful hands administered both until human stomachs were reduced to barren wastes and death would result from starvation aggravated by disease.

Most of the cases of disease that fall to the care of the physician are trivial, self-limited, and rapidly recover under even the most crucifying dosages; Nature really winning the victories, the physician carrying off the honors.

This is so nearly true that it may be stated that, aside from the domain of surgery, professional success in the general sense depends upon the personal qualities and character of the physician rather than the achievements of the materia medica.

People have a confidence in the power of medicine to cure disease scarcely less than the dusky warrior has in the Indian medicine-lodge of the Western wilderness, and a confidence about as void of reason.

The physician goes into the rooms of the sick held to the severest accountability in the matter of dosage; and the larger his own faith in medicines the greater his task; and, if he is of my own, the so-called "old school," or Allopathic, the more dangerous he is to the curing efforts of Nature.

With the people the disease is simply an attack, and not the summing up of the results of violated laws going on perhaps from birth. With the people the symptoms are merely evidences of destruction, and not the visible efforts to restore the normal condition. Hence the failures to relieve always raise more or less questioning, among friends in painful concern, as to the ability of the physician to discharge his grave duties.

This unreasoning, unreasonable "blind faith" in remedial means is as strong in the most intelligent as in the most ignorant, and it has ever given me more trouble than the care of the sick. Another serious complication of the sick-room arises from near-by friends who are very certain that their own physicians are better fitted by far for the serious work of prescribing for the sick.

In addition to the serious work of attacking the symptoms of disease as so many foes to life, there is also a care as to what unbidden food shall go into unbidden stomachs, that the system shall be supported while life seems to be in the hands of its greatest enemy.

The universal conception of disease as a foe to life, and not as a rational process of cure; the boundless faith in remedies as means to resist the attack, revealed by symptoms, makes the professional care of the sick the gravest of all human occupations, and the most trying to both head and heart.

With all these taxing conditions confronting me, I opened an office in a field which seemed to be more than occupied by men of large experience.

With all my army experience I still had a hazy conception as to Nature in disease. That the vital forces needed the support of all the food the stomach of the sick could dispose of, was not a question of the remotest consideration. That medicine did in some way act to cure disease I could not fully question.

I was now to enter a service in which, from the care of infancy in its first breathings to old age in its last, every resource of the materia medica, of the reason, judgment, and of the soul itself, was to be called in in every grave case, and to be held to a responsibility measured by preposterous faith in medicines.

I entered upon my duties with a determination to win professional success by the most thorough attention to all the details of service upon the sick and their friends, and I confined my efforts almost wholly to acute cases. None of my professional colleagues were winning laurels by the treatment of chronic diseases, and not having faith in drugs for such I had my scruples about fees for failures that seemed inevitable.

And yet with the most painstaking service fortune would play with me at times in the most heartless manner. At one time four of my adult patients were awaiting burial within the radius of a half mile. As they were all physical wrecks, and died after short illnesses, there could be no question raised in any just sense as to the character of my services, but the fatalities were scored against me. Such fortune would be annihilating but for the fatalities inevitable with all practitioners.

For full ten years I visited the sick and dosed them according to the books, but with far less force of hands and faith than any of my brethren, and all were enjoined to take nourishment to keep up the strength for the combat with disease.

My doses were confined to only a few Sampsons of the materia medica, and these were administered with a watching for favorable results that could hardly be surpassed, and yet always with disappointment.

I was innocent enough to believe that a large practice could only be built up by the most painstaking and persistent effort; later on I found that a large practice was but little dependent upon the skill and learning displayed in the sick-room. One physician could immediately secure a large patronage because she was a woman; another, because he belonged to this or that nationality, or there was something in the personal outfit rather than in the professional that incited large hopes for the ailing.

In all my cases of acute sickness there was always a wasting of the body no matter how much they were fed; a like increase of general strength when a normal desire for food occurred no matter how little they were fed. I saw this with eyesight only; but I saw with insight that a large practice could be carried on by doctors too ignorant to know that there was an alphabet in medical science.

I was not then so fully aware of the depths of ignorance among the people as to what cures disease, did not know that faith in doses was so large, as child-like even with the most cultured as with the ignorant. I was not so well aware, as I became later, that the physician himself must have such energy of faith in the materia medica as to reveal it in every line of his countenance when in the rooms of the sick.

As the years went on, my faith in remedies did not increase; but I had to dose to meet the superstitious needs of the people. My practice, though far short of what it seemed to merit from the pains bestowed upon it, was large enough for all the needs of profitable study had I been in a condition for thought and reflection. It was not to my encouragement that there were those doing a

far larger business with doses simply crucifying, and because crucifying, a far larger attendance was the direct result.

I now see, as I did not then so clearly, that Nature's victories are often won against the desperate odds of treatments that are simply barbarous; and yet Nature is so powerful, so persistent in the attempts to right all her wrongs, that she wins the victory in the great majority of cases no matter how severely she may be taxed with means that hinder. The great majority of the severely sick of a hundred years ago recovered in spite of the bloody lancet and treatments that are the barbarism of to-day.

## II

I was called one day to one of the families of the poorest of the poor, where I found a sick case that for once in my life set me to thinking. The patient was a sallow, overgrown girl in early maturity, with a history of several months of digestive and other troubles. I found a very sick patient, so sick that for a period of three weeks not even one drink of water was retained, not one dose of medicine, and it was not until several more days that water could be borne. When finally water could be retained my patient seemed brighter in mind, the complexion was clearer, and she seemed actually stronger. As for the tongue, which at first was heavily coated, the improvement was striking; while the breath, utterly foul at first, was strikingly less offensive. In every way the patient was very much better.

I was so surprised at this that I determined at once to let the good work go on on Nature's own terms, and so it did until about the thirty-fifth day, when there was a call, not for the undertaker, but for food, a call that marked the close of the disease. The pulse and temperature had become normal, and there was a tongue as clean as the tongue of a nursing infant.

Up to this time this was the most severely sick case I ever had that recovered, and yet with not apparently more wasting of the body than with other cases of as protracted sickness in which more or less food was given and retained. And all this with only water for thirst until hunger came and a *complete cure*!

Such ignoring of medical faith and practice, of the accumulated wisdom and experience of all medical history, I had never seen before. Had the patient been able to take both food and medicine, and I had prohibited, and by chance death had occurred, I would have been held guilty of actually putting the patient to death – death from starvation. Feed, feed the sick whether or not, say all the doctors, say all the books, to support strength or to keep life in the body, and yet Nature was absurd enough to ignore all human practice evolved from experience, and in her own way to support vital power while curing the disease.

I could recall a great many cases in which because of intense aversion to food patients had been sick for many days, and even weeks, with not enough nourishment taken to account for the support of vital power; but the fact did not raise a question with me.

The effect of this case upon my mind was so profound that I began to apply the same methods in Nature to other patients, and with the same general results. The body, of course, would waste during the time of sickness; but so did the bodies of sick that were fed. As for medicines, they were utterly ignored except where pain was to be relieved, though unmedicated doses were alike a necessity with all. Not a single medicine was given except for pain, and occasionally in cases in which I had reason to think the entire digestive tract needed a general clearing of foul sewage. Thence on, that supreme work, the cure of disease, in my hands became the work of Nature only.

In a general practice I was able to carry out the non-feeding plan by permitting the various meat teas or the cereal broths, none of which can be taken by the severely sick in quantities to do harm. By withholding milk I was enabled to secure all the fasting Nature required, while satisfying the ever-anxious friends with tea and broth diversions.

This was a line of investigation that I felt ought to be of the deepest interest to every thinking, high-minded physician, to every intelligent layman; and very early the evidences of the utility of withholding food from the sick during the entire time of absence of desire for it, its absolute safety, were beyond any questioning.

I had no fatalities that were apparently in any way due to the enforced lack of food. In cases of chronic disease in which death was inevitable, such as cancer, consumption, etc., patients were permitted to take what they could with the least offence to the sense of relish. In every case of recovery there was a history of increasing general strength as the disease declined, of an actual increase of

vital power without the support of food that had no more relish than the dose that crucified the nerves of taste.

In all America milk is the chief reliance to support vital power when no other food can be taken. Milk in one stage of normal digestion gets into the form of tough curds ready for the press, and curds should always be thoroughly masticated before swallowing.

Sir William Roberts, of England, in his exhaustive work on *Digestion and Diet*, asserts that milk-curds are not digested in the stomach during sickness, but are forced into the duodenum, where, he asserts, they are digested, but he gives no reason for his faith that there is power to digest in the duodenum where there is none in the stomach.

It was not difficult to make the mothers in the homes understand that taking milk by the drink was equivalent to swallowing green cheese-curds without due mastication.

With these hygienic conceptions and methods I continued to visit the sick as a mere witness of Nature's power in disease rather than as an investigator, yet without being able to understand the secret of the support of vital power without food. But whatever risk there might be, or how strong my faith when my patrons were the subjects of what might be called foolhardy experiments, there came a time when this faith was to have the severest of all tests.

An epidemic of diphtheria broke out among my nearest neighbors, and after four deaths in as many families within a stone's throw of my residence a son of mine aged three years was taken. I had never given him in all his life even a cross look, and whatever sin there was in making idols of children in this I was the worst of all sinners, and I did not quite believe, as some Christian folks would have me, that my happiness through him was not the very incense of gratitude to the great Author for the gift of such a treasure of the heart.

In my hour of trial two of my ablest and most experienced medical friends came to me. Quinine and iron in solution were their verdict – and the little throat was not copper-lined; and, in addition, all the strong whiskey possible to force into the stomach: all this would have required manacled wrists and the prying apart of set jaws. He had never received anything from me more violent than caresses, and this abomination of dosage was to be sent down a bleeding, ulcerated way, over raw surfaces that would writhe and quiver under the added torture. This would not be rational treatment for ulcerations on the body, and the loss of strength through resistance and structural injury to the throat had no promise of redemption except in the minds of my medical friends.

It happened that I left home without getting the prescription filled, and, not getting back as soon as expected, the anxious wife procured the medicines and succeeded in getting one dose into the stomach, and also in raising a nervous hurricane that took an hour to allay. She was then informed that such a dose would be cruel even to a horse. Thence on he took nothing into his stomach but the water that thirst compelled, and a little dosage with it to meet the mother's need; and so I stood beside the suffering idol of my heart, with the entire medical world against me – strong enough, only rejoicing in my strength to defend him against the barbarism of authorized treatment. My only comfort was that in his time of supreme need I could give him supreme kindness, and if death must come there would not be the additional laceration of avoidable cruelty inflicted; and Nature, with every possible aid that could add comfort to the suffering body, won the victory.

Since then the medical world has advanced to antitoxin as a specific, leaving me nearly alone to plodding ways that are by sight and not by faith. That the treatment of my sick son in the absence of the only supposed specific was in advance of my time, the medical world cannot now question.

As the months and years went on, it so happened that all my fatalities were of a character as not to involve in the least suggestions of starvation, while the recoveries were a series of demonstrations as clear as anything in mathematics, of evolving strength of all the muscles, of all the senses and faculties, as the disease declined. No physician whose practice has been extensive has failed to have had cases in which the same changes occurred, and in which the amount of food taken did not explain this general increase of strength.

Believing I had made a most important discovery in physiology, one that would revolutionize the dietetic treatment of the sick, if not ultimately abolish it, my visits to the sick became of unsurpassed interest, I watched every possible change as an unfolding of new life, seeing the physical changes only as I would see the swelling buds evolve into the leaves or flowers, reading the soul- and mind-changes in the more radiant lines of expression.

I saw all these things with the naked eye, and more and more marvelled at the bulk of our materia medicas, the size of our drug-stores, and the space given to healing powers in all public and medical prints.

For years I saw my patients grow into the strength of health without the slightest clue to the mystery, until I chanced to open a new edition of Yeo's *Physiology* at the page where I found this table of the estimated losses that occur in death after starvation:

Fat	97 per cent.
Muscle	30 "
Liver	56 "
Spleen	63 "
Blood	17 "
Nerve-centres	0

And light came as if the sun had suddenly appeared in the zenith at midnight. Instantly I saw in human bodies a vast reserve of predigested food, with the brain in possession of power so to absorb as to maintain structural integrity in the absence of food or power to digest it. This eliminated the brain entirely as an organ that needs to be fed or that can be fed from light-diet kitchens in times of acute sickness. Only in this self-feeding power of the brain is found the explanation of its functional clearness where bodies have become skeletons.

I could now go into the rooms of the sick with a formula that explained all the mysteries of the maintenance and support of vital power and cure of disease, and that was of practical avail. I now knew that there could be no death from starvation until the body was reduced to the skeleton condition; that therefore for structural integrity, for functional clearness, the brain has no need of food when disease has abolished the desire for it. Is there any other way to explain the power to make wills with whispering lips in the very hour of death, even in the last moments of life, that the law recognizes as valid?

I could now know that to die of starvation is a matter not of days, but of weeks and months; certainly a period far beyond the average time of recovery from acute disease.

### III

There fell to my care a very much worn-out mother, who took to her bed with an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, with the joints so involved as to require the handling of a trained nurse. The agony was such that the hypodermic needle was required to make existence endurable, and it was used with the idea that the brain would be less injured by the remedy than by the agony with its inevitable loss of sleep.

I know of no disease in which treatment has been more savage than in this. The remedies in common use at that time were mainly new and of supposed specific powers; but they were so violent, and proved to be so futile, that they have all been given up since by the majority of the profession.

As the days went on the disease declined in spite of the enforced comfort through the needle; there were easier movements, a clearing of the skin from sallow to a tint of redness, and finally, after a month, the armchair could be used for a change.

On the morning of the forty-sixth day there was revealed in the face the perfect color of health, and happiness marked every line of the expression. There was ability to walk through several rooms of her home. But it was not until the afternoon that the first food was desired and taken, and never before was plain bread and butter, the supreme objects of desire, so relished. In the following few months there was an actual gain of forty pounds.

My next marked case is a wonderful illustration of the self-feeding power of the brain to meet an emergency, and a revelation, also, of the possible limitations of the starvation period. This was the case of a frail, spare boy of four years, whose stomach was so disorganized by a drink of solution of caustic potash that not even a swallow of water could be retained. He died on the seventy-fifth day of his fast, with the mind clear to the last hour, and with apparently nothing of the body left but bones, ligaments, and a thin skin; and yet the brain had lost neither weight nor functional clearness.

In another city a similar accident happened to a child of about the same age, in whom it took three months for the brain to exhaust entirely the available body-food.

I will now enter upon a study of the brain and its powers along these lines, to be enlivened by illustrative evidence. What reason and physiology had I with me that I should use methods in the sick-room wherein the entire medical world was against me, and with severest condemnation?

The head is the power-house of the human plant, with the brain the dynamo as the source of every possible human energy. We think, love, hate, admire, labor with our hands, taste, hear, smell, see, and feel through the brain. Broken bones and wounds heal, diseases are cured through energy evolved in the brain or the brain system as a whole. The other so-called vital organs and the muscles are only as so many machines that are run by the brain power, with the stomach an exceedingly important machine. That powers so rare do not originate in the bones, ligaments, muscles, or fats, does not need argument; that when the nerve-trunks that supply the arm or leg are severed power of movement and feeling is lost, is known to all; and equally would the power of the stomach be abolished were the nerve-trunks cut off. In a general way, then, it may be stated that the strength of the body is directly as the strength of the brain.

With this physiology, who in or out of the medical profession can fail to see clearly that the digestion of even an atom of food is a tax upon the strength of the brain for whatever of power needed by the stomach, the machine, for this purpose? Unless it can be proved that the stomach has powers not derived from the brain system, this will have to be admitted.

How is the strength kept up in the light of this physiology? The universal belief is that it is kept up by the daily food. In proportion to the prostration of sickness, so are physicians anxious to conserve the energies by working the stomach to the limit of its powers.

The impression that there must be something digested to support the vitality of the system is a belief, a conviction that has always been too self-evident to suggest a doubt.

If the well need food to keep up the strength, the sick need it all the more; this is the logic that has been displayed upon this question. Let us keep it clear in mind that, if the nerves going to the stomach are severed, paralysis will result as in the case of the arm, in order more definitely to conceive the stomach as a *machine* that requires power to run it even to a tiringout degree. This is strikingly illustrated by the exhausted feeling that invites the after-dinner nap for rest, which, however, does not rest overfilled stomachs, overfilled brains. The brain gets no rest while getting rid of food-masses with more of decomposition than of digestion.

If food really has power to keep up the strength, there should not be so much strength lost by the general activities – indeed, it would seem that fatigue should be impossible. But the fact remains that from the first wink in the morning to the last at night there is a gradual decline of strength no matter how much food is taken, nor how ample the powers of digestion; and that there comes a time with all when they must go to bed, and not to the dining-room, to recover lost strength. The loss of a night of sleep is never made up by any kind of care in eating on the following day, and none are so stupid as not to know that rest is the only means to recover from the exhaustion of excessive physical activity.

The brain is not only a self-feeding organ when necessary, but it is also a self-charging dynamo, regaining its exhausted energies entirely through rest and sleep. There is no movement so light, no thought or motion so trivial, that it does not cost brain power in its action – and this is true of even the slightest exercise of energy evolved in digestion.

Why, then, do we eat?

For two reasons, or perhaps three: we eat because we are hungry. We rarely fail to eat excessively to satisfy the sense of relish after the normal hunger sense has been dissipated; we may eat to satisfy relish as we eat ice cream, fruits, and the enticing extras that beguile us to put more food into the stomach after it is already overfilled for its working capacity. But our actual need of food, the best reason for taking it, is to make up for the wastes from the general activities; and this is a process in the order of Nature that actually tires the entire brain system, or, in the common phrase, the whole body, unless the stomach has powers not derived from the brain system.

Now as we need not, cannot feed the brain in time of sickness, what can we feed? In all diseases in which there are a high pulse and temperature, pain or discomfort, aversion to food, a foul, dry mouth and tongue, thirst, etc., wasting of the body goes on, no matter what the feeding, until a clean, moist tongue and mouth and hunger mark the close of the disease, when food can be taken with relish and digested. This makes it clearly evident that we cannot save the muscles and fat by feeding under these adverse conditions.

Another very important, unquestioned fact is that disease in proportion to its severity means a loss of digestive conditions and of digestive power.

Cheer is to digestion what the breeze is to the fire. It may well be conceived that there are electric nerve wires extending from the depths of the soul itself to each individual gland of the stomach, with the highest cheer or ecstasy to stimulate the highest functional activity, or the shock of bad news to paralyze. From cheer to despair, from the slightest sense of discomfort to the agony of lacerated nerves, digestive power goes down. Affected thus, digestive power wanes or increases, goes down or up, as mercury in a barometer from weather conditions.

Digestive conditions in their maximum are revealed in the school-yard during recess, when Nature seems busy recovering lost time.

How compares the ramble of a June morning, with the blue and sunshine all above, the matchless green of the trees, and all the air fragrant with the perfume of flowers and alive with music from the winged singer, in digestive conditions, with those in the rooms of the sick, where there is only distress felt in the body and seen in the faces of the friends?

In time of health, if we eat when we are not hungry, or when very tired, or in any mental worriment, we find that we suffer a loss of vital power, of both physical and mental energy. How, then, can food be a support to vital power when the brain is more gravely depressed by disease? Yet



from the morning of medical history the question of how vital power is supported in time of sickness has never been considered, because there has never been any doubt as to the support coming from food. I assume this to be a fact, since all works on the practice of medicine of to-day enjoin the need to feed the sick to sustain their depressed energies – all this without a question as to whether there is not a possibility of adding indigestion to disease when food is enforced against Nature's fiat.

Since vital power is centred in the brain, do we need to feed, can we feed, for other than brain reasons? This physiology admitted, there is no other conclusion possible than that feeding the sick is a tax on vital power when we need all that power to cure disease.

With all this physiology behind me, for more than a score of years I have been going into the rooms of the sick to see the evolutions of health from disease, as I see the evolutions from the dead wastes of March to the affluence of June, and from the first I had the exceeding advantage of being able to study the natural history of disease, a history in which none of the symptoms were aggravated by digestive disturbances.

As there was no wasting of vital power in the hopeless effort to save the body from wasting, I had a clear right to presume that my patients recovered more rapidly and with less suffering. With no perplexing study over what foods and what medicines to give, I could devote my entire attention to the study of symptoms as evidences of progress toward recovery or death; and in addition to all this there was the great satisfaction of being strictly in line with Nature as to when and what to eat.

As to the danger of death from mere starvation, the following remarkable case reveals how remote it is in the ordinary history of acute diseases. The late Rev. Dr. Merchant, of Meadville, Pa., a short time before his death, which occurred some months ago, informed me that a brother entered the army during the War of the Rebellion with a weight of one hundred and fifty-nine pounds. He was sent home so wasted from ulceration of stomach and bowels that he actually spanned his thigh with thumb and finger. He lived ten days only, to astonish all by the clearness of his mind even on the last day of his life, when he could think on abstruse questions as he had never been known to do in health. At death his body weighed only sixty pounds.

It was Dr. Merchant's opinion, from a history of the case, that no food was digested during the last four months of his life; but it is my opinion that it took a much longer time than this for the brain to absorb more than ninety pounds of the body. That life was shortened by the more rapid loss of the tissues from the disease is to be taken into account in estimating time in starvation.

## IV

Feeding the sick! Who that rule in kitchens and feed the well do not realize with weariness of brain the demands of the stomach that at each meal there shall be some change in the bill of fare?

The chief reliance of physicians for the maintenance of strength while sick bodies are being cured is milk. As a food, milk was mainly destined for the calf, and not for man – certainly not after the coming of the molars. It is not a food that will start the saliva in case of hunger, as the odors from the frying-pan or from roasting fowl, yet because it plays such an important part as a complete food for some months in the life of the calf, and because it can be taken without especial aversion when the odors of the cooking-stove are an offence to the nostrils; it is given by the hour, day after day, and in some cases week after week; and there are physicians by the thousands who reinforce this inflexible bill of fare by the strongest alcoholics, whiskey being generally selected.

In this connection I shall say of alcoholics that they contain not an atom that can be converted into living atoms; they congest and irritate the stomach, and hence lessen digestive power; and benumb all the brain powers and faculties.

As a daily ration without change, this combination, strictly adhered to, would prostrate the energies of a giant, and he would find himself mustered out of all active service in less time than the hapless sick are often compelled to endure such feeding. Does Nature so conveniently reverse herself to meet an emergency that the sick can be built up and sustained by such feeding as would debilitate the well?

In the city where I live the physicians average well in learning, ability, character, and experience. Among them are the extremists in dosage: those with a hundred remedies for a hundred symptoms; others with such boluses as would writhen the face of an ox. There are some with extraordinary force of command in the rooms of the sick, who believe that whiskey is nourishing and that milk is liquid food; that doses go into human stomachs to travel the rounds of the circulation, and finally drop off at the right place for either patchwork or original work.

Whatever there is in drugs to cure disease, whatever in milk and the strongest alcoholics to sustain the strength, every protracted case has been made to reveal in their forceful hands. I have no reason to believe they exceeded authorized treatments. I have no reason to doubt that in all countries, in all lands, where there are educated physicians, the same appliances are in common use, appliances that will make the next short step from the lancet and bolus of a darker age the estimate of the time to come.

The treatments of the sick are always changing, while the process of cure remains the same. Only in the case of broken bones are we compelled to let Nature do all the curing, while we may take pride in some progress in the mechanical appliances.

As milk and stimulants are a common, authorized means to sustain the sick, and as they are poured into human stomachs with all the faith with which lancets were once forced into congested veins, their efficiency for good or evil must be studied by comparison.

Treatments must lessen both the severity and the duration of disease to be of permanent benefit. For a study by comparison, this opportunity came to me. There was a call to attend a case of typhoid fever in a young girl. In the same vicinity there had been under the care of one of my forceful brethren a woman in middle life, whose stomach was habitually rejecting all the milk and alcoholics poured into it, the doctor having a theory that good would result no matter how brief the time they were retained.

For a month my patient swallowed only the desired water and doses which did not corrode, a desire for food coming at the end of the month. The only day and night nurse was an overwrought mother, who got into bed with the same disease as soon as the daughter got out of it. There was another month of severer sickness, when without food and without the horror of dosage, as before, the

call for food marked the close of the disease. My services ended here some days before the undertaker took charge of the doctor's case.

A girl in her later teens, with a mild, so-called malarial fever, fell into the same forceful care. There was a true history in this case of nearly two gallons of whiskey, and daily milk from the quart at first down to inability to take the least nourishment at last. Then there were more than a month of days when vital power sustained itself without the ways of violence, death occurring during the *nineteenth week*.

The ravenous brain had absorbed the lips to such thinness that the depressions between the teeth were clearly revealed. From the first dose to the last breath this was a case of dying, and the most persistent fight for life against immense odds I have ever become aware of in an acute case. In this case the stomach had become so seared by the alcoholic that digestion was impossible, as would have been the case in a body that was not sick.

Near this home there was a more delicate girl of about the same age taken with the same fever; but with mild dosage and no food – in Nature's care – hunger came at the close of the fourth week.

Later on in the same family there was a case of la grippe, in which for several years there had been chronic, ulcerative bronchitis that bid defiance to blisters and inhalations, the various specifics of another forceful predecessor, who also was a believer in large doses and full rations of alcoholized milk.

The coughing was so persistent, so continuous, that only the hypodermic needle met the need. To prevent the tearing of a raw surface in the bronchial tubes by the cough was as necessary as to apply splints to a broken bone. There was no food for six weeks, and Nature made most of her opportunity, not only to cure the acute disease, but also the chronic disease, which for nearly ten years since has remained cured.

I was summoned to Asheville, N. C., to see a young man in the last stage of consumption. I found him nearly a skeleton, though he had been eating six times daily for several months by the decree of a really learned physician. The belchings from gas were loud and frequent; the sputa by actual measure was about six ounces during every twenty-four hours.

A fast was ordered, and on the third day a mass of undigested food was thrown up. As soon as the stomach and bowels became empty there was comfort all along the line, and the cough was so diminished, that less than an ounce of sputa was raised in twenty-four hours.

After a week of fasting there came a natural desire for food, and thence on he enjoyed without distress of stomach all he wished to take. Thence on he lived with only the least discomfort, and with whispering lips he dictated to me his will, conveying large property. He could look with meaning when the power to whisper was gone, and life ended as the going out of a candle.

For months his sufferings had nearly all been due to food masses in a state of decomposition. He saw clearly and mentioned often that his had been a case of starvation from overfeeding. Nature finally had to succumb because she was not also able to deal with a clearly avoidable disease, indigestion; but she kept up a brave fight until the body was nearly absorbed.

As soon as the stomach and bowels became empty the friends noticed that nervousness largely disappeared. His sleeps were much longer, because not broken by coughing as before; and as the brain was not taxed with food masses there was an accumulation of power that was clearly revealed in the cheer of expression and a calmness as if heavenly rest had come at last.

A few years ago an attorney in this city had to endure a course of fever to which was added all the known barbarism of the times. Under enforced food and stimulants his mind at last became so weak that the dosings were forced down his throat. There were many weeks of life at lowest ebb before the man of torture (the doctor) was compelled to discontinue his evil work, and there were then months, extending to years, during which there appeared a colorless ghost of his former self on the streets – and this in spite of a wood-chopper's daily eatings, which were far in excess of power to digest.

At last he was brought to his couch with a mild fever complicated with a variety of other ailments. Not one of his friends who knew him intimately expected his recovery, as it was believed by them that there were chronic conditions that were beyond cure, and this because there had been death in manner, movements, and looks for months. And yet he had been able to take a stomach to his office every morning for many weeks filled with pancakes, sausage, fried potatoes, etc., only to shiver before the stove between his stomach-fillings.

To this possibly hopeless case I was called, and from that time he was to suffer only from the disease. For nearly three weeks no food was called for; and yet power so increased that he became able to dress himself; and on the morning before hunger finally called for food he came down from his bedroom with a son on his back who weighed not less than seventy-five pounds. Thence on, life, color, mind, muscle, rapidly came until there was such regeneration as to reveal a new body and a new soul.

Some years before this event an only son was taken sick with a mild fever. A young physician and friend of the patient was called whose faith in drugs, milk, and whiskey was boundless. He was fresh from his university, and therefore Nature had no part, through experience at the sick-bed, in the cure of disease. For many weeks these remedies of torture were vigorously and persistently enforced. But the time came when Nature would bear no longer. The father, a personal friend, came to see me simply to unburden himself, and as he was not able to give me the case I was unprofessional enough to advise that the attendance should go on, but that there should be a complete rest the physician should not know of. This was done, and in a few days there was a call for food, the first call in more than two months. Of course, there was a recovery, which was an exceeding victory for Nature against extraordinarily adverse conditions, but it required many months to restore the wrecked balance.

As I write this experience the following comes to me as a still stronger indictment against authorized medical method. A. B., when in the early maturity of his physical manhood, was stricken with a partial paralysis that sent him to his bed. It was simply the case of a wound of the brain requiring rest as the chief condition for cure. But milk, whiskey, and drugs were used with the greatest persistence, and after three months he became able to be about, no less feeble in mind than in body, and with teeth utterly ruined by the dosage. For fully five years he went about his home and along the streets as one in a dream. For ten years there was inability to attend to his ordinary business. Life came at last through the no-breakfast plan.

The most remarkable fight for life on the part of Nature against the adverse conditions of drugs, alcoholics, and milk I have ever known was in the following case: A spare woman, of perhaps forty years, came to her bed the victim of habitual bromidia and chloral, invited by severe headaches. The treatment of this case was as follows: whiskey every hour, milk every other hour; corrosive medication and powerful brain sedative every night, which would have paralyzed digestive energy for many days. There was not an hour during the twenty-four in which there was not dosing either to cure the disease or to sustain the system. The average quantity of whiskey was six ounces daily, and of milk nearly a quart. This treatment was borne for weeks, merging into months. There was no disease not caused by the treatments, and the battle went on until there was only the shadow of a woman left when Nature rebelled against further violence. A few days of peace were granted because hope had departed; but it took Nature more than a year to recover from the damage.

A man of iron and steel, in the early prime of life, was the victim of a severe injury. With the agony of lacerated nerves and the hypodermic needle to make the digestion of food impossible, milk and whiskey were poured into an unwilling stomach from the first, and both were used until neither could be retained; and then the lower bowel was extemporized into a stomach. For one hundred and forty-six days, from three to seven doses of morphine were put into the arm daily; and morphine dries both mouth and stomach and lessens all energies of the brain. The body itself was not sick; there was no hint of disease in it; yet there were drugs prescribed that cost dollars by the score, and there were alcoholics by the gallon. For months the pain, alcoholics, and morphine kept the mind in such a daze that there were only the imbecilic mutterings of a dreamer in trouble.

The only treatment indicated in this case was the best of surgery for the injury, and some easing doses for a short while at first, to relieve pain. No food would be desired or digested; so the fast would go on until there would be a natural hunger, which would only manifest itself when there would be marked relief from pain. The meals, thence on, would be so far apart that all would be keenly relished; and there could be no loss of weight when meals would be so taken.

It is not surprising when I say that a seared stomach and a brain converted into a whiskey pickle had no part in the digestion of milk: else why did the weight of one hundred and sixty pounds at the time of the accident fall to eighty-five at the time of hunger? And all this drugging and alcoholics for a man who was not really sick! and the bill of fare that was not changed during one hundred and sixty days! and the time lost, and the expense entailed, and the anxious, aching hearts that were nearest the bed of horrors – of horrors, torments clearly invited.

By way of contrast the following case is given. During vacation a lad of twelve years of one of my families took to his bed with appendicitis in severe form. A learned physician was called, and there were many days of morphine, with other medication and all the food that could be coaxed into an unwilling stomach. Enough morphine was given daily to paralyze digestive energy for at least two or three days in one in ordinary health. There was a month of this war against Nature, when the violence of the acute attack subsided and a partial victory was gained against great odds.

On my return I found him under heavy dosage for the recovery of strength and lost appetite. Colorless, anæmic, languid – he was barely able to walk. He was immediately put under my care, and therefore under a fast that ended in a few days in such hunger as had not been felt in several months; and color, cheer, energy, weight evolved in a month. But there was also a developing abscess deep in the groin, and the time came when a grave operation was necessary to save life. He was made ready for the surgeon's knife that cut its way down, down many inches to relieve walls ready to burst from the tension. The wound remained in the care of the surgeon, but the life in my care. Who deny that the anæsthetic, the shock of the operation, and the subsequent pain will not abolish all power to digest as well as all the desire for food? Here was a patient waiting for Nature to rally, which she did on the third day in a call for food; and thence on one daily meal was keenly relished, and the wound was healed – a wound that was three inches long on the surface and six inches deep. On the fifteenth day the lad was able to be dressed and able to walk about his room, and with a freshness of color that was never observed in him before. What law of body was violated in the preliminary treatment intended to prepare Nature for the ordeal and to enable her to rally from it?

This fresh tragedy in one human life has become known to me while I write. A man, a giant, in his eighty-eighth year, lost his appetite, and was put to death by the following means: A pint of whiskey and from one to two quarts of milk daily to keep him nourished. Five months passed without any change in the bill of fare – five months of delirium, of imbecilic muttering before the last breath was drawn. These tragedies are common the world over. Do I cry against them with too loud a voice? Would that I had a voice of thunder!

I have given a few examples of the crucifixions of the sick and the afflicted, whereof I have many, and they are the real history of cases known, and are constantly occurring in every community.

The cure of disease and injury by fasting – the mode of Nature – made the greatest impression in families in which there was intelligence enough to comprehend it; but the victories of Nature were complicated by cases in which death was inevitable. With a feeling that I must give the new hygiene to the world in printed form, I did not enlarge in public over a method that would be certain to be suggestive of starvation, where food was supposed to be of the greatest importance.

My sick-room success failed to enable me to draw larger checks; but the satisfaction of going into the rooms of the sick and not having to rack my mind over what medicine to give, what food to be taken, was a great compensation for the absence of a large bank account. Professional attainments and abilities play only a small part in the mere business side of the medical profession. An innocent public believes with intense convictions in the efficacy of dosage; and with distorted vision, as the

famous knight of La Mancha, sees giants in professional healers who are really only windmills, with whom personal contact in the sick-room is only too often a danger measured by its closeness.

Think of the wasting of the body during sickness; of the brain system, which is life itself, that does not waste: think of the cases of recovery in which for weeks no food is possible for stomach reasons; of the more frequent cases in which recoveries take place after weeks of such scant food as not to be taken into account as a support to vital power by minds governed by reason. Think how disease, in proportion to its severity, is a loss of digestive power, and with cure energy entirely of the brain, how serious a matter it is to lessen it by waste of energy in forcing decomposing food masses through a digestive channel nearly two rods long, food masses that the brain will have none of, and that do not save the fat and muscles; think of all this physiology, and raise this question: "Is this man alone in his faith and practice, or is Nature so in line with him that the entire medical profession is wrong in their dosings and feedings?"

I conclude these cases with an illustration. Think of all this enforced feeding, of the doses to relieve, of the wasting of brain power, and compare with the following illustration, in which case no food was taken for thirty-six days, and yet it was possible for the patient to be about during the greater part of the time.

Note. – In this case severe indigestion and nervous troubles and almost daily headaches had been a torture for years. On the morning of the thirty-sixth day, on which the photograph was taken, a visit to the dentist for the extraction of a tooth revealed no fear, as had formerly been the case. Eating was resumed on the thirty-eighth day with no inconvenience. Since then (over six months ago) no trace of the former troubles has reappeared. Loss of weight about twenty pounds.

## V

"Physician, heal thyself!" There is a world of sarcasm in these three words; for about the only advantage the physician has over the laity is that he can do his own dosing. As a general fact, he does no more to prevent bodily ailings than other people, and is just as liable to become the victim of bad habits.

It is my impression that, in proportion, as many physicians become the slaves of tobacco, opium in some form, and alcoholics as are to be found in any other class of people; they are quite as likely to be the victims of various chronic ailings as other people, and with equal impotency to relieve. Every day I see physicians going to the homes of the sick with cigars on fire, signals of the brain system in distress undergoing the lullaby of nicotine; going into rooms where the purest air of heaven ought to prevail, as animated tobacco-signs.

Where is there virtue in this world that is of any practical good whose vital force is not to be found in example rather than in precept? Who has more need to go into the room of the sick with the purest breath, the cleanest tongue, the brightest eyes, the purest complexion, the most radiant countenance, and with a soul free from the bonds of ailings or habits that offend and disable, than the physician? Where is the logic of employing the sick to feed the sick? Is not that a sick doctor whose nerves are so full of complaints as to need the frequent soothing only found in a cigar, that also sears the nerves of taste? Is he not very sick when those nerves require the stronger alcoholic?

There is contagion in good health and sound morals, when daily illustrated, no less than in courage and fear. No physician can be at his best in the rooms of the sick if he be under any bondage from disease or habit.

"Physician, heal thyself!" Physician, how does it happen that you have need to be healed, and of what worth are you if you can neither prevent disease nor cure yourself with your dosings? What availeth it to a man to talk righteously when virtue is not in him?

Ailings, habits blunt all the special senses and the finer instincts and tastes, and impair the power to reason clearly, to infer correctly, to conclude wisely. Only the well have that hopefulness that comes from power in reserve, power that is not wasted through acquired disease and acquired habits. The contagion of health is a power no less than courage or fear.

That man, self-poised, void of fear, General Grant, crushed the Rebellion with a single sentence, "I will fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." That sentence made every man in his army a Grant in courage and confidence. Grant in his prime could puff his cigar while commanding all the armies of his country; but the cigar ultimately destroyed his life, and there was no physician to interpose to prevent one of the most torturing of deaths.

Where is the logic of the sick trying to heal the sick? This question will be more frequently asked in that time to come when the drug-store annex to the sick-room will be much smaller than is now thought necessary.

Human expression is studied in the rooms of the sick as nowhere else; and if the lines are not obscured by the fogs and clouds of disease the signs can be much more clearly distinguished.

A man is now under my care whose soul is of the largest mould, and who is so supremely endowed by reason of intellect, varied tastes and acquirements, as to make life on earth well worth living. His long chronic local ailment has not impaired his power to read me for signs of hope as it seems to me I have never been read before; and never before have I so felt the need to enter a room of the sick with a larger stock of general health. For the time I seem to him to be holding before his eyes the keys of life or death.

The physician should be able to go into the room of the sick to see with clearest vision whatever is revealed to the natural eye; and no less to see with eyes of understanding that he may be an interpreter of conditions that indicate recovery or death. He is the historian of disease, and therefore

before he can write he must see clearly all that can be known about the process of cure as revealed by symptoms.

The eye is at its best only in perfect health no less than the reason, the judgment, and the spirits. A few years ago a drouth of many weeks occurred; in some meadows and pastures the grass seemed dead, beyond the possibility of growth. Every shade of the green had departed; but warm rains came, and in a few days there was a green carpet plush-like in its softness and delicacy.

So the progress of cure may be read on the tongue, on the skin, in the eyes, where there are both eyesight and insight to see and to study.



## VI

For many years I entered the rooms of the sick a sick man myself; I was the victim of that monster of hydraheads, dyspepsia, or, to call it by a more modern title, indigestion.

In my later teens my stomach began seriously to complain over its tasks, and a pint of the essence of bitterness was procured to restore it to power. My mouth was filled with teeth of the sweet kind; hence my horror for the doses far exceeded the milder protests of the stomach. Not the slightest benefit came from my medicinal sufferings, and this ended all routine treatment of my stomach. My intense aversion to the flavor of strong medicines caused me to inflict them as rarely as possible upon other mouths during the drug period of my practice.

Mine seemed to be a weary stomach, in which the tired sense was a close approach to acute pain for hours after each meal. When a medical student I found nothing in the books, in the advice of my preceptor, nor in the lectures at the university, but what proposed to cure me through drugs that were abhorrent. As I never encountered any cures nor received the slightest benefit from my experiments, I was deterred from injuring myself through persistent dosage.

In the early part of my student career I was behind a drug-counter, where I had ample experience in putting up prescriptions, and had an excellent opportunity to measure medical men as revealed in their formulas and the results in many cases in which failure was the rule in chronic ailings; and I was not encouraged to abuse myself through the results as revealed by any form of medication.

For the benefit of those who suffer from complainings of the stomach I give a condensed summing-up of myself. I was born with a wiry constitution, but of the lean kind, and a weak stomach, the chiefest ancestral legacy. With ability to see with intense sense very much to enjoy in this world, my resources in this way were boundless, hence I was always full of hope and cheer.

All the senses of my palate were of the acute kind, and so were a continual source of the penalties of gluttony. Whatever else there might be alack with me, there was never a lack of appetite. I was able to eat at each meal food enough which, if fully digested, would have redeemed the wastes of any day of labor; and not only this, but also enough of sugar-enticing foods to anticipate the wastes of the following day.

Growing up in the country and with an intense fondness for the tart sweetness of apples, pears, and peaches, and the harmlessness of eating them no matter how full the stomach with hearty food, without question my stomach was never void of pomace during the entire fruit season.

Whenever I sat down to eat there was an onrush of all the senses of the palate as the outrush of imprisoned children to the ecstatic activities of the school-yard; hence over-eating always, with never a sense of satiety. The penalties were realized in painful digestion, with the duodenum the chiefest of protesting voices.

A time came when gas would so accumulate as to make the heart labor from mere pressure, the inevitable insufficiency of breath causing a lack of aëration of the blood. With a constant waste of power in the stomach there was always a sense of weariness; hence I was never able to know the luxury of power in reserve. All through life my best efforts were the result of intellectual inebriation, with always corresponding exhaustion as the direct result. This weakness compelled me to waste the least time on people who could not interest me, and to spend much time alone to recharge my exhausted batteries.

For such a case as mine there is not to-day to be found an intelligent hint in any medical text-book as to the physiological way to recovery.

The breakfasts in my house were of a character that, without ham, sausage, eggs, steaks, or chops, they would not have been considered worth spending time over. I had reached a time when a general collapse seemed to be impending; but it was stayed for a few years by the new life that came to me through the evolutions of health in the rooms of the sick that seemed to portend possible

professional glories: but as the years went on I suffered more and more from nervous prostration through waste of power in the stomach.

My friends began to enlarge upon my wretched looks, and with no little concern; but none were wise enough to realize that my need was for words that reminded of life and not of death.

By chance I met an old friend on the street when he happened to be thinking about ways in daily food in Europe, from which he had just returned, and at once he began to talk, not about my wretched looks, but about the exceedingly light breakfasts customary in all the great centres where he had been. They consisted only of a roll and a cup of coffee. I was impressed just enough not to forget the fact, but without there being a hint in it to set me to thinking.

But the time came, "the fulness of time." There came a morning when for the first time I remembered that when in ordinary health I had no desire to breakfast; but there was a sense of such general exhaustion from power wasted over an unusual food mass not needed at the previous evening meal that my morning coffee was craved as the morning dram by the chronic toper. Only this, and a forenoon resulted of such comfort of body, such cheer, and such mental and physical energy as had never been realized since my young manhood was happy in the blessed unconsciousness of having a stomach that, no matter how large or how numerous the daily meals, never complained.

As for the dinner that followed, it was taken with an acuteness of relish and was handled with a power of digestion that were also a new, rich experience; but the afternoon fell far short of the forenoon. The experience was so remarkable that I at once gave up all eating in the morning, and with such reviving effects upon all my powers that the results began to be noticed by all friends.

So originated the no-breakfast plan. Up to this time I had never had a thought of advising anyone to do without food when desired; much less that any of the three daily meals should be given up. My war was against feeding when acute sickness had abolished all desire for food, and this I had been able to conduct many years without exciting suspicion of a general practice of homicide.

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