

How I Cured My Own Ill-Health

By Mrs. S. T. Rorer

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MY MOTHER was a very delicate woman. Consumption of the lungs had taken every member of her family out of the world with the exception of three, who died of cancer. With an outlook like this one has very little ambition to throw off even the every-day ills, and to make one's self absolutely well seems like a gigantic or impossible undertaking.

In those days heavily-carpeted rooms, draperies, leather beds and heavy blankets were used, perhaps for six months at a time, without a real good cleaning. "Dust, and its dangers," were in every part of the house. The windows were never opened at night for fear of the "night air"—an idea ingrained still in the minds of some unthinking people.

At this time I was not especially interested in either cooking or housekeeping. They never had been brought to me in an attractive or even in an interesting manner. I ate primarily to satisfy my hunger, of course choosing the things I liked. Pickles seemed to be the one thing I craved, so I ate them in large quantities; also an occasional lemon, until my stomach gave out, and then I had two diseases, instead of one, to contend with.

A long fast, voluntary, because I had no appetite, seemed to cure the stomach—that is, it gave it a start, and enabled it to digest the little food desired.

One day I happened into the Woman's Medical College, in Philadelphia, and listened to a lecture by Doctor Keller. The many truths that she put forth quite fixed themselves in my mind; in fact, they were so firmly rooted that I could not shake them off. I went immediately to the country and lived outdoors all the day, and slept at night in a room with all the windows raised as high as possible; but I went right on eating three meals a day of unsuitable food.

When I First Began to Study Cooking

THE kitchens at that time were not sufficiently attractive to entice a woman, not especially interested in household affairs, within their walls. But, right in the midst of all this thinking, Philadelphia opened a cooking school, and I was enrolled as a pupil in the very first class. Before I had taken the second lesson I saw the great possibilities of right living and a well-organized school of domestic science. In fact, I saw, a hundred years ahead, the influence that this knowledge would have over the health and homes of the people: how the study and application of domestic science would broaden the housewife; and how it would make cooking a profession, perhaps not second to medicine.

After I had finished the course I was so interested in all these thoughts and possibilities that I had forgotten myself—the very first essential to recovery from invalidism. I had corrected my diet, lived in the open air, and naturally I was stronger. All rational treatments came together.

The next year I continued the study. After having started my second course the teacher resigned, and there was no one who could be quickly placed except myself. Very reluctantly I took the position. I knew very little, I assure you, of so vast a subject. However, in those early days the schools of domestic science were practically cooking schools; the fancier the dishes, the better. In fact, as I now look back upon that old outline of study, I wonder any one lived after eating some of those pernicious dishes. Personally, I never ate nor recommended them.

On My Former Diet I Should Not Be Alive

ALMOST immediately the chemistry of foods came to the front; professors of physiology, chemists, physicians, all began to talk about diet and better methods of eating.

My eyes had been opened to the fact that, by right, I should not be alive; I had eaten every unsuitable thing; in fact, I had selected the very worst line of diet for my diseases. Pickles, fried foods, sweets, three meals a day, when I had so little strength to digest them.

I dropped pork, all fried foods, sweets, soups, cod-liver oil, red flannels and heavy underclothing. I took my fatty food in the form of cream, butter and olive oil. I was very glad to get rid of the cod-liver oil, which, by-the-way, I had taken by the gallons. The energy I had spent in carrying around pounds of underclothing I used to other more important ends. I conserved, rather than wasted, my energy.

I gradually cut down my breakfasts to a diet of toast and a little fruit, until, later, I dropped even this, and substituted a cup of hot water. I took my heaviest meal at noon—a real, good, substantial breakfast, after which I rested for half an hour or more. I could then enter the schoolroom and take up my work without the slightest inconvenience. The night meal was always light composed



DRAWN BY CLARA E. PECK

In less than eight years I was prostrated with an attack of typhoid fever, and while you are told that this disease builds you anew, do not believe it; it necessitates a long rest and the most careful feeding even to pull through, to say nothing of recovery. I was in bed ninety-one days and out of school an entire year.

Of course, after this I was a little lower down in the scale of health than I had been for six years. In this weak condition I found that a little food, frequently administered, was best adapted to my needs; so I took four meals rather than two, and began to take coffee in the morning without any other food, a habit I still follow. The remaining meals of the day were largely composed of milk, fruit and nuts, with whole wheat bread and butter.

I soon regained my health, and in two years had a little better health than I had ever before known. Year by year, on less food, more carefully selected, thoroughly masticated, I gained strength, until now I find no difficulty whatever in working from fourteen to sixteen hours a day, almost three hundred and sixty-five days in the year.

I Wish I Could Teach All Women to Cook

THE great possibilities of domestic science—from a practical standpoint, the uplifting of the homes—are always before me. I should like to teach every woman to cook, teach her how to live—in fact, I am quite certain that many times I become a little tiresome to others who are not interested in my "hobby"; but the question always reverts: How can they be so little interested in this vital matter? Now and then I find a person, perhaps an invalid, who grasps at every suggestion that tends to better health, like a drowning man at a straw; and I can see those persons now, healthy, strong, and ready and willing to scatter broadcast the better methods of living. The better methods are always the simpler ones.

In every community in which I have lectured one or two women would take hold of the work as energetically as I did, and give the glad tidings to others. It is, however, a most difficult subject on which to preach reform. It is a question of temperament; they will not have their idols destroyed; they are ingrained and must not be shaken. And women, most of them, especially mothers, are anxious to know what to feed their children and how to rear them well and healthy; but the men, and the grandmothers!!!

The average person does not investigate; he studies along narrow lines, and accepts statements of investigators rather than investigating for himself.

Observe, in a broad sense, the various classes of people and the food they eat, and it will take you but a short time to see that something is radically wrong.

Almost every family has a "family physician," not to look after the health of the family, but to cure them of ills.

Do Not Eat Unless You are Hungry

I DO NOT eat breakfast. I do not need it. Few people do. The muscles, under the rest of sleep, do not need food repair. The fuel foods have not been used up by activity, but have been stored in the body. Use them, or you will increase your weight without corresponding strength. The stomach is not active when one first awakens. It is not ready for food, and if we insist upon urging it indigestion is sure to follow. A sour orange, or a cup of water, or a stimulant, will irritate it to a sort of action which is both unnatural and unhealthy.

Food ingested into an unresponsive stomach at eight o'clock in the morning is its closest companion until noon. In other words, you have carried your luncheon in your stomach rather than in a lunch-basket. In this condition many persons, who feel it necessary to eat when the hour arrives, take a second luncheon, and the poor stomach, overburdened and tired, must again make an effort to do impossibilities. "Constant dropping wears away a stone."

Do not eat unless you are hungry. Hunger is Nature's way of telling you that you need food. Unnatural cravings are the cravings of disease. Hunger is a good healthy calling for food. Cravings are accompanied by nervous irritation. Hunger is accompanied by increased activity.

I think, perhaps, the keystone to my own health is thorough mastication. I masticate everything, from twenty to thirty times before swallowing. One will receive more nourishment

or any foods containing starch. I know better. The human being has very little or no digestion for uncooked starches, and I shall not waste my energy in trying to promote an adverse theory. I do not eat raw meats for fear of dangerous germs; but I do eat such green vegetables as celery, lettuce, cress, chicory, endive, cabbage, radishes, onions, garlic, chives and the early spring edible weeds. These are all anti-scorbutic and act like a broom to the system, keeping it clean and clear.

Headaches are Not Necessary Evils

"BILIOUS" attacks, the headaches, and the dull, heavy feelings of the morning, have their origin in the stomach. If one takes more sugar than is needed in the economy it crowds the liver, which, in turn, rebels and you have a "bilious" attack. If it were not for these "bilious" attacks you probably would have something much worse. But why have anything so unpleasant? It takes time, money, strength, and robs you of pleasure. All the green vegetables, both cooked and raw, are good for people who are inclined to be "bilious." Then sweets, of all things, must be cut off.

I am quite sure that headaches are not necessary evils. While the most annoying type originate in the stomach, many come from impure, bad air and want of proper exercise. Housework is not sufficient exercise for the housewife. She is on her feet all day, hence does not feel the necessity of walking; but there is no comparison between a good, brisk walk in the open air and walking around a close and ill-ventilated house. Forget the housework and take a walk. You will finish it with a better relish when you return.

Ventilate Your House Thoroughly Every Day

AIR the bedrooms—in fact, the whole house—every day. Ventilate and air the cellar, and, under no circumstances, fasten the cellar windows so that they cannot be opened during the winter. No one can live over a dump hole, especially if it contain decaying vegetation. Health and strength are the products of care and knowledge. The world is a wilderness to those who make it so. To the perfectly well, normal individual it is a beautiful beyond description. And everything in it is beautiful beyond description. Even when a person is perfectly well, almost all occupations are interesting. If you are but scrubbing the kitchen, possibilities arise that you have never known before; of you may be cleaning a window, and will think of various chemical materials to aid in the operation, and before you know it you have tried a dozen different articles and have selected the best. Every branch of housework, no matter how menial, becomes perfectly beautiful, and you wonder why other women are not following this same line of thought.

I shall end my days, I presume, in trying to teach people how to live, and in every article I write, in every sentence I utter, the truths come from experience, and experience of the hardest kind. It is not easy, I grant you, for a perfectly well woman to be interested in subjects pertaining to the sickness of others. If one has been ill, and by careful living has become strong, it is difficult to understand why other people do not follow the same paths.

To What I Attribute My Perfect Health

IN SUMMING up, my perfect health, absence of headaches, my gigantic capacity for work without tiring, are due to the small amount of food I take, fitted and suited to my occupation and surroundings; to a goodly quantity of fresh, pure water, plenty of fresh air and outdoor exercise.

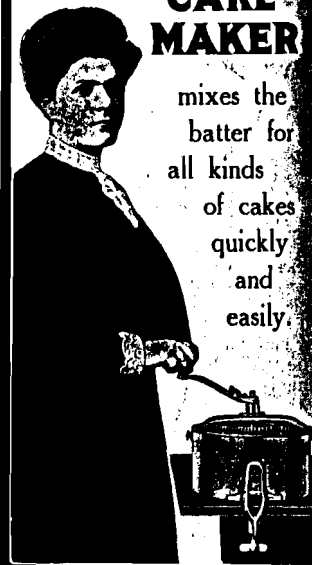
I live in a house that is thoroughly aired every morning; sleep in a room with the windows raised as high as possible; use light, thin underclothes in the house. I do not have carpets that are tacked down; nor upholstered furniture, nor any amount of drapings. In short, I remove, as nearly as possible, all dust collectors.

I do my best, and heaviest, work early in the morning, while my stomach is absorbing the glass of cold water that I have taken immediately after a cold bath.

I do not drink iced drinks, nor eat iced foods. My diet is always attractive, but always hygienic. Unattractive and tasteless foods, by-the-way, are not hygienic, no matter what elements they may contain. The table must be attractive and well kept in every way. The food must be daintily cooked and well served; then be careful not to overeat.

After the heavy day's work is done I take a good dinner, composed of a clear soup, a meat, either roasted or broiled, two vegetables, one starchy and the other green or succulent; followed by a well-made French salad, with a bit of cheese and a toasted cracker.

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