

How I Cut Down My Doctor's Bills

The Prize Winning Letter

TWO years ago I broke down so completely in a nervous way that I could neither think consecutively nor hold myself quiet. For a while I was in a sanatorium; but that was expensive, and the atmosphere was depressing. My breakdown had come in part from hard and long continued work with responsibility; but chiefly, as I have noticed is often the case, from worry—and selfish worry at that.

I faced the situation candidly, and as a result I went back home with a schedule for living that left as little time as possible for thought of myself and my ailments. At first I did the things I could do with the least strain. Gradually, as I grew stronger, I took more and more responsibility and did real constructive work. My aim was to have a variety of things to do, and as often as possible they were for others.

What were these things?

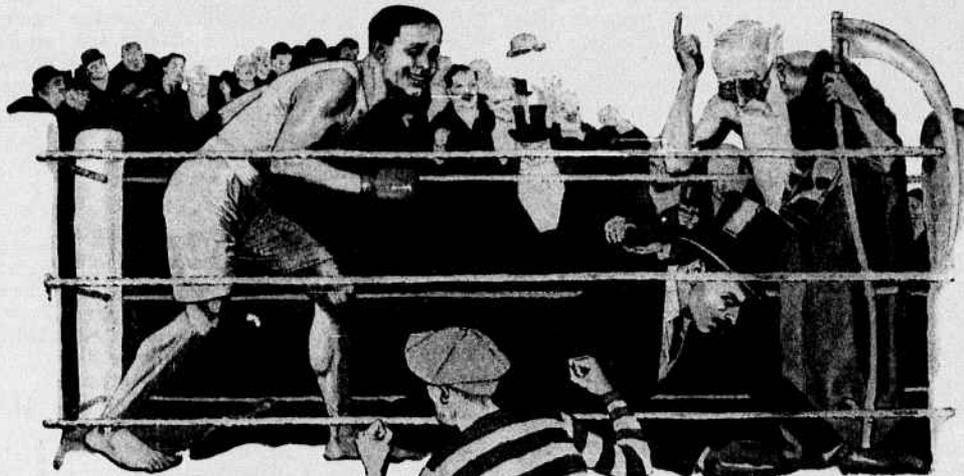
One of them was to plan unusually good meals, in which I studied the tastes of each member of my family. At first I had sometimes to give up in the midst of things and rest and let some one else finish; but those times grew fewer and fewer till they ceased altogether.

But the greatest of all helps was my garden. I made my aim twofold: to make the garden a real delight to all who saw it, and to furnish the family and our neighbors with delectable vegetables in as many varieties as possible. I planned it so that, from the time the first pie-plant shoot grew long enough to cut and the first crisp radish appeared, there should be something from the garden, if not for every meal, at least for one meal a day. From the apple and other fruit seeds which I saved from the table I started a miniature nursery.

As my strength came back I did as much as I could of the heavy work in the garden; and the exercise, the sunshine, the fresh air, and most of all my never-failing interest and enthusiasm acted like a tonic.

I did other things when I could not work in the garden. You will laugh at one of them, yet it was extremely effective. I read the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, volume by volume. I made a specialty of English economic history; but I found that I was constantly stopped by other fascinating articles. I chose the *Britannica* because the discussions are all worth while, and yet there was the variety that my nervous restlessness demanded. Magazines also furnished the same healing variety.

I followed a daily schedule. I rose early and went to bed early, and stopped considering whether I had slept well. On rising I drank from two to six glasses of water, and, if there was no gardening, I took some indoor exercise, followed by a cold shower, ate an apple, and then my breakfast. I worked and read till ten, when I had some more water, and if I had no heavy exercise in connection with my work, I took some light exercises to keep the muscles supple. In the afternoon at four I repeated this. If I was hungry between meals,—and nervous people are apt to think they are,—I either ate an apple or drank some hot water. If I grew



faint I drank a glass of hot water, and found that it always revived and quieted me. When I felt sorry for myself or wanted to cry, I drank hot water, bathed my face in hot water, and let it run over my wrists. Just before going to bed I took a hot bath.

As to my diet: I aimed to have uncooked and cooked fruit every day, and, though I touched no meat from choice, I found that it was possible to get into the three meals the requisite proteins, carbohydrates, etc., without at each meal having such a variety that the system would grow disordered.

All this time I took no drug of any kind, and no stimulant but hot water, and I kept my mind glad. This sickness has taught me that it does not pay, even in perfect health, to think anything but happily about people and situations. One's productive power is decreased materially with every angry, covetous, or even intolerant thought.

But the hardest thing I had to do for months was to refuse to see any one but the immediate family. No one who has not tried it knows how difficult—and how healing to ragged nerves—this is.

There is one thing of which I am certain: If a variety of *unselfish* interests, outdoor exercise, plenty of water, a carefully balanced diet, and happy, controlled thoughts could cure me when I had reached the plight I was in,—when, I believe, I was on the extreme verge of mental disturbance,—it will save others from breaking down. It is not work, in reasonable amounts and under reasonable conditions, that kills, but worry, a narrow, horizon, selfishness, and disregard for the laws of physical, mental, and spiritual life.

Miriam Hunt, Clark, S. D.

She Humanized Her House

HAVING suffered for several weeks with a backache which was growing steadily worse, I decided to go to a doctor on a certain day. In doing my morning work that day, I was about to put away the "leftovers" from breakfast, when it seemed to me I had reached the limit of my endurance. I was using a food-box, outside of a window which stuck so that it was hard to open it, even using both hands.

I felt just then that I could never open that window again. Then the thought struck me that possibly, since that hurt

my back so, it might be partly the cause of my trouble. Taking courage from the thought, I got an oil-can, a cake of soap, and a knife, and oiled, soaped, and scraped for half an hour. At the end of that time I could open and close the window with a touch. I decided to postpone my trip to the doctor's for a few days, and never found it necessary to go.

Since that time I have watched closely for things that tire me and things from which I instinctively shrink. Among the conditions that have needed adjustment have been a door that opened with a jerk, a gas-jet above my reach, a kitchen table too low, shelves too high, mixing bowls and kettles too heavy, run-over heels, skirts too tight or too heavy, too many rugs, and standing over a hot stove when a fireless cooker should have been used.

I surely have saved many a doctor bill—in the case mentioned probably a very large one. For what doctor, however thorough he may be, would ever think to examine the kitchen window?

C. F. H., Washington, D. C.

No Overeating, No Doctor

ONE day, as I watched a G. A. R. parade, I noticed that all the veterans were lean and thin, over seventy years of age, and apparently healthy and happy. Suddenly the thought struck me: Where are all the fat men?

I asked that question of a wise-looking old fellow, thin as a lion and full of ginger. "Gathered to their forefathers; dug their own graves with their teeth," said he.

At that time I weighed 201 pounds, was five feet six inches tall, short of wind, gouty, catarrhal, and rheumatic. Now I carry around 165 pounds, and the aches and pains have vanished.

How did I do it?

Here is the program:

Immediately upon waking up in the morning, I draw in and throw out the abdomen one hundred times. I have performed this exercise approximately 110,000 times. It has strengthened my abdominal muscles in a wonderful way, and stimulates the great trunk sewage system.

Then with a rough brush I quickly scrub

every inch of cuticle on the body. This brushing opens the pores and takes off the skin dust.

Now I'm ready for exercise, and I put a lot of "pep" into it. I have about twenty movements which any physical instructor can outline to the prospective health-seeker. Now I'm in a glow. The blood is coursing rapidly through the arteries. A quick scrub in tepid water, followed by a cold spray, takes the fog out of the brain and brings me out of the tub pink, fine, and fit. People who creep out of bed and into their clothes miss a luxury that can not be purchased with money.

Breakfast? I have a cup of coffee with cream and sugar, and sometimes a couple of pancakes made from bran flour.

At noon? Nothing but a glass of buttermilk, sometimes two, with a cracker and a dish of cottage cheese, which leaves the brain fresh and keen for the afternoon's work.

Dinner? I eat vegetables, soft boiled eggs, lean meat, milk, graham gems, and salads. I have cut out fried stuff, fresh bread, potatoes, fat meats, too much sugar, and all midnight lunches. I get up from the table feeling that I could eat some more, and that is the time I stop.

Now a hearty dinner at noon is like a dose of poison, and the joy of suffering myself is gone; but the joy of feeling perfectly well, fit for business at forty-nine, and having the capacity for the really enjoyable things of life more than compensates.

G. L. C., Detroit, Michigan.

Health and a Golden Wedding

THE writer of this letter, 72 years old, enjoys complete freedom from organic, nervous, or rheumatic complaints, keeps house without hired help for husband and family, attends church services, lectures, and concerts, visits the poor and afflicted, takes active part in several societies for women's welfare, reads her newspaper regularly, walks a mile or two every bright day, and plays the piano evenings.

The health of myself and family is excellent; no doctor's services have been required for several years past. We rise about 5 A. M. in summer, 6 A. M. in winter, taking a short walk before breakfast, breathing deeply the fresh morning air, listening to the songs of birds, viewing the beauties of nature, and raising grateful hearts to the Creator of all earth's loveliness, whether the trees are covered with foliage, laden with fruit, or bending beneath a mantle of snow.

According to rules of health, we eat, without repletion, well cooked meals, according to the season, fruit and vegetables in plenty, meat rather sparingly, fresh eggs, milk, rye and whole wheat bread, a soup, different every day, coffee in the morning, tea in the evening.

We sleep seven hours, each member of the family having a separate room, with open windows protected from draft and insects by wire and muslin screens. The house is well ventilated, on a slight elevation of a large lot, with a garden and grove, in a suburb. The first sunbeam glides into the east windows and the last rays penetrate every nook of

