

A SYMPOSIUM ON FASTING

Recently I published a request that those who had tried the fast as the result of my advocacy would write to advise me of the results. I stated that I desired to hear unfavorable results as well as favorable; that I wanted to get at the facts, and would tabulate the results exactly as they came. The questions asked were as follows:

1. How many times have you fasted?
2. How many days on each occasion?
3. From what complaints did you suffer?
4. Were these complaints ever diagnosed by regular physician? If so, give the names and addresses of these physicians.
5. Do you consider that you were definitely benefited by the fasts? If so, in what way?
6. For how long did the benefit continue?
7. Do you consider that you were completely cured?
8. Do you consider that you were definitely harmed? If so, in what way?
9. Have you ever been examined by any regular physician since the cure? If so, give name and address.

[Pg 63]

10. Are you willing that your name and address should be quoted for the benefit of others?

The total number of fasts taken was 277, and the average number of days was 6. There were 90 of five days or over, 51 of ten days or over, and 6 of 30 days or over. Out of the 109 persons who wrote to me, 100 reported benefit, and 17 no benefit. Of these 17 about half give wrong breaking of the fast as the reason for the failure. In cases where the cure had not proved permanent, about half mentioned that the recurrence of the trouble was caused by wrong eating, and about half of

the rest made this quite evident by what they said. Also it is to be noted that in the cases of the 17 who got no benefit, nearly all were fasts of only three or four days.

Following is the complete list of diseases benefited—45 of the cases having been diagnosed by physicians: indigestion (usually associated with nervousness), 27; rheumatism, 5; colds, 8; tuberculosis, 4; constipation, 14; poor circulation, 3; headaches, 5; anæmia, 3; scrofula, 1; bronchial trouble, 5; syphilis, 1; liver trouble, 5; general debility, 5; chills and fever, 1; blood poisoning, 1; ulcerated leg, 1; neurasthenia, 6; locomotor ataxia, 1; sciatica, 1; asthma, 2; excess of uric acid, 1; epilepsy, 1; pleurisy, 1; [Pg 64]impaction of bowels, 1; eczema, 2; catarrh, 6; appendicitis, 3; valvular disease of heart, 1; insomnia, 1; gas poisoning, 1; grippe, 1; cancer, 1.

There follows a brief summary of some of the most interesting cases. A number of longer letters will be found in the Appendix.

Mrs. Lulu Wallace Smith, 324 W. White Oak Ave., Monrovia, Cal. Age 28. Fasted 30 days for appendicitis and peritonitis, diagnosed by four physicians. "Yes, indeed, I have definitely been benefited by fasting. My stomach is not distressed after meals, I have regular evacuations of the intestines, which I had not had since I was seventeen. I feel perfectly healthy and look the same."

William N——. Syphilis, with advanced ulcers in throat. Physicians declared the case hopeless. Complete disappearance of symptoms after four day's fast, but they gradually reappeared, and longer fast intended.

Dora Jordan, Connersville, Md. Indigestion, extreme nervousness, neuralgia in its worst form. Fasted thirty days; did most of cooking for a family of five, was at no time tempted to eat. "I am no longer troubled with the old diseases, and weigh more than ever before. After my fast I felt as happy and care free as a little child."

C. L. Clark, Greenville, Mich. Nervous, poor digestion. Fasted nine days. "I have been [Pg 65] wonderfully benefited, and am a rabid convert. Alas, for the poor mortal who shows the faintest spark of interest in my fast—I hand him the whole works, lock, stock and barrel! I feel a new power and new incentive in life. Whenever I see a sick person, I feel like telling him that for all he knows to the contrary, good health has been and may be only eight or ten days away and waiting for years for him to claim it."

T. S. Jacks, Muskegon, Mich. Twenty days, followed by shorter fasts, for stomach trouble, diagnosed by Dr. M—— as cancer. "He advised me to be operated on. Since my fast, three years ago, I have had no trouble with my stomach. I am entirely cured, and am enjoying fine health."

Gordon G. Ives, 147 Forsythe Bldg., Fresno, Cal. "Have fasted a good many times since 1899, to cure catarrh of stomach, constipation, deafness of four months' standing, neuralgia, etc. Duration, from one to sixteen days. Never failed in accomplishing a cure. Benefit continued until I had over-eaten for a long time. Complaints were never diagnosed by regular physicians, as I got on to them in 1894. Use my name if it will help the truth."

Mrs. Maria L. Scott, Boring, Ariz. Reports case of husband, who fasted seven days for constipation and deafness; had been obliged to take enema daily for several months. Complete cure.

Mrs. A. Wears, De Funiak Springs, Fla. "Age forty-two, subject to severe colds and sore throat all my life, chronic catarrh of head and throat, in bed two winters with bronchitis and asthma. Did not take complete fast. My catarrh is much improved. I feel perfectly well and enjoy life so much more than I did before the fast."

Mrs. Mae Bramble, Alba, Pa., R. F. D. 70. One fast of thirty days, another of three days; nervous prostration the first time, appendicitis the second time. "The first complaint was diagnosed, the second was not; as I am a professional nurse, I understood the symptoms myself." Complete and permanent cure. "I have never had a return of the nervous trouble, and am well of the other complaint. It is five years since the first fast."

M. E. Beard, Corning, Cal. Fasted nine days for scrofula. Had been diagnosed. Complete cure, permanent since 1908. Age forty-seven. "Five years ago I broke down. Physicians never could tell me what ailed me. I kept busy during my fast physically and mentally; worked over the cook stove and outdoors. Felt no weakness."

Joseph L. Lewis, Hatfield, Ark. Fasted three days, and then four days. "During the last ten days have felt better than at any time during the last seven years."

Monroe Bornn, Port of Spain, Trinidad. Fasted seven days on three occasions, for liver trouble. "I had been treated by three physicians. I consider that I was completely cured. I have been examined by regular physicians since the cure."

E. B. Bayne, White Plains, N. Y. Sends record of fasts taken by two people, Mr. and Mrs. A. Mr. A. fasted for rheumatism, which had caused kidney and bladder trouble of years' standing, and iritis; fasted five days and then four days and was completely cured. Mrs. A. Neuralgia and catarrhal deafness. Completely cured. "Finds that exposure to draughts has no effect upon her whatever, heretofore she would catch cold upon the least exposure."

Mrs. Charles H. Vosseller, Newark, N. J. "I don't agree with you or Bernarr Macfadden in not recommending fasting for tuberculosis. My case was diagnosed by Dr. B. G——, New Brunswick, N. J. I fasted nineteen days and was completely cured; I received no harm, and have been examined since by a physician. I weigh 114 lbs. now and before my fast weighed 100 lbs. I never felt better in my life than I do at present. Do not know that I have a pair of lungs."

In connection with the above tabulation of results, it should be specified that it does not include any of the cases quoted elsewhere in the book; it includes some of the letters given in the Appendix, but not all. Thus it will appear that there are many more than 277 cases of fasting recorded in this volume. The reason that I did not summarize in the tabulation all the letters I have received is, that I wished to give only those which were sent to me in answer to my definite series of questions, so that I might be sure of getting the unfavorable as well as the favorable reports. Recently a well-known physician who edits a magazine of health came out in vehement opposition to the fasting cure, maintaining that we hear only of the cases which are successful, and

do not hear of the disastrous failures. In reply to this, I wrote to him suggesting that he publish my series of questions in his magazine, thus giving his readers an opportunity to make me acquainted with the unsuccessful cases. This, however, the physician declined to do.