

The Fruit and Nut Diet

From early childhood until January 9, 1910, or about twenty years in all, I had been a sufferer from asthma, and chronic catarrh in addition. As a child I was sick a great deal of the time, having regular attacks every few weeks, of such little troubles as bilious fevers, chills and la grippe, with pneumonia, typhoid, measles, [Pg 133]whooping cough and the like sprinkled in at times. I have taken gallons of castor oil, and pounds of calomel and quinine, I think. I don't believe I ever had more than one cold, but I was never really free of that.

The first attack of asthma came shortly after the disappearance of a severe case of eczema, and from that time on throughout the entire twenty years, I did not pass a single moderately cold night without having at least one, and more often, two and three spasms of asthma during the night. These were relieved temporarily, only after sitting up in bed and inhaling, for several minutes, the smoke from a green powder which I burned for that purpose. Frequently attacks would last continually for three and four days or a week, during which time I was not able to draw a single free breath, and would suffer so intensely that on many occasions I felt as if I was breathing my last. I mention all this for fear some Salisbury followers may doubt that mine was a real genuine case of asthma. In that case, I think I can get satisfactory evidence from our family physician and others who were with me a great deal during that time.

As I grew older, and about the time I went to work for myself, I began to be interested in physical culture methods, and noticed a great improvement by exercising and cutting down my diet, and afterwards adopting the two-meal-a-day plan. However, there was one thing which is strongly emphasized in these methods that did not work with me at the time, but seemed to make the[Pg 134] asthma worse; and that was the fresh air idea. I always had better results, and the attacks were less frequent and not so severe, when I closed the windows and doors, and filled the room with the smoke and fumes of the remedy I used. That was due mostly to the narcotic effect of the remedy when breathing the smoke and fumes continually. I mention this for fear some one may suggest that the ultimate permanent relief was brought about simply by breathing fresh air continually when I did begin to open the windows.

During all this time, I ate meat with each meal, or twice daily.

I began to notice that nuts and especially pecans, of which I am particularly fond, and which are quite plentiful in that part of the country in which I live, seemed to have a decidedly bad effect on my asthma, and a greater part of the time I would not touch them on this account. At that time, however, I had the impression that generally prevails among a large majority of people, that nuts or fruits were only good for eating between meals, or as a dessert at the end of a meal, and in addition to the regular food that was eaten; and that was the way I had eaten them.

Mr. Upton Sinclair's first article in the Physical Culture magazine on the fruit and nut diet was the first hint I ever had that fruit and nuts eaten alone as a diet had any real substantial food value. From this time on I began experimenting with short fasts of one meal or one day, and also began substituting fruit for some meals, and at[Pg 135] the same time cut down my meat eating from twice daily to two or three times a week. I noticed a great improvement in both asthma and catarrh, although I continued having attacks of asthma almost every night, as this was during the winter and most of the nights were quite cold.

After the appearance of his second article, I determined to try this diet out in my own case, hoping to lessen the attacks of asthma at least, never dreaming of the real surprise that was in store for me. I fasted the last two days of December, 1909, and started in January 1st, eating mostly acid fruits, such as lemons, oranges, grape fruit, etc. (This in order to relieve the constipation that I was then, and had been troubled with more or less for the past two or three years.) As a result of the fast, and of what might be termed a partial fast for a few days after, I lost several pounds in weight, which I did not regain until after I had been eating other fruits for several days, such as dates, figs, bananas and apples, also all kinds of nuts, including the much dreaded pecan, which seemed to cause so much trouble before.

On the night of January 8, 1910, I had my last attack of asthma, and have had none since. By that time my bowels were perfectly free, and all traces of constipation gone. The night of the 9th I spent in peaceful, dreamless sleep, my head perfectly clear of any cold or catarrh, enabling me to breathe freely through my nose during sleep, which had never been possible before this.[Pg 136] Although the temperature outside was a little above zero, and stood close around there during the greater part of January and February where I was, two windows in my room were wide open all of the time, and I slept between them; also there was no stove or other heating appliances in the room to warm me on retiring and arising.

I stuck rigidly to the fruit and nuts, living on them alone until the weather began to grow warmer. I then grew so confident, that I gradually lapsed into a general raw-food diet, and later on, to a partly raw and partly cooked diet, but no meat at all, save at times, when it was necessary in order to avoid unpleasant controversies and explanations among people who knew nothing on the subject, and were therefore sceptical, and often inclined to ridicule me.

With the return to cooked foods, came a return of constipation, and with it, traces of the old cold or catarrh. This is one thing I noticed in particular; that when my bowels were moving freely, then and only then was I free of catarrh or cold. I am situated at present where I am away from the influences of kind-and-well-meaning friends and members of my own family, so am living on a raw-food diet entirely, doing heavy gymnasium work every day, also quite a bit of study and other brain work besides, which in all keeps me quite busy most of the day. I am enjoying the best of health in

every particular all the while.