

Fasting and the Doctors

A most discouraging circumstance to me was the attitude of physicians, as revealed in the correspondence that came to me. Mostly I learned of this attitude from the letters of patients who quoted their physicians to me. From the physicians themselves I heard practically nothing. We have some one hundred and forty thousand regularly graduated "medical men" in this country, and they are all of them presumably anxious to cure disease. It would seem that an experience[Pg 49] such as mine, narrated over my own signature, and backed by references to other cases, would have awakened the interest of a good many of these professional men.

Out of the six or eight hundred letters that I have received, just two, so far as I can remember, were from physicians; and out of the hundreds of newspaper clippings which I received, not a single one was from any sort of medical journal. There was one physician, in an out-of-the-way town in Arkansas, who was really interested, and who asked me to let him print several thousand copies of the article in the form of a pamphlet, to be distributed among his patients. One single mind, among all the hundred and forty thousand, open to a new truth!

In the English Review for November, 1910, I find an article entitled "Bone-setting and the Profession, by Fairplay." It is a narrative of the experience of the writer and some of his friends with Osteopathy, being a defence of that method of treatment in cases of bruises and sprains. I quote the following paragraph:

"Harvey's statement about the circulation of the blood was met with scorn by the doctors, who called him in derision the 'Circulator.' Simpson's discovery of the use of chloroform was scouted by them as incredible, some even declared it to be[Pg 50] 'impious,' and a 'defiance of the will of God.' Elliotson's use of the stethoscope called forth the rage of the protected society as a body: the Lancet described him as a 'pariah of the profession.' The ignorant scorn and slander broke his heart; but to-day the stethoscope is in constant use, and is recognized as one of the most important aids to a correct diagnosis."

It might also be of interest to quote the note which one finds appended to this remarkable article: "The Editor was amused to find that the Lancet refused the advertisement of the above article, thereby confirming what the writer alleges against the ring."

Of course I realize what a difficult matter it is for a medical man to face these facts about the fast. Sometimes it seems to me that we have no right to expect their help at all, and that we never will receive it. For we are asking them to destroy themselves, economically speaking. We do not expect aid from eminent corporation lawyers when we set out to overthrow the rule of privilege in our country; and it must be equally difficult for a hard-worked and not very highly paid physician to contemplate the triumph of an idea, which would leave no place for him in civilization. In an article contributed to Physical Culture magazine for January, 1910, I stated that in the course of [\[Pg 51\]](#) my search for health I had paid to physicians, surgeons, druggists and sanatoriums not less than fifteen thousand dollars in the last six or eight years. In the last year, since I have learned about the fast, I have paid nothing at all; and the same thing is true, perhaps on a smaller scale, of every one who discovers the fasting cure. As one man, who wrote me a letter of enthusiastic gratitude, expresses it: "I have spent over five hundred dollars in the last ten years trying to get well on medicines. It cost me only thirty cents to use your method, and for that thirty cents I obtained relief a million-fold more beneficial than from five hundred dollars' worth of medicine."

Not so very long ago I saw a report in some metropolitan newspaper to the effect that the medical profession was greatly alarmed over the decrease in its revenues—it being estimated that the income of the average physician to-day was less than half of what it had been ten years ago. All this, I think, is directly attributable to the spread of knowledge concerning natural methods in the treatment of disease—and, more important yet, of natural methods in the preservation of health. Only the other day I was talking with a friend who was a teacher in a small college in the Middle West. There was a physician regularly employed to attend the girl-students, but several [\[Pg 52\]](#) of the teachers became interested in the fasting cure, and whenever they learned of any illness they would go to the girl and start her on a fast; as a result, the physician lost considerably more than half his practice. In the same way, I myself recently started several people in a small town to fasting, and every time I saw the local physician driving by in his carriage I marvelled at the courtesy and cordiality he displayed; for before I had left that place I had cured half a dozen of his permanent customers—people to whom he had been dispensing pills and powders every few weeks for a dozen years.