

Perfect Health

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Have you any conception of what the phrase means? Can you form any image of what would be your feeling if every organ in your body were functioning perfectly? Perhaps you can go back to some day in your youth, when you got up early in the morning and went for a walk, and the spirit of the sunrise got into your blood, and you walked faster, and took deep breaths, and laughed aloud for the sheer happiness of being alive in such a world of beauty. And now you are grown older—and what would you give for the secret of that glorious feeling? What would you say if you were told that you could bring it back and keep it, not only for mornings, but for afternoons and evenings, and not as something accidental and mysterious, but as something which you yourself have created, and of which you are completely master?

[Pg 10]

This is not an introduction to a new device in patent medicine advertising. I have nothing to sell, and no process patented. It is simply that for ten years I have been studying the ill health of myself and of the men and women around me. And I have found the cause and the remedy. I have not only found good health, but perfect health; I have found a new state of being, a new potentiality of life; a sense of lightness and cleanness and joyfulness, such as I did not know could exist in the human body. "I like to meet you on the street," said a friend the other day. "You walk as if it were such fun!"

I look about me in the world, and nearly everybody I know is sick. I could name one after another a hundred men and women, who are doing vital work for progress and carrying a cruel handicap of physical suffering. For instance, I am working for social justice, and I have comrades whose help is needed every hour, and they are ill! In one single week's newspapers last spring I read that one was dying of kidney trouble, that another was in hospital from nervous breakdown, and that a third was ill with ptomaine poisoning. And in my correspondence I am told that another of my dearest friends has only a year to live; that another heroic man is a nervous wreck, craving for death; and that a third[Pg 11] is tortured by bilious headaches.^[1] And there is not one of these people whom I could not cure if I had him alone for a couple of weeks; no one of them who would not in the end be walking down the street "as if it were such fun!"

I propose herein to tell the story of my discovery of health, and I shall not waste much time in apologizing for the intimate nature of the narrative. It is no pleasure for me to tell over the tale of my headaches or to discuss my unruly stomach. I cannot take any case but my own, because there is no case about which I can speak with such authority. To be sure, I might write about it in the

abstract, and in veiled terms. But in that case the story would lose most of its convincingness, and so of its usefulness. I might tell it without signing my name to it. But there are a great many people who have read my books and will believe what I tell them, who would not take the trouble to read an article without a name. Mr. Horace Fletcher has set us all an example in this matter. He has written several volumes about his individual digestion, with the result that literally millions of people have been helped. In the same way I propose to put my case on record. The reader will find that it is a [Pg 12] typical case, for I made about every mistake that a man could make, and tried every remedy, old and new, that anybody had to offer me.

I spent my boyhood in a well-to-do family, in which good eating was regarded as a social grace and the principal interest in life. We had a colored woman to prepare our food, and another to serve it. It was not considered fitting for children to drink liquor, but they had hot bread three times a day, and they were permitted to revel in fried chicken and rich gravies and pastries, fruit cake and candy and ice-cream. Every Sunday I would see my grandfather's table with a roast of beef at one end, and a couple of chickens at the other, and a cold ham at one side; at Christmas and Thanksgiving the energies of the whole establishment would be given up to the preparation of delicious foods. And later on, when I came to New York, I considered it necessary to have such food; even when I was a poor student, living on four dollars a week, I spent more than three of it on eatables.

I was an active and fairly healthy boy; at twenty I remember saying that I had not had a day's serious sickness in fourteen years. Then I wrote my first novel, working sixteen or eighteen hours a day for several months, camping out, and living mostly out of a frying-pan. At [Pg 13] the end I found that I was seriously troubled with dyspepsia; and it was worse the next year, after the second book. I went to see a physician, who gave me some red liquid, which magically relieved the consequences of doing hard brain-work after eating. So I went on for a year or two more, and then I found that the artificially-digested food was not being eliminated from my system with sufficient regularity. So I went to another physician, who gave my malady another name, and gave me another medicine, and put off the time of reckoning a little while longer.

I have never in my life used tea or coffee, alcohol or tobacco; but for seven or eight years I worked under heavy pressure all the time, and ate very irregularly, and ate unwholesome food. So I began to have headaches once in a while, and to notice that I was abnormally sensitive to colds. I considered these maladies natural to mortals, and I would always attribute them to some specific accident. I would say, "I've been knocking about down town all day"; or, "I was out in the hot sun"; or, "I lay on the damp ground." I found that if I sat in a draught for even a minute I was certain to "catch a cold." I found also that I had sore throat and tonsilitis once or twice every winter; also, now and then, the grippe. There were times when I did not [Pg 14] sleep well; and as all this got worse, I would have to drop all my work and try to rest. The first time I did this a week or two was sufficient; but later on a month or two was necessary, and then several months.

The year I wrote "The Jungle" I had my first summer cold. It was haying time on a farm, and I thought it was a kind of hay-fever. I would sneeze for hours in perfect torment, and this lasted for a month, until I went away to the sea-shore. This happened again the next summer, and also another very painful experience; a nerve in a tooth died, and I had to wait three days for the pain to

"localize," and then had the tooth drilled out, and staggered home, and was ill in bed for a week with chills and fever, and nausea and terrible headaches. I mention all these unpleasant details so that the reader may understand the state of wretchedness to which I had come. At the same time, also, I had a great deal of distressing illness in my family; my wife seldom had a week without suffering, and my little boy had pneumonia one winter, and croup the next, and whooping-cough in the summer, with the inevitable "colds" scattered in between.

After the Helicon Hall fire I realized that I was in a bad way, and for the two years following I gave a good part of my time to trying to find[Pg 15] out how to preserve my health. I went to Battle Creek, and to Bermuda, and to the Adirondacks; I read the books of all the new investigators of the subject of hygiene, and tried out their theories religiously. I had discovered Horace Fletcher a couple of years before. Mr. Fletcher's idea is, in brief, to chew your food, and chew it thoroughly; to extract from each particle of food the maximum of nutriment, and to eat only as much as your system actually needs. This was a very wonderful idea to me, and I fell upon it with the greatest enthusiasm. All the physicians I had known were men who tried to cure me when I fell sick, but here was a man who was studying how to stay well. I have to find fault with Mr. Fletcher's system, and so I must make clear at the outset how much I owe to it. It set me upon the right track—it showed me the goal, even if it did not lead me to it. It made clear to me that all my various ailments were symptoms of one great trouble, the presence in my body of the poisons produced by superfluous and unassimilated food, and that in adjusting the quantity of food to the body's exact needs lay the secret of perfect health.

It was only in the working out of the theory that I fell down. Mr. Fletcher told me that "Nature" would be my guide, and that if only[Pg 16] I masticated thoroughly, instinct would select the foods. I found that, so far as my case was concerned, my "nature" was hopelessly perverted. I invariably preferred unwholesome foods—apple pie, and toast soaked in butter, and stewed fruit with quantities of cream and sugar. Nor did "Nature" kindly tell me when to stop, as she apparently does some other "Fletcherites"; no matter how much I chewed, if I ate all I wanted I ate too much. And when I realized this, and tried to stop it, I went, in my ignorance, to the other extreme, and lost fourteen pounds in as many days. Again, Mr. Fletcher taught me to remove all the "unchewable" parts of the food—the skins of fruit, etc. The result of this is there is nothing to stimulate the intestines, and the waste remains in the body for many days. Mr. Fletcher says this does not matter, and he appears to prove that it has not mattered in his case. But I found that it mattered very seriously in my case; it was not until I became a "Fletcherite" that my headaches became hopeless and that sluggish intestines became one of my chronic complaints.

I next read the books of Metchnikoff and Chittenden, who showed me just how my ailments came to be. The unassimilated food lies in the colon, and bacteria swarm in it, and the poisons[Pg 17] they produce are absorbed into the system. I had bacteriological examinations made in my own case, and I found that when I was feeling well the number of these toxin-producing germs was about six billions to the ounce of intestinal contents; and when, a few days later, I had a headache, the number was a hundred and twenty billions. Here was my trouble under the microscope, so to speak.

These tests were made at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, where I went for a long stay. I tried their system of water cure, which I found a wonderful stimulant to the eliminative organs; but I discovered that, like all other stimulants, it leaves you in the end just where you were. My health was improved at the sanitarium, but a week after I left I was down with the grippe again.

I gave the next year of my life to trying to restore my health. I spent the winter in Bermuda and the summer in the Adirondacks, both of them famous health resorts, and during the entire time I lived an absolutely hygienic life. I did not work hard, and I did not worry, and I did not think about my health except when I had to. I lived in the open air all the time, and I gave most of the day to vigorous exercise—tennis, walking, boating and swimming. I mention this [\[Pg 18\]](#) specifically, so that the reader may perceive that I had eliminated all other factors of ill-health, and appreciate to the full my statement that at the end of the year's time my general health was worse than ever before.

I was all right so long as I played tennis all day or climbed mountains. The trouble came when I settled down to do brain-work. And from this I saw perfectly clearly that I was over-eating; there was surplus food to be burned up, and when it was not burned up it poisoned me. But how was I to stop when I was hungry? I tried giving up all the things I liked and of which I ate most; but that did no good, because I had such a complacent appetite—I would immediately take to liking the other things! I thought that I had an abnormal appetite, the result of my early training; but how was I ever to get rid of it?

I must not give the impression that I was a conspicuously hearty eater. On the contrary, I ate far less than most people eat. But that was no consolation to me. I had wrecked myself by years of overwork, and so I was more sensitive. The other people were going to pieces by slow stages, I could see; but I was already in pieces.

So matters stood when I chanced to meet a lady, whose radiant complexion and extraordinary health were a matter of remark to [\[Pg 19\]](#) everyone. I was surprised to hear that for ten or fifteen years, and until quite recently, she had been a bed-ridden invalid. She had lived the lonely existence of a pioneer's wife, and had raised a family under conditions of shocking ill-health. She had suffered from sciatica and acute rheumatism; from a chronic intestinal trouble which the doctors called "intermittent peritonitis"; from intense nervous weakness, melancholy, and chronic catarrh, causing deafness. And this was the woman who rode on horseback with me up Mount Hamilton, in California, a distance of twenty-eight miles, in one of the most terrific rain-storms I have ever witnessed! We had two untamed young horses, and only leather bits to control them with, and we were pounded and flung about for six mortal hours, which I shall never forget if I live to be a hundred. And this woman, when she took the ride, had not eaten a particle of food for four days previously!

That was the clue to her escape: she had cured herself by a fast. She had abstained from food for eight days, and all her troubles had fallen from her. Afterwards she had taken her eldest son, a senior at Stanford, and another friend of his, and fasted twelve days with them, and cured them of nervous dyspepsia. And then she had taken a woman friend, the wife of a Stanford [\[Pg 20\]](#) professor, and cured her of rheumatism by a week's fast. I had heard of the fasting cure, but this

was the first time I had met with it. I was too much burdened with work to try it just then, but I began to read up on the subject—the books of Dr. Dewey, Dr. Hazzard and Mr. Carrington. Coming home from California I got a sunstroke on the Gulf of Mexico, and spent a week in hospital at Key West, and that seemed to give the coup de grace to my long-suffering stomach. After another spell of hard work I found myself unable to digest corn-meal mush and milk; and so I was ready for a fast.

I began. The fast has become a commonplace to me now; but I will assume that it is as new and as startling to the reader as it was to myself at first, and will describe my sensations at length.

I was very hungry for the first day—the unwholesome, ravening sort of hunger that all dyspeptics know. I had a little hunger the second morning, and thereafter, to my very great astonishment, no hunger whatever—no more interest in food than if I had never known the taste of it. Previous to the fast I had had a headache every day for two or three weeks. It lasted through the first day and then disappeared—never to return. I felt very weak the second day,[\[Pg 21\]](#) and a little dizzy on arising. I went out of doors and lay in the sun all day, reading; and the same for the third and fourth days—intense physical lassitude, but with great clearness of mind. After the fifth day I felt stronger, and walked a good deal, and I also began some writing. No phase of the experience surprised me more than the activity of my mind: I read and wrote more than I had dared to do for years before.

During the first four days I lost fifteen pounds in weight—something which, I have since learned, was a sign of the extremely poor state of my tissues. Thereafter I lost only two pounds in eight days—an equally unusual phenomenon. I slept well throughout the fast. About the middle of each day I would feel weak, but a massage and a cold shower would refresh me. Towards the end I began to find that in walking about I would grow tired in the legs, and as I did not wish to lie in bed I broke the fast after the twelfth day with some orange-juice.

I took the juice of a dozen oranges during two days, and then went on the milk diet, as recommended by Bernarr Macfadden. I took a glassful of warm milk every hour the first day, every three-quarters of an hour the next day, and finally every half-hour—or eight quarts a day. This is, of course, much more than can be assimilated, but[\[Pg 22\]](#) the balance serves to flush the system out. The tissues are bathed in nutriment, and an extraordinary recuperation is experienced. In my own case I gained four and a half pounds in one day—the third—and gained a total of thirty-two pounds in twenty-four days.

My sensations on this milk diet were almost as interesting as on the fast. In the first place, there was an extraordinary sense of peace and calm, as if every weary nerve in the body were purring like a cat under a stove. Next there was the keenest activity of mind—I read and wrote incessantly. And, finally, there was a perfectly ravenous desire for physical work. In the old days I had walked long distances and climbed mountains, but always with reluctance and from a sense of compulsion. Now, after the cleaning-out of the fast, I would go into a gymnasium and do work which would literally have broken my back before, and I did it with intense enjoyment, and with amazing results. The muscles fairly leaped out upon my body; I suddenly discovered the possibility of becoming an athlete. I had always been lean and dyspeptic-looking, with what my friends called a "spiritual" expression; I now became as round as a butter-ball, and so brown and rosy in the face that I was a joke to all who saw me.

I had not taken what is called a "complete"[Pg 23] fast—that is, I had not waited until hunger returned. Therefore I began again. I intended only a short fast, but I found that hunger ceased again, and, much to my surprise, I had none of the former weakness. I took a cold bath and a vigorous rub twice a day; I walked four miles every morning, and did light gymnasium work, and with nothing save a slight tendency to chilliness to let me know that I was fasting. I lost nine pounds in eight days, and then went for a week longer on oranges and figs, and made up most of the weight on these.

I shall always remember with amusement the anxious caution with which I now began to taste the various foods which before had caused me trouble. Bananas, acid fruits, peanut butter—I tried them one by one, and then in combination, and so realized with a thrill of exultation that every trace of my old trouble was gone. Formerly I had had to lie down for an hour or two after meals; now I could do whatever I chose. Formerly I had been dependent upon all kinds of laxative preparations; now I forgot about them. I no longer had headaches. I went bareheaded in the rain, I sat in cold draughts of air, and was apparently immune to colds. And, above all, I had that marvellous, abounding energy, so that whenever I had a spare minute or two I would[Pg 24] begin to stand on my head, or to "chin" myself, or do some other "stunt," from sheer exuberance of animal spirits.

For several months after this experience I lived upon a diet of raw foods exclusively—mainly nuts and fruits. I had been led to regard this as the natural diet for human beings; and I found that so long as I was leading an active life the results were most satisfactory. They were satisfactory also in the case of my wife, and still more so in the case of my little boy; the amount of work and bother thus saved in the household may be imagined. But when I came to settle down to a long period of hard and continuous writing, I found that I had not sufficient bodily energy to digest these raw foods. I resorted to fasting and milk alternately—and that is well enough for a time, but it proves a nervous strain in the end. Recently a friend called my attention to the late Dr. Salisbury's book, "The Relation of Alimentation to Disease." Dr. Salisbury recommends a diet of broiled beef and hot water as the solution of most of the problems of the human body; and it may be believed that I, who had been a rigid and enthusiastic vegetarian for three or four years, found this a startling idea. However, I make a specialty of keeping an open mind, and I set out to try the Salisbury system. I am sorry to have[Pg 25] to say that it seems to be a good one; sorry, because the vegetarian way of life is so obviously the cleaner and more humane and more convenient. But it seems to me that I am able to do more work and harder work with my mind while eating beefsteaks than under any other régime; and while this continues to be the case there will be one less vegetarian in the world.

The fast is to me the key to eternal youth, the secret of perfect and permanent health. I would not take anything in all the world for my knowledge of it. It is Nature's safety-valve, an automatic protection against disease. I do not venture to assert that I am proof against virulent diseases, such as smallpox or typhoid. I know one ardent physical culturist, a physician, who takes typhoid germs at intervals in order to prove his immunity, but I should not care to go that far; it is enough for me to know that I am proof against all the common infections which plague us, and against all the "chronic" troubles. And I shall continue so just as long as I stand by my present resolve, which is to fast at the slightest hint of any symptom of ill-being—a cold or a headache, a feeling of depression, or a coated tongue, or a scratch on the finger which does not heal quickly.

Those who have made a study of the fast [Pg 26] explain its miracles in the following way: Superfluous nutriment is taken into the system and ferments, and the body is filled with a greater quantity of poisonous matter than the organs of elimination can handle. The result is the clogging of these organs and of the blood-vessels—such is the meaning of headaches and rheumatism, arteriosclerosis, paralysis, apoplexy, Bright's disease, cirrhosis, etc. And by impairing the blood and lowering the vitality, this same condition prepares the system for infection—for "colds," or pneumonia, or tuberculosis, or any of the fevers. As soon as the fast begins, and the first hunger has been withstood, the secretions cease, and the whole assimilative system, which takes so much of the energies of the body, goes out of business. The body then begins a sort of house-cleaning, which must be helped by an enema and a bath daily, and, above all, by copious water-drinking. The tongue becomes coated, the breath and the perspiration offensive; and this continues until the diseased matter has been entirely cast out, when the tongue clears and hunger reasserts itself in unmistakable form.

The loss of weight during the fast is generally about a pound a day. The fat is used first, and after that the muscular tissue; true starvation begins only when the body has been reduced to [Pg 27] the skeleton and the viscera. Fasts of forty and fifty days are now quite common—I have met several who have taken them.

Strange as it may seem, the fast is a cure for both emaciation and obesity. After a complete fast the body will come to its ideal weight. People who are very stout will not regain their weight; while people who are under weight may gain a pound or more a day for a month. There are two dangers to be feared in fasting. The first is that of fear. I do not say this as a jest. No one should begin to fast until he has read up on the subject and convinced himself that it is the thing to do; if possible he should have with him someone who has already had the experience. He should not have about him terrified aunts and cousins who will tell him that he looks like a corpse, that his pulse is below forty, and that his heart may stop beating in the night. I took a fast of three days out in California; on the third day I walked about fifteen miles, off and on, and, except that I was restless, I never felt better. And then in the evening I came home and read about the Messina earthquake, and how the relief ships arrived, and the wretched survivors crowded down to the water's edge and tore each other like wild beasts in their rage of hunger. The paper set forth, in horrified language, that some of them [Pg 28] had been seventy-two hours without food. I, as I read, had also been seventy-two hours without food; and the difference was simply that they thought they were starving. And if at some crisis during a long fast, when you feel nervous and weak and doubting, some people with stronger wills than your own are able to arouse in you the terrors of the earthquake survivors, they can cause their most direful anticipations to be realized.

The other danger is in breaking the fast. A person breaking a long fast should regard himself as if he were liable to seizures of violent insanity. I know a man who fasted fifty days, and then ate half a dozen figs, and caused intestinal abrasions from which he lost a great deal of blood. I would dwell more upon this topic were it not for my discovery of the "milk diet." When you drink a glass of milk every half-hour you have no chance to get really hungry, and so you glide, as if by magic, from a condition of extreme emaciation to one of blooming rotundity. But very frequently the milk diet disagrees with people; and these have to break the fast with very small quantities of the simplest foods—fruit juices and meat broths for the first two or three days at least.

I will conclude this chapter by narrating the experiences of some other persons with the fasting[Pg 29] cure. With the exception of one, the second case, they are all people whom I know personally, and who have told me their stories with their own lips.

First, I give the case of my wife. She has always been frail, and subject to sore throats since girlhood. In the past five years she has undergone three major surgical operations and had several serious illnesses besides. Two years ago she had a severe attack of appendicitis. The physician made a wrong diagnosis, and kept her alive for about ten days with morphine. She was then too low to risk an operation, and was not expected to live. It was several months before she was able to walk again, and she had never fully recovered from the experience. When she began the fast she was suffering from serious stomach trouble, loss of weight, and neurasthenia.

I did not think that she would be able to stand a fast. She had more trouble than I—some nervousness, headache and nausea. But she stood it for ten days, when her tongue cleared suddenly. She had lost twelve pounds, and she then gained twenty-two pounds in seventeen days. She then took another fast of six days with me, and with no more trouble than I experienced the second time—walking four miles every morning with me. She is now a picture of health, and is engaged in accumulating muscle with enthusiasm.

[Pg 30]

Second, a man well on in life, who had always abused his health. He suffered from asthma and dropsy, and was saturated with drugs. He had not been able to lie down for several years. He weighed over 220 pounds, and his legs were "like sacks of water, leaking continually." His kidneys had refused to act, and after his doctors had tried all the drugs they knew, he was told that he was dying. His brother, who narrated the circumstances to me, persuaded him not to eat the supper that was brought in to him, and so he lived through the night. He fasted seven days, and went for four weeks longer on a very light diet, and is now chopping wood and pitching hay upon his farm in Kentucky.

Third, a young physician, as a college boy a physical wreck from dissipation, now twenty-four. "A born neurastheniac." He was attacked by appendicitis twice in succession. He fasted five days after the last attack, and six days later on. Gained thirty-five pounds, and is a splendidly developed athlete; he runs five miles in 26 minutes 15 seconds, and rode a wheel 500 miles in seven days.

Fourth, a young lady, who had suffered a nervous collapse caused by overwork and worry. The bones of her spine had softened; her hipbones tilted upwards three-quarters of an inch;[Pg 31] she was "barely able to crawl on two sticks." She fasted ten days, and again eight days, and took the milk diet for six weeks. I have seen her every day for the last eight or ten weeks, and I do not think that I ever met a woman who impressed me as possessing more superabundant and radiant health.

Fifth, a young man, injured in a railroad wreck; a rib broken and the outer lining of the lungs punctured. Still has an opening for drainage, caused by chafing of the membranes. Suffered in succession attacks of bronchitis, typhoid, pneumonia and pleurisy. Was reduced from 186 to 119

pounds, and had planned to take his life. Fasted six days, gained twenty-seven pounds, and plays tennis vigorously, in spite of having an opening in his chest. Recently walked 442 miles in eleven days.

Sixth, a lady, married, and in middle life, a life-long sufferer from stomach trouble; had experienced six attacks of inflammatory rheumatism, resulting in valvular heart disease and the loss of the use of her limbs. Fasted four times—four, eight, twenty-eight, and fourteen days. I can best describe her present condition by saying that all this summer she arose every morning at daybreak, walked four and a half miles, went for a swim, and then walked home for breakfast.

[Pg 32]

Seventh, an Episcopal clergyman, who had suffered almost all his life from indigestion; had an acute attack of gastritis, followed by nervous prostration and complete breakdown. Specialists had diagnosed his case as "prolapsed stomach and bowels, autointoxication and neurasthenia," and told him that he could not expect to get well in less than five years. He was so emaciated that he could hardly creep around, and, despite the fact that he had a wife and six children, was contemplating suicide. He fasted eleven days, and then gained thirty pounds. I am prepared to testify that he is the most hard-working, cheerful and athletic clergyman it has ever been my fortune to meet.

I have taken some trouble to investigate the subject of the fast, and to meet people who have been through the experience. I could give a dozen more cases such as the above if space permitted. I know one man who reduced his weight from 365 pounds to 235. I know one little girl whose spine was bent in the shape of a letter U lying sideways, and who, by means of fasting and a diet of fruits exclusively, has come four inches nearer to straightness in a few months. She has the complexion of perfect health, and is rapidly recovering the use of arms and legs, which were paralyzed years ago.

[Pg 33]

The reader may think that my enthusiasm over the fasting cure is due to my imaginative temperament; I can only say that I have never yet met a person who has given the fast a fair trial who does not describe his experience in the same way. I have never heard of any harm resulting from it, save only in cases of tuberculosis, in which I have been told by one physician that people have lost weight and not regained it.

I regard the fast as Nature's own remedy for all other diseases. It is the only remedy which is based upon an understanding of the fundamental nature of disease. And I believe that when the glad tidings of its miracles have reached the people it will lead to the throwing of 90 per cent of our present materia medica into the waste-basket. This may be unwelcome to those physicians who are more concerned with their own income than they are with the health of their patients; but I personally have never met any such physicians, and so I most earnestly urge it upon medical men to investigate the extraordinary and almost incredible facts about the fasting cure.

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Shortly after the above was completed the writer had another interesting experience with the fast. He had occasion to do some work which kept him indoors for a couple of weeks, under [Pg 34] considerable strain; and after that to spend the greater part of a week in the dentist's chair suffering a good deal of pain; and finally to spend two days and nights in a railroad train. He arrived at his destination with every symptom of what long and painful experience has taught him to recognize as a severe attack of the "grippe." (The last attack laid him up in hospital for a week, and left him so reduced that he could hardly stand.) On this occasion he fasted, and although circumstances compelled him to be up and about during the entire time, every trace of ill-feeling had left him in two days. Having started, however, he continued the fast for twelve days. During this time he planned a play, and wrote two-thirds of it, and he has reason to think that it is as good work as he has ever done. It is worth noting that on the eighth day he was strong enough to "chin" himself six times in succession, though previous to the fasting treatment he had never in his life been able to do this more