FLETCHER HORACE

FLETCHERISM

Horace Fletcher

Fletcherism

Fletcher H.

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Содержание

Horace Fletcher
Fletcherism / What it is, or how I became Young at Sixty

INTRODUCTION

Fletcherism has become a fact.

A dozen years ago it was laughed at as the "chew-chew" cult; to-day the most famous men of Science endorse it and teach its principles. Scientific leaders at the world's foremost Universities – Cambridge, England; Turin, Italy; Berne, Switzerland; La Sorbonne, France; Berlin, Prussia; Brussels, Belgium; St. Petersburg, Russia; as well as Harvard, Yale and Johns Hopkins in America – have shown themselves in complete accord with Mr. Fletcher's teachings.

The intention of the present volume is that it shall stand as a compact statement of the Gospel of Fletcherism, whereas his other volumes treat the subject more at length and are devoted to different phases of Mr. Fletcher's philosophy. The author here relates briefly the story of his regeneration, of how he rescued himself from the prospect of an early grave, and brought himself to his present splendid physical and mental condition. He tells of the discovery of his principles, which have helped millions of people to live better, happier, and healthier lives.

Mr. Fletcher writes with all his well-known literary charm and vivacity, which have won for his works such a wide-spread popular demand.

It is safe to say that no intelligent reader will peruse this work without becoming convinced that Mr. Fletcher's principles as to eating and living are the sanest that have ever been propounded; that Fletcherism demands no heroic sacrifices of the enjoyments that go to make life worth living, but, to the contrary, that the path to Dietetic Righteousness, which Mr. Fletcher would have us tread, must be the pleasantest of all life's pleasant ways.

THE PUBLISHERS

PREFACE

"*What is good for the richest man in the world, must be also good for the poorest, and all in between.*" *Daily Express, London, May 15th, 1913.*

This quotation was apropos of an announcement in the *Evening Mail*, of New York, telling that the Twentieth Century Crœsus and financial philosopher, John D. Rockefeller, had uttered a Confession of his Faith in the fundamental principles of Dietetic Righteousness and General Efficiency as follows:

"Don't gobble your food. Fletcherize, or chew very slowly while you eat. Talk on pleasant topics. Don't be in a hurry. Take time to masticate and cultivate a cheerful appetite while you eat. So will the demon indigestion be encompassed round about and his slaughter complete."

At the time this compendium of physiological and psychological wisdom concerning the source of health, comfort, and happiness came to my notice I was engaged in furnishing my publishers with a "compact statement of the Gospel of Fletcherism," as they call it, and hence the able assistance of Mr. Rockefeller was welcomed most cordially. Here it was in a nutshell, crystallized, compact, refined, monopolized as to brevity of description, masterly, and practically leaving little more to be said.

The Grand Old Man of Democracy in England, William Ewart Gladstone, had had his say on the same subject some years before, and will be known to the future of physiological fitness more permanently on account of his glorification of Head Digestion of food than for his Liberal Statesmanship.

In like manner, Mr. Rockefeller will deserve more gratitude from posterity for having prescribed the secret of highest mental and physical efficiency in thirty-three words, than for the multiple millions he is dedicating to Science and Sociological Betterment.

It will be interesting, however, to seekers after supermanish health and strength to know how the author took the "straight tip" of Mr. Gladstone, and "worked it for all it was worth" until Mr. Rockefeller referred to the process of common-sense involved as "Fletcherizing."

I assure you it is an interesting story. It has taken nearly fifteen years to bring the development to the point where Mr. Rockefeller, who is carefulness personified when it comes to committing himself for publication, is willing to express his opinion on the subject. It has cost the author unremitting, completely-absorbing, and prayerful concentration of attention, and nearly twenty thousand pounds sterling ($100,000), spent in fostering investigations and securing publicity of the results of the inquiries, with some of the best people in Science, Medicine, and Business helping him with generous assistance, to accomplish this triumph of natural sanity.

In addition to other co-operation, and the most effective, perhaps, it is appropriate to say that there is scarcely a periodical published in all the world, either technical, news-bearing, or otherwise, on the staff of which there has not been some member who has not received some personal benefit from the suggestions carried by the economic system now embodied in the latest dictionaries of many nations as "Fletcherism."

The first rule of "Fletcherism" is to feel gratitude and to express appreciation for and of all the blessings which Nature, intelligence, civilization, and imagination bring to mankind; and this utterance will be endorsed, I am sure, by the millions of persons who have found economy, health, and general happiness through attention to the requirements of dietetic righteousness. It will be especially approved by those who, like Mr. Rockefeller, gained new leases of life after having burned the candle of prudence at both ends and in the middle, to the point of nearly going out, in the struggle for money.

Yet the secret of preserving natural efficiency is even more valuable than cure or repair of damages due to carelessness and over-strain. In this respect the simple rules of Fletcherizing, embodying the requirements of Nature in co-operative nutrition, are made effective by formulating exercises whereby habit-of-conformity is formed, and takes command of the situation so efficiently,

that no more thought need be given to the matter than is necessary in regard to breathing, quenching thirst, or observing "the rule of the road" in avoiding collisions in crowded public thoroughfares.

Mr. Rockefeller's thirty-three words not only comprise the practical gist of Fletcherism, but also state the most important fact, that by these means the real dietetic devil, the devil of devils, is kept at a safe distance.

The mechanical act of mastication is easy to manage; but this is not all there is to head digestion. Bad habits of inattention and indifference have to be conquered before good habits of deliberation and appreciation are formed. These requirements of healthy nutrition have been studied extensively and analyzed thoroughly, to the end that we know that they may be acquired with ease if sought with serious interest and respect.

I began the preface by quoting the statement that "What is good for the *richest man in the world* must be also good for the poorest, and all in between." I will close by asserting that

> "Doing the right thing in securing right nutrition is easier than not if you only know how."

CHAPTER I

HOW I BECAME A FLETCHERITE

My Turning Point – How I had Ignored My Responsibility – What Happens during Mastication – The Four Principles of Fletcherism

Over twenty years ago, at the age of forty years, my hair was white; I weighed two hundred and seventeen pounds (about fifty pounds more than I should for my height of five feet six inches); every six months or so I had a bad attack of "influenza"; I was harrowed by indigestion; I was afflicted with "that tired feeling." I was an old man at forty, on the way to a rapid decline.

It was at about this time that I applied for a life-insurance policy, and was "turned down" by the examiners as a "poor risk." This was the final straw. I was not afraid to die; I had long ago learned to look upon death with equanimity. At the same time I had a keen desire to live, and then and there made a determination that I would find out what was the matter, and, if I could do so, save myself from my threatened demise.

I realised that the first thing to do was, if possible, to close up my business arrangements so that I could devote myself to the study of how to keep on the face of the earth for a few more years. This I found it possible to do, and I retired from active money-making.

The desire of my life was to live in Japan, where I had resided for several years, and to which country I was passionately devoted. My tastes were in the direction of the fine arts. Japan had been for years my Mecca – my household goods were already there, waiting until I should take up my permanent residence; and it required no small amount of will-power to turn away from the cherished hope of a lifetime, to continue travelling over the world, and concentrate upon finding a way to keep alive.

I turned my back on Japan, and began my quest for health. For a time, I tried some of the most famous "cures" in the world. Here and there were moments of hope, but in the end I was met with disappointment.

THE TURNING POINT

It was partly accidental and partly otherwise that I finally found a clue to the solution of my health disabilities. A faint suggestion of possibilities of arrest of decline had dawned upon me in the city of Galveston, Texas, some years before, and had been strengthened by a visit to an Epicurean philosopher who had a snipe estate among the marshlands of Southern Louisiana and a truffle preserve near Pau, in France. He was a disciple of Gladstone, and faithfully followed the rules relative to thorough chewing of food which the Grand Old Man of England had formulated for the guidance of his children. My friend in Louisiana attributed his robustness of health as much to this protection against overeating as to the exercise incident to his favourite sports. But these impressions had not been strong enough to have a lasting effect.

One day, however, I was called to Chicago to attend to some unfinished business affairs. They were difficult of settlement, and I was compelled to "mark time" in the Western city with nothing especially to do. It was at this time, in 1898, that I began to think seriously of eating and its effect upon health. I read a great many books, only to find that no two authors agreed; and I argued from this fact that no one had found the truth, or else there would be some consensus of agreement. So I stopped reading, and determined to consult Mother Nature herself for direction.

HOW I HAD IGNORED MY RESPONSIBILITY

I began by trying to find out why Nature required us to eat, and how and when. The key to my search was a firm belief in the good intentions of Nature in the interest of our health and happiness, and a belief also that anything less than good health and high efficiency was due to transgressions against certain good and beneficent laws. Hence, it was merely a question of search to find out the nature of the transgression.

The fault was one of nutrition, evidently.

I argued that if Nature had given us personal responsibility it was not hidden away in the dark folds and coils of the alimentary canal where we could not control it. The fault or faults must be committed before the food was swallowed. I felt instinctively that here was the key to the whole situation. The point, then, was to study the cavity of the mouth; and the first thought was: "What happens there?" and "What is present there?" The answer was: Taste, Smell (closely akin to taste and hardly to be distinguished from it), Feeling, Saliva, Mastication, Appetite, Tongue, Teeth, etc.

I first took up the careful study of Taste, necessitating keeping food in the mouth as long as possible, to learn its course and development; and, as I tried it myself, wonders of new and pleasant sensations were revealed. New delights of taste were discovered. Appetite assumed new leanings. Then came the vital discovery, which is this: I found that each of us has what I call a food-filter: a discriminating muscular gate located at the back of the mouth where the throat is shut off from the mouth during the process of mastication. Just where the tongue drops over backward toward its so-called roots there are usually five (sometimes seven, we are told) little teat-like projections placed in the shape of a horseshoe, each of them having a trough around it, and in these troughs, or depressions, terminate a great number of taste-buds, or ends of gustatory nerves. Just at this point the roof of the mouth, or the "hard palate," ends; and the "soft palate," with the uvula at the end of it, drops down behind the heavy part of the tongue.

During the natural act of chewing the lips are closed, and there is also a complete closure at the back part of the mouth by the pressing of the tongue against the roof of the mouth. During mastication, then, the mouth is an airtight pouch.

After which brief description, please note, the next time you take food,

WHAT HAPPENS DURING MASTICATION

Hold the face down, so that the tongue hangs perpendicularly in the mouth. This is for two reasons: one, because it will show how food, when properly mixed with saliva, will be lifted up in the hollow part in the middle of the tongue, against the direct force of gravity, and will collect at the place where the mouth is shut off at the back, the food-gate.

It is a real gate; and while the food is being masticated, so that it may be mixed with saliva and chemically transformed from its crude condition into the chemical form that makes it possible of digestion and absorption, this gate will remain tightly shut, and the throat will be entirely cut off from the mouth.

But as the food becomes creamy, so to speak, through being mixed with saliva, or emulsified, or alkalised, or neutralised, or dextrinised, or modified in whatever form Nature requires, the creamy substance will be drawn up the central conduit of the tongue until it reaches the food-gate.

If it is found by the taste-buds there located around the "circumvalate papillæ" (the teat-like projections on the tongue which I mentioned above) to be properly prepared for acceptance and further digestion, the food-gate will open, and the food thus ready for acceptance into the body will be sucked back and swallowed unconsciously – that is, without conscious effort.

I now started to experiment on myself. I chewed my food carefully until I extracted all taste from it there was in it, and until it slipped unconsciously down my throat. When the appetite ceased, and I was thereby told that I had had enough, I stopped; and I had no desire to eat any more until a real appetite commanded me again. Then I again chewed carefully – eating always whatever the appetite craved.

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF FLETCHERISM

I have now found out five things; all that there is to my discovery relative to optimum nutrition; and to the fundamental requisite of what is called Fletcherism.

First: Wait for a true, earned appetite.

Second: Select from the food available that which appeals most to appetite, and in the order called for by appetite.

Third: Get all the good taste there is in food out of it in the mouth, and swallow only when it practically "swallows itself."

Fourth: Enjoy the good taste for all it is worth, and do not allow any depressing or diverting thought to intrude upon the ceremony.

Fifth: Wait; take and *enjoy as much as possible* what appetite approves; Nature will do the rest.

For five months I went on patiently observing, and I found out positively in that time that I had worked out my own salvation. I had lost upwards of sixty pounds of fat: I was feeling better in all ways than I had for twenty years. My head was clear, my body felt springy, I enjoyed walking, I had not had a single cold for five months, "that tired feeling" was gone! But my skin had not yet shrunk back to fit my reduced proportions, and when I told friends whom I met that I felt well and a new man, their retort was that I certainly "did not look it!"[1]

The more I tried to convince others, the more fully I realised from talking to friends how futile and well-nigh hopeless was the attempt to get credence and sympathy for my beliefs, scientifically well founded as I felt they were. For years it proved so; and I faced the fact that to pursue the campaign for recognition meant spending much money, putting aside opportunities to make profit in other and more agreeable directions, and no end of ridicule. Sometimes, during the daytime, when I was "sizing up" the situation in my mind, treating it with calm business judgment, it seemed nothing less than insane to waste any more time or money in trying to prove my contentions.

Fully three years passed before I received encouragement from any source of recognised authority. I went first to Professor Atwater,[2] who received me most politely, but when I told him my story he threw cold water on my enthusiasm. In our correspondence afterwards he was most cordial but in no way encouraging.

The frost became more and more repellent and benumbing.

Still I persisted. At last I got hold of my first convert: a medical man, ill and discouraged; a member of a family long distinguished in the medical profession. He was Doctor Van Someren, of Venice, Italy, where I had made my home and where I lived for some years. I induced him to organise an experiment with me. We enlisted a squad of men and induced them to take food according to my ideas. We also were fortunate enough to secure the co-operation of Professor Leonardi, of Venice.

In less than three weeks the sick physician found himself relieved of his acute ailments, and it would have taken several teams of horses to hold him back from preaching his discovery.[3] A

[1] Note: – Some of these same friends, fifteen years later, when I was sixty-four years of age, as positively declared: "You never looked so well: Fletcherizing has *certainly* done well for Fletcher!"

[2] Professor W. A. Atwater, of Connecticut, U.S.A., was, in his time, a respected authority in the field of human nutrition, and, as such, was selected by the editors of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to write the chapters on Nutrition for the *Encyclopædia*.

[3] Dr. Van Someren's testimony is given as an Appendix to this volume; taken from The *A.B. – Z. of Our Own Nutrition*.

little later, we transferred the field of experiment to the Austrian Tyrol, and tested our endurance qualities, only to find a capacity for work that was not before considered possible. Then Doctor Van Someren wrote his paper for the British Medical Association, which excited the interest of Professor Sir Michael Foster, of the University of Cambridge, England, and the first wave of scientific attention was set in motion.

CHAPTER II

SCIENTIFIC TESTS

First Critical Examination at Cambridge University, England – My Endurance Test at Yale University in America

One result of this powerful interest was a test of our theories made at Cambridge University, England, organised by Sir Michael Foster, who was then Professor of Physiology at the University, and conducted by Professor Francis Gowland Hopkins. The test was successful, proving our most optimistic claims, and the report of it was published.

The scientific world now began to turn its attention to my discoveries. Doctor Henry Pickering Bowditch, of Harvard Medical School, the dean of American physiologists, put the full weight of his respected influence into the work to secure for America the honour of completing the investigation; but it was not until the experiments at Yale University, in New Haven, that the first wide publicity was accorded. The story of this and subsequent experiments and their results is this: Professor Russell H. Chittenden was at the time President of the American Physiological Association, Director of the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University, and the recognised leading physiological chemist of America. He invited me to the annual meeting of the Physiological Association at Washington, where I described the results in economy and efficiency, and especially in getting rid of fatigue of brain and muscle, obtained up to that time. But evidently to little purpose, as Professor Chittenden revealed to me at the close of the meeting. He said, in effect:

"Fletcher, all the men you have met at our meeting like you immensely, personally; but no one takes much stock in your claims, even with the endorsement of the Cambridge men; the test there was insufficient to be conclusive. If, however, you will come to New Haven and let us put you through an examination, our report will be accepted here. You will be either justified or disillusioned; and – I want to be frank with you – I think you will be disillusioned."

MY EXAMINATION

by Dr. Chittenden showed a daily average of 44.9 grams of proteid, 38.0 grams of fat, and 253 grams of carbohydrates, with a total average calorie value of 1,606 (*compare this with the Voit Diet Standard, page 109*), and careful and thorough tests made at the Yale Gymnasium proved that, in spite of this relatively low ration, I was in prime physical condition.

Previously, as before stated, in the autumn of 1901, Dr. Van Someren had accompanied me to Cambridge for the purpose of having our claims closely investigated, with the assistance of physiological experts. The Cambridge and the Venice findings were fully confirmed at New Haven, and striking physical evidence was added by Doctor William Gilbert Anderson's examinations of me in the Yale Gymnasium. This latter test, described on page 24, was more practically important as an eye-opener to both doctors and laymen than were the laboratory reports. I personally showed endurance and strength in special tests superior to the foremost among the College athletes. This was without training and with comparatively small muscle; the superiority of the muscle lying in the quality and not in the amount of it.

Professor Chittenden then became intensely interested in the matter, as did also Professor Mendel; and the former suggested organising an experiment on a sufficiently large scale to prove

universality of application or the reverse. He volunteered his services and the use of his laboratory facilities.

At this time, too, I became acquainted with General Leonard Wood[4] and Surgeon-General O'Reilly, of the United States Army. I found both open to my evidence; and, in the case of General Wood, I learned that it was confirmed by his own experience while chasing Indians in the Western wilds. Through them President Roosevelt and Secretary Root became interested, and *carte blanche* was given General O'Reilly to use the War Department facilities, including the soldiers of the Hospital Corps, for assistance in the proposed experiment.[5]

One of the revelations of our experiments worthy of mention here was that occasional long abstinence from food, say two or three weeks, with water freely available, is comparatively harmless, if "Fletcherizing" is carefully practised when food is again given to the body. Nature prescribes accurately what is to be eaten (often the most unexpected sort of food); and if the food selected by appetite is carefully masticated, sipped, or whatever other treatment is necessary to get the good taste out of it, and the mental state at the same time is clear of fear-thought or worry of any kind, the just amount that the body can use at the moment is prescribed by appetite, and the restoration to normal weight is accomplished with epicurean delight, well worth a spell of deprivation.

THE IRVING FISHER EXPERIMENTS

The tests of endurance, which were conducted by Professor Irving Fisher, of Yale, now President of the Committee of One Hundred on National Health of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and with the co-operation of the famous athletic coach, Alonzo B. Stagg, formerly of Yale, but now of the University of Chicago – on College athletes, students of sedentary habits, and on members of the staff of the Battle Creek Sanatorium – are of prodigious importance in their relation to the possibilities of human endurance through simple Fletcherizing.

The reports include a test in what is termed "deep-knee bending," or squatting on the heels and then lifting the body to full height as many times as possible. John H. Granger, of the Battle Creek Sanatorium staff, did this feat 5,002 times consecutively in two hours and nineteen minutes and could have continued. He then ran down a flight of steps to the swimming-pool, plunged in and had a swim, slept sweetly and soundly for the usual time, and showed no signs of soreness or other disability afterwards.

Doctor Wagner gave his strenuous contribution to our knowledge of possibilities of endurance by holding his arms out horizontally for 200 minutes without rest – three hours and twenty minutes. At the end of that time he showed no signs of fatigue, and stopped only because of the weariness shown by those who were watching and counting the minutes. These statements seem like exaggerations, but they are not.

Both of these tests can be tried by any one in the privacy of his or her own bedroom.

Doctor Anderson, Director of the Yale Gymnasium, taking advantage of the cue offered by the Yale experiments, which he superintended, practised Fletcherizing in all its branches. At the end of six years he put the muscles thus purified to the test, with the result that he added fifteen pounds of pure muscle to a frame that never carried more than 135 pounds before in the half century of its existence, and demonstrated that the same progressive recuperation that I have enjoyed is open and available to others who have passed middle life.

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[4] Now Chief of Staff.

[5] The full report of this famous experiment may be found in Professor Chittenden's book *Physiological Economy in Nutrition*; but such small mention of indebtedness to Fletcherism was made, that Professor Irving Fisher, in the interest of practical Political Economy, organised a supplemental experiment, more normal than the first, to test the economic effects of Fletcherism, pure and simple.A brief account of this investigation is given on page 98.Professor Chittenden made amends, later on, by composing a physiological prose poem on the benefits and delights resulting from careful chewing and tasting of nutriment, which I quote in full in Chapter VII.

Mr. Stapleton, one of Professor Chittenden's volunteers, grasped the same valuable cue while serving as one of the heavy-weight test-subjects in the Yale experiments. He reduced his waist measurement to thirty inches and a half, increased his chest measurement to forty-four inches; and has refined his physique until his ribs show clearly through his flesh, while his muscles mount tall and strong where muscle is needed in the economy of efficiency. In the meantime, without training other than that connected with his teaching, he increased the total of his strength and endurance more than one hundred per cent.; and reduced his amount of food by nearly, if not quite, half – as have also Doctor Anderson and myself.

MY ENDURANCE TEST AT YALE

These are merely typical cases of distinguished and measured improvement.

How the movement went on from step to step others have told, and I need not follow it further here.

Two years after I began my experiments my strength and endurance had increased beyond my wildest expectation. On my fiftieth birthday I rode nearly two hundred miles on my bicycle over French roads, and came home feeling fine. Was I stiff the next day? Not at all, and I rode fifty miles the next morning before breakfast in order to test the effect of my severe stunt.[6]

When I was fifty-eight years of age, at the Yale University Gymnasium, under the observation of Dr. Anderson, I lifted three hundred pounds dead weight three hundred and fifty times with the muscles of my right leg below the knee. The record of the best athlete then was one hundred and seventy-five lifts, so I doubled the world's record of that style of tests of endurance.

The story of this test at Yale, when I doubled the "record" about which so much has been written, is this: Professor Irving Fisher, of Yale, had devised a new form of endurance-testing machine intended to be used upon the muscles most commonly in use by all persons. Obviously these are the muscles used in walking. Quite a large number of tests had been measured by the Fisher machine, but it was still being studied with a view to possible simplification.

I was asked to try it and to suggest any changes that might improve it. I did so, and handled the weight with such seeming ease that Dr. Anderson asked me whether I would not make a thorough test of my endurance. This I was glad to do.

The Professor Irving Fisher Endurance Testing Machine is weighted to 75 per cent. of the lifting capacity of the subject, ascertained by means of the Kellog Mercurial Dynamometer. The lifting is timed to the beats of a metronome.

When I began, Dr. Anderson cautioned me against attempting too much. I asked him what he considered "too much," and he replied: "For a man of your age, not in training, I should not recommend trying more than fifty lifts." So I began the test, lifting the weight to the beat of the metronome at the rate of about one in two seconds, and had soon reached the fifty mark. "Be careful," repeated Dr. Anderson, "you may not feel that you are overdoing now, but afterwards you may regret it."

But I felt no strain and went on.

When seventy-five had been exceeded, Dr. Anderson called Dr. Born from his desk to take charge of the counting and watching to see that the lifts were fully completed, and ran out into the gymnasium to call the masters of boxing, wrestling, fencing, etc., to witness the test. When they had gathered about the machine, Dr. Anderson said to them, "It looks as if we were going to see a record-breaking." I then asked, "What are the records?" Dr. Anderson replied, "One hundred and seventy-five lifts is the record; only two men have exceeded one hundred; the lowest was thirty-three, and the average so far is eighty-four."

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[6] Detailed account of this test is given in *The New Glutton or Epicure*, New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.

In the meantime I had reached one hundred and fifty lifts, and the interest was centered on the question as to whether I should reach the high record, one hundred and seventy-five.

When one hundred and seventy-five had been reached, Dr. Anderson stepped forward to catch me in case the leg in use in the test should not be able to support me when I stopped and attempted to stand up. But I did not stop lifting the three-hundred-pound weight. I kept right on, and as I progressed to two hundred, two hundred and fifty, three hundred, and finally to double the record, three hundred and fifty lifts, the interest increased progressively.

After adding a few to the three hundred and fifty I stopped, not because I was suffering from fatigue, but because the pounding of the iron collar on the muscles above my knee had made the place so pummelled very sore, as if hit a great number of times with a heavy sledge-hammer. I had doubled the record, and that seemed sufficient for a starter in the competition.

As I stood up, Dr. Anderson reached up his arms to support me. But I needed no support. The leg that had been in use felt a trifle lighter, but in no sense weak or tired.

Then I was examined for heart-action, steadiness of nerve, muscle, etc., and was found to be all right, with no evidence of strain. A glass brimming full of water was placed first in one hand and then in the other, and was held out at arm's length without spilling any of the water.

Next morning I was examined for evidence of soreness, but none was present. There was the normal elasticity and tone of muscle.

Later in that same year, at the International Young Men's Christian Association Training School at Springfield, Massachusetts, I lifted seven hundred and seventy pounds with the muscles of the back and legs – a feat that weight-lifting athletes find hard to perform. And I did these stunts eating two meals a day, one at noon and the other at six o'clock, at an average cost of eleven cents a day.

Still another examination at the University of Pennsylvania resulted in my breaking the College record of lifting power with the back muscles. I do not cite these instances as feats of extraordinary prowess, but just to show the difference in my condition then and twenty years before. All this I have done simply by keeping my body free of excess of food and the poisons that come from the putrefaction of the food that the organism does not want and cannot take care of.

As to myself, I am now past sixty-four. I weigh one hundred and seventy pounds, which is a good weight for my height. During the many years of experiment I have ranged between two hundred and seventeen and one hundred and thirty pounds, but have "settled down" to my present quite convenient figure. I feel perfectly well; I can do as much work as can a man of forty – more than can the average man of forty, I believe. I rarely have a cold, and although I am always careless in this regard, my work is never delayed. I do not know what it is to have "that tired feeling," except as expressed by sleepiness. When I get into bed I scarce ever remember my head striking the pillow, and after four and one-half hours I awake from a dreamless slumber with a happy waking thought in process of formation.

I usually find it agreeable to court supplemental naps, to be followed by more pleasant waking thoughts: but these are pure luxury. I can do with five hours sleep if need be.

CHAPTER III

WHAT I AM ASKED ABOUT FLETCHERISM

Let Nature Choose the Meals – How Many Meals a Day? – Housewives – Fletcherism – The Financial Economy of Fletcherism – Business People and Fletcherism – The True Epicure

What do I eat?
When do I eat?
How much do I eat?

My answer to all these questions is very simple. I eat anything that my appetite calls for; I eat it only when it *does* call for it; and I eat until my appetite is satisfied and cries "Enough!"

With my New England food preferences, my range of selection circulates among a very simple and inexpensive variety, namely, potatoes, corn-bread, beans, occasionally eggs, milk, cream, toast-and-butter, etc.; and combinations of these, such as hashed-browned potatoes, potatoes in cream, potatoes *au gratin*, baked potatoes, potato pats, fish-balls – mainly composed of potato; occasionally tomato stewed with plenty of powdered sugar; oyster stew with the flavour of celery; escalloped oysters, etc. The taste for fruits is always suitable to the season, and is intermittent, strong leanings towards some particular fruit persisting for a time and then waning to give place to some other preference.

But with all my fifteen or twenty years of unremitting study of the subject, I cannot now tell what my body is going to want to-morrow. But Nature knows, and she alone knows.

LET NATURE CHOOSE THE MEAL

Once in Venice a group of experimenters, of which I was one, subsisted on milk alone. During seventeen days nothing but milk, always from the same cow, and fresh from the milking, passed my lips in the way of food or drink. I sipped the milk, and tasted it for all the taste there was in it, and I learned to be so fond of it that it was with some difficulty that I went back to a varied diet when the experiment called for a change. Good, fresh milk is an exception to Nature's dislike for monotony in food. Milk is the one perfectly-balanced food material; and while it may not be always the best food for grown persons, it is the most acceptable as a monotonous diet, and always is good, sufficient and safe nutriment, if sipped, tasted, and naturally swallowed.

I have forgotten just what the exact quantity was that I consumed daily during those seventeen days – I believe it was about two quarts. I get away as far as possible from quantitative amounts, which may influence other persons. The appetite is the only true guide to bodily need; and if milk is tasted and swallowed only by involuntary compulsion as required by right feeding, the appetite will gauge the bodily need exactly, and cut off short when enough for the moment has been taken.

So I say to all who ask me these questions as applied to themselves: I cannot advise you appropriately what to eat, when to eat, nor how much to eat; neither can anybody else. Trust to Nature absolutely, and accept her guidance.

If she calls for pie, eat pie. If she calls for it at midnight eat it then, but eat it right. Understand the food filter at the back of the mouth as I have described it in a previous article, and use it in connection with the pie. If it is used properly, and all the taste is extracted from the pie, and it is

swallowed only in response to the natural opening of the gate, and if the ingredients of the pie that are not swallowed naturally are removed from the mouth, nothing will happen to disturb profound sleep.

Few persons will crave mince pie or Welsh rarebit late at night. The worker on a morning paper may do so, and often does. He has earned his appetite, and sometimes it is so robust as to call for mince pie or Welsh rarebit; but if these are eaten properly they will then be utilised by the body, eagerly and easily.

I dwell purposely upon this extravagance of eating. It is to accentuate the fact that we want to get as far away as possible, when cultivating vital economies, from the idea of extraneous advice in the matter of food.

The ordinary person will probably find his appetite leaning towards the simplest of foods, and away from frequency of indulgence. If the breakfast is postponed until a real, earned appetite has been secured, the mid-day or later breakfast (remember always that breakfast means the first meal of the day, no matter when taken) will be so enjoyable a meal, and the appetite will be so entirely satisfied that there will be no more demand for food until evening, and possibly not even then.

HOW MANY MEALS A DAY?

I am often asked if it is true that I eat only two meals a day; that I never eat breakfast, and why I have dropped that meal.

I have two meals a day more habitually than any other number, but not with any prescribed regularity, for the reason that my activities are most irregular at times, and my appetite accommodates itself to my needs.

When I am doing work under the most favourable of conditions, one meal a day is the rhythm best appreciated by my body. But the question of "How many meals a day?" is tantamount to the inquiry as to the amount of sleep needed: it is a matter of satisfaction of the natural requirements. The harder one works, the faster one runs, etc., the more air he needs. The same applies to the need for food according to the amount of heat eliminated, and the repair material consumed. The really hardest work that anybody does is done within the body. Muscular effort in normal conditions is not so waste-provoking and exacting as getting rid of excess of food and the counteraction of worry or anger. Likewise, idleness begets uneasiness, uneasiness begets desire for something (nobody knows just what), and groping around for "Don't know what" causes the temptation to eat and drink something which the body does not need; and then the really hard work of the body begins in the attempt of Nature to get rid of the excess. Excess of water can be thrown off in perspiration with comparative ease, but with excess of food it is different. The kidneys, bacteria and fuel furnaces of the body are all over-worked to get rid of it.

When I am so busy that I have only time to replenish the real exhausted need of the body, say half an hour at most, I find one meal a day all that my appetite demands of me. This is taken after I have done my day's work of, say, eight hours of writing, or twelve or thirteen hours of bicycle riding or mountain climbing, and then I do not have appetite for more until the next day, after the work is done.

When I mention two meals as being the more habitual, it is because I am not fully, constructively active all the time now, although I am usually "snowed under" with things that I *might* do to advantage; and hence I conform to the social custom and sit down to table some time in the evening to be social.

The reason I have dropped the habit-hunger morning meal is because I find that it is unnatural in my case. My experience showed me that omission of the early morning meal led to desire for a lighter but more satisfactory mid-day meal, and took away the craving for the evening supper. I first came to this realisation during excessive hot weather and monotonously trying environment. The only time I could write comfortably was before sun-up in the morning. Absorbed in my writing I did not realise the growing heat of the day until I actually began to rain perspiration, by which time it was

nearly noon. Then came the mid-day meal of breakfast selection with salad and fruit preponderating. The best of feelings followed, the waist-line shrank, and one meal satisfied.

In order to try the urgency of any habit appetite – the early morning meal, for instance – take a drink of water instead, and note if that does not suffice as well as food to allay the craving for "something." A cup of hot water, with sugar and milk to suit the taste, is amply sufficient. Water will not satisfy a real, earned appetite; but it often will effectually allay a purely habit-hunger such as that for early breakfast.

HOUSEWIVES AND FLETCHERISM

A great many women ask: "But how is it possible to follow such a haphazard way of eating in a home without upsetting the whole routine of the household, disturbing the work of the servants? You can't just have your family eating whenever they like."

My answer is this: The possible disturbance to domestic regularity and convenience, because of the difficulty of supplying different members of the family only when appetite in each case is "just good and ready," is purely imaginary. Persons of regular occupations will accommodate themselves to the ordinary rhythm of meal schedule easily and naturally, with the difference that they may occasionally skip a meal or two when the ordinary activity has been lessened.

The general experience has been, that concentration on one particular meal, either at noon or in the evening, will suit everybody, and other feedings will be "snoopings" from the larder, or taken at a restaurant in those instances where one's occupation is remote from home. The "Fletcherite" at business frequently follows the method of having nuts or plain biscuits in his desk in case he feels like taking them; and the business woman would do well to profit by his example.

The adoption of Fletcheristic simplicity leads to the solving of the eternal household problem, and under its influence it is possible for woman's work to be done sooner, giving physical relief and more time for healthful recreation.

Diminution of the demand for meat-foods has much to do with both the ease of house-work, and the modification of cost. But this is not the most important saving. The saving of liability to intestinal toxication (poisoning) is the great economy of the method.

THE FINANCIAL ECONOMY OF FLETCHERISM

It has been stated by writers who have correctly reported results that more than two hundred thousand families in America live according to Fletcherism and save as much as a dollar a day on their living expenses. This has led many to ask: "How are one's living expenses reduced by your principles?"

The estimate, arrived at a few years ago, that some two hundred thousand families in America were saving an average of a dollar a day through Fletcherizing, was made, I believe, by Doctor Kellog, of Battle Creek, Michigan. Through the thousands of patients who pass under his observation, and through a comprehensive touch with the sale of different kinds of food throughout the country, Doctor Kellog has his finger on the pulse of the nation in relation to its dietetic circulation. Fletcherism first affected families of sumptuous tastes, and the economy of it easily effected a saving of an average of a dollar a day, largely in the diminution of meat requirements and complex dishes.

The spread of the movement has now begun to encompass families of lesser luxury of habits; and here it is found that an average saving of ten cents a day for each person is easily accomplished. In the Christian Endeavour Society alone, the leaders of the movement, as the result of their own practical experience, hoped to effect a saving of hundreds of thousands of dollars a day through the spread of this economic nutritive teaching. This was likewise the aspiration of the Roman Catholic benevolent organisations. A circular letter signed by the Reverend Father Higgins, of Germantown,

Pennsylvania, which was distributed widely, declared that, in addition to the food economy sought to be obtained, a condition which makes for poverty – that is, intemperance – was overcome by Fletcherism.

Father Higgins declared that "*No Fletcherite can be intemperate in the use of alcoholic stimulants*," and he was right in his assertion.

BUSINESS PEOPLE AND FLETCHERISM

What would be the best way for business people to adopt Fletcherism? is often asked. The case is frequently cited to me of a young man or woman who isn't hungry for breakfast at seven o'clock, does not eat at that time because the appetite doesn't demand it; and then gets ravenously hungry at eleven o'clock. It may be impossible to get any food until one-thirty – by which time the feeling comes that one has "waited too long," and a headache and no desire for food are the results. Or, the case of working-girls who live in boarding-houses, eat no breakfast, and at noon cannot afford the wholesome and hearty food Nature would then crave. Later, at dinner, they have to eat what is put before them, whether they want it or not, or else go without. Will a hearty luncheon, rightly eaten, interfere with a good afternoon's work? I am reminded also that leisure, money, and easily-accessible cafés are not always available for business women.

My answer to such questions is: – Any change of habit is apt to excite a protest on behalf of the body, especially when the body is not properly nourished, and is in a state of more or less disease. When the habit-hunger comes on a few sips of water will quiet the discomfort for the time being and, very likely, until it is convenient to take food comfortably and with the calm and relish necessary to good digestion. Headache, faintness, "all-goneness" and like discomforts, are symptoms, not of hunger, but of the reverse – that is, fermentation of undigested excess of food which the body cannot use.

A person, thus troubled, should brave discomfort for a week, and even go without food entirely for a few meals, in order to give the body a chance to "clean house": then the real sensation of hunger will be expressed by "watering of the mouth" and a keen desire for some simple food such as bread and butter, or dry bread alone. But this healthy appetite will "keep" and accumulate until it is convenient to take food.

THE TRUE EPICURE

I am, personally, a hearty man in full activity, both mental and physical. I can work six hours and then satisfy the keenest of appetites on a meal of wheat griddle-cakes with maple syrup and a glass or two of milk. A young working woman should be able to do the same. If I eat such a meal with "gusto," deliberation (so as to enjoy the maximum of taste), taking not more than fifteen minutes over it, I can then go to work, or play, or to mountain climbing, or to riding a bicycle, and keep it up until I am sleepy, with no sense of repletion or discomfort.

"Money, leisure and easily-accessible cafés" are the menace of right nutrition, unless one is proof against temptation to kill time in this dangerous manner.

Steady work to earn a true appetite, small means to spend on food, the necessity of going to seek it, with the appreciation which comes from rarity, are the very best safeguards to right nutrition.

I am an epicure. Yet I have never seen a boarding-house, nor a restaurant, nor a camp where I could not find something to satisfy a true (earned) appetite. During more than a year in the Far East – Ceylon, Java, the Philippines, China, Burma, India, Kashmir – and at many steamer and railway lunch tables, I always found something good to satisfy a keen appetite. If you are all right inside, and will only conquer your habit-hungers, I believe you can live sumptuously, anywhere, on less than two shillings a day. I can, and often do; and do it, too, at one hundred and seventy pounds weight and

"awfully busy" all the time. It may be difficult, and perhaps painful, at first, to get the best of bad habit-cravings, but it is worth while. A week should accomplish the reformation.

A number of men ask me: "Do you honestly believe that in your theories lies the secret of long life?" I do, and I may give one example of a "lived model" of longevity as the result of Fletcherism in all its ramifications of temperance of eating, careful mastication, radiant optimism, practical altruism, superabundant activity, etc. The Honourable Albert Gallatin Dow, of Randolph, New York, passed away in May, 1908, lacking less than three months of a hundred years of age. Up to the last moment of his century of life there was no encroachment of senility, and he fell, ripe fruit, into the lap of Mother Nature, without a blemish of decay. Shortly before he passed away, Mr. Dow invited me to see him, and told me that he had received a shock of warning early in life as I had done late in life, and had made the same discovery that had reformed me. He believed that he owed his health and vigour to following the simple requirements of Nature, as I was teaching; but he had his career to make at the time, and had not had the leisure and means to preach dietetic righteousness as I was doing. He wished me Godspeed on my mission. All inquiry in all directions, wherever longevity has been accomplished, reveals the same simplicity of habits of living, which are the natural points of Fletcherizing.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.