

help to keep the curdy matter of the food in solution in the blood and in the juices of the mouth and stomach and bowels. There are other uses which you cannot understand, but the important thing to know is that we must have salts as part of our food. Not too much, and not too little, but just enough to keep our bodies in good health. They seem to act like oil on a piece of machinery; indeed, we may say that they keep the machinery of our bodies in good working order.

Water, too, is just as necessary as the other four kinds of food. You cannot live on dry food. If you tried to eat dry bread, you would find that you could eat some of it, but not much. After a little, you would find yourself choking. People can live longer without food than they can without water. It does not itself give us any strength: but it keeps the curds, and fats and starches in *solution*, so that the blood can suck the good out of them as they pass down the bowel. As water makes up almost nine-tenths of the blood, the water may be said to be the means by which our food is carried from the bowels and carried all over the body to the flesh, and muscles, and nerves, and other parts, which need to be nourished.

Water, then, is part of our food just as much as curd or salt is. We must take a certain amount of it every day, if the other foodstuffs do not contain enough water. If we lived on milk, we should not need to take any water. But if we lived on bread and butter and cheese, or other such foods, we should need to drink a good deal of water. Here, however, the same rule holds good as in the case of other foods. We must not take too little water; nor too much water. It would not be quite so bad for us to take too much or too little water as it would be to take too much or too little curd. But too much of any of the foods is bad for us. Too much of any one of them—even water—would sicken us, because everything which we eat, and which our bodies do not want, will do us harm. They go round and round in the blood and act as a poison.

But besides the five things which are absolutely necessary for us as food, there are many other things which many people take, which they have learned to like, and which they claim do them no harm. I mean such things as tea, coffee, cocoa, wine, beer, and a number of other things containing alcohol, or spirits of wine. What about these? Are they necessary, like the foods, or can we live without them? There is no doubt as to what the answer should be. They are certainly not necessary for keeping us well and strong. Much less are they necessary for keeping us alive. Foods we must have, but tea, coffee, and all kinds of drinks containing spirits of wine or alcohol need not be taken at all. Many people never take any of these drinks, and feel none the worse. On the other hand, it must be said that many people have drunk tea, coffee and cocoa daily for years, and claim that they have not been harmed by them. Some people, also, who have taken a little ale or wine for years, claim that they have not only not been *harmed* by small quantities of these drinks, but think that these liquors have done them good.

Let us first look at the effects of tea and coffee, because, if we understand clearly how these act upon our bodies we shall the better be able to understand