

Cities having even a very hard water supply do not show the prevalence of any disease that can be attributed to the water and we may conclude that the lime compounds present do not work any injury to health. As already remarked sudden changes from one character of water to another, whether hard to soft or soft to hard, may cause disturbance in the system, but such will only be temporary. The system requires lime to build up its skeleton and for its other tissues and it may take it from the water as well as from the food; there is nothing to prove that the lime taken in the water is not as readily assimilable as that in the food stuffs we consume. Consensus of opinion points to a moderately hard spring water, in which all possibility of contamination is out of the question, as probably the best supply, but such unfortunately is very hard to find.

2. Is distilled water wholesome? The only argument that can be urged against its use for drinking is that it does not contain the necessary mineral elements for the building up of the tissues and for the replacement of the daily outgo of these elements. The answer is that in the ordinary, normal diet there is such an abundance of the mineral salts that the absence of them in the drinking water need cause no alarm. There is much to be said in favor of distilled water, as it should be free from all forms of organic matter and disease germs.

3. What means can the householder take towards making a suspicious water harmless? Undoubtedly the best plan is to boil the water for from 5 to 15 minutes. This is the most efficient safeguard that can be proposed for the individual. Household filters, though removing suspended matter, are seldom to be depended upon to deprive the water of germ life and at the best require constant attention and cleansing to be kept even fairly efficient. The addition of hypochlorite of lime, now largely used in the purification of city supplies is not readily applicable in the house and cannot be regarded as equal to boiling for the destruction of germs. The boiled water may be rendered palatable and the "flat" taste removed, by being allowed to cool in the open air.

And now in conclusion, I must emphasize two points. The first is the insidious character of polluted water. The danger that lurks in water polluted with excretal products is not always apparent. This fact must not be lost sight of. There may be no outbreak of typhoid fever, but it may be generally undermining the health. In far too many cases the well goes unsuspected until the victim is stricken down. The moral is, ascertain the purity of the supply.

And the second point is that there is abundance almost everywhere of pure water. There is no better watered country