

# An Out-Door Living Room

**F**ADS and foolishness are synonymous as a rule. But like all others, this rule, too, has an exception which means that at last a sane and sensible fad is being exploited. It is the fad of sleeping out doors.

In every age some wise person has sung the praises of the outdoor life. Once it was the only life. Then came the houses and the open fires, and following closely the furnaces, climaxed by the demon of warming methods—steam heat. Just as surely there followed over-heated houses, poor ventilation and disease.

Now people are fighting that disease, and everywhere are signs of the battle against tuberculosis, the main weapon in the fight being—pure air and plenty of it. So through an old but powerful motive force, the fear of death, people are coming to realize the value of the outdoor life.

The moment a person develops signs of the dread disease, he is ordered to live in the open. That sounds simple enough, but is often difficult enough. If a man has a family to support and depends on daily wages, or even a weekly salary, he can't go merrily off to the woods to enjoy the simple life and live in the open. Yet if he stays at home, sleeping indoors and working all day in a close office, he runs a good chance of ending it all sooner than he might choose. This situation has led a number of energetic people who decided that they did not want to die yet and simply would not, to combine their enforced daily routine with the outdoor life. One man who was a prominent dentist in eastern Canada spent a hundred dollars in having a piazza built on the west side of his house, and connected with his room by a French window. The piazza was screened in by mosquito netting and built on the second story of the house to shelter it a little from public curiosity. He then ordered a "shake down" and an Adirondack sleeping bag. His outfit complete, he slept in his open air bedroom every night, even when the thermometer went many degrees below zero. In telling of his experiment he said: "Really, you know, I do not object so much to the snow or rain as they usually come down so straight that they do not reach me, but the moonlight is very distracting. Until I became accustomed to it I had to go to sleep under an umbrella every night."

This man, who is the fashionable dentist of the city, has been able to keep up a practice for several hundred dollars a week, has added many years to his lease of life, and has derived no end of fun just from sleeping out of doors.

Another interesting example of what the outdoor life will do is that of a college girl who developed inherited tendencies to tuberculosis just as she was about to enter college. The doctor ordered her to give up all idea of the higher education and to live out of doors. It was a bitter disappointment to her, for she had counted on the college life ever since she was a little girl. She devised all sorts of schemes and finally asked the doctor if she couldn't combine the outdoor life with the college.

"Yes, by sleeping in a tent on the campus," he told her, laughing.

The idea suggested a new scheme to the girl. She persuaded her mother to take a journey to the college during the long vacation and look over all the dormitories. To her great joy, they found that one had a second-story piazza connecting with one room. Immediately they wrote to the registrar to know if it were possible to engage that special room, and to the president asking permission for the student to sleep outside on the piazza every night. Both requests were granted and the girl is now in her senior year at college, and in better health than for several years before she went. From September to December she sleeps outside in her aerial couch every night, then again from February to June, but the two months intervening she finds too severe and has to go inside to sleep.

Other persons than those fighting tuberculosis germs are entering heart and soul into the outdoor fad. Only this summer a young couple who wished to avoid the usual "Pullman, hotel and pleasure resort honeymoon," decided to begin their married life in the open air. So instead of packing a trunk with dainty articles from the troussseau they filled a burlap bag with cooking utensils, blankets, pillows and a tent, and camped out for a month in a little Ontario village.

All their meals were cooked on the top of an old stove set across two stones with a roaring fire of pine boughs underneath. He made the fire and brought water, while she did the cooking. At night he picked fresh cedar boughs and spread them thick and soft on the ground inside the tent, while she smoothed the blanket over them. Then they each rolled up in a blanket and slept a deep, sound, refreshing sleep. It was perfect joy to waken with the birds and sun and to feel as though chopping trees would be mere child's play.

Even the thunderstorms that came on suddenly in the night failed to detract from the pleasure. The lightning would make the white wet sides of the tent gleam like ice, and the thunder rolled right close overhead, but inside was warm and comfortable, yes, and a little wonderful, for not everyone has stayed in a tent during a midnight storm. When the wind howled and threatened to lift the tent up and leave the sleepers with only the blankets for protection it was a trifle awful, but that happened only once. Altogether it was a perfect honeymoon, they said, and far better than a hotel with everything a la mode.

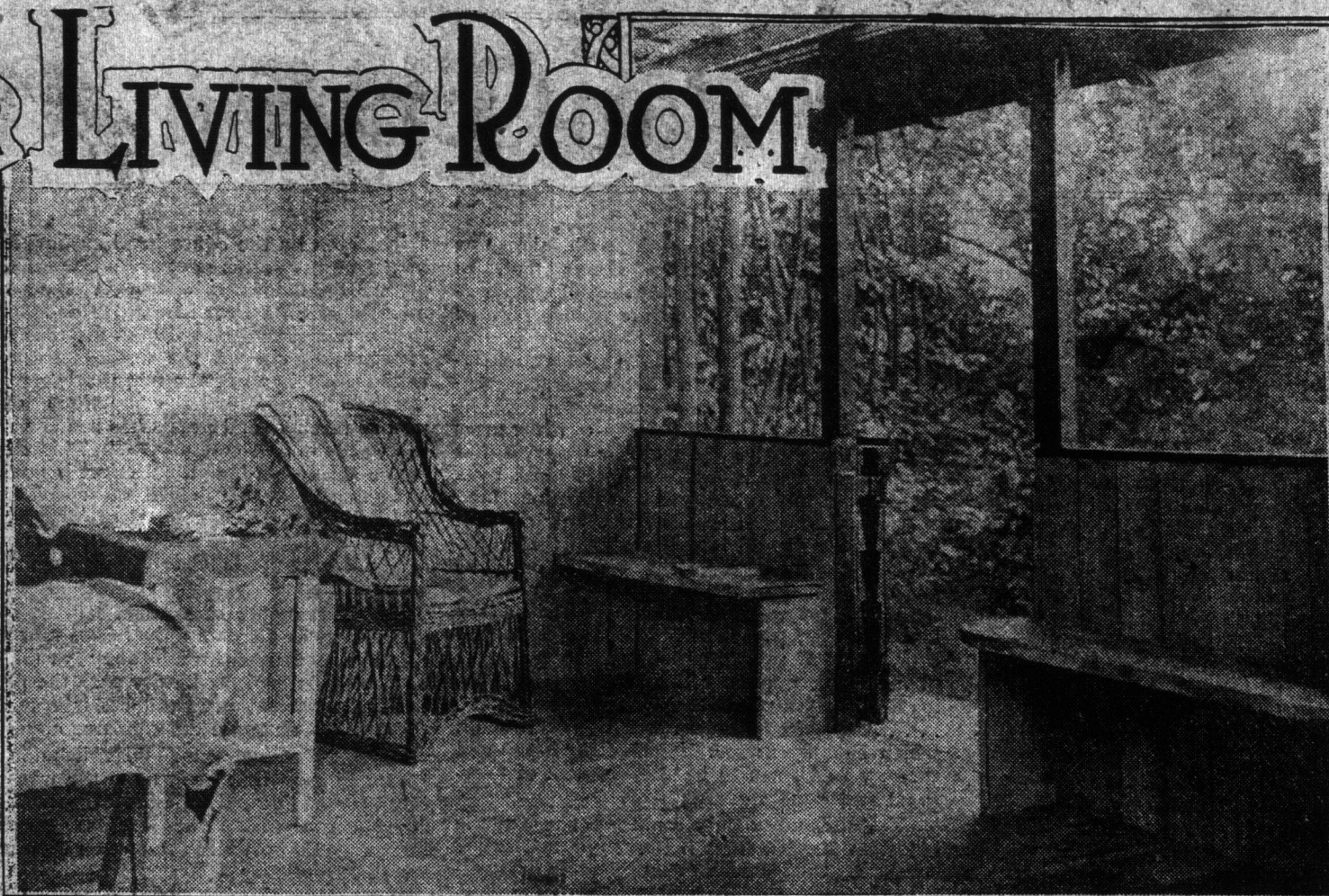
Stevenson has written wonderfully of the outdoor life, and any one who has lived it and wants to tell of the joys but cannot find words, should read his "Night in the Pines."


In an article in American Homes and Gardens, Carine Cadley writes of "Garden Rooms" as follows:

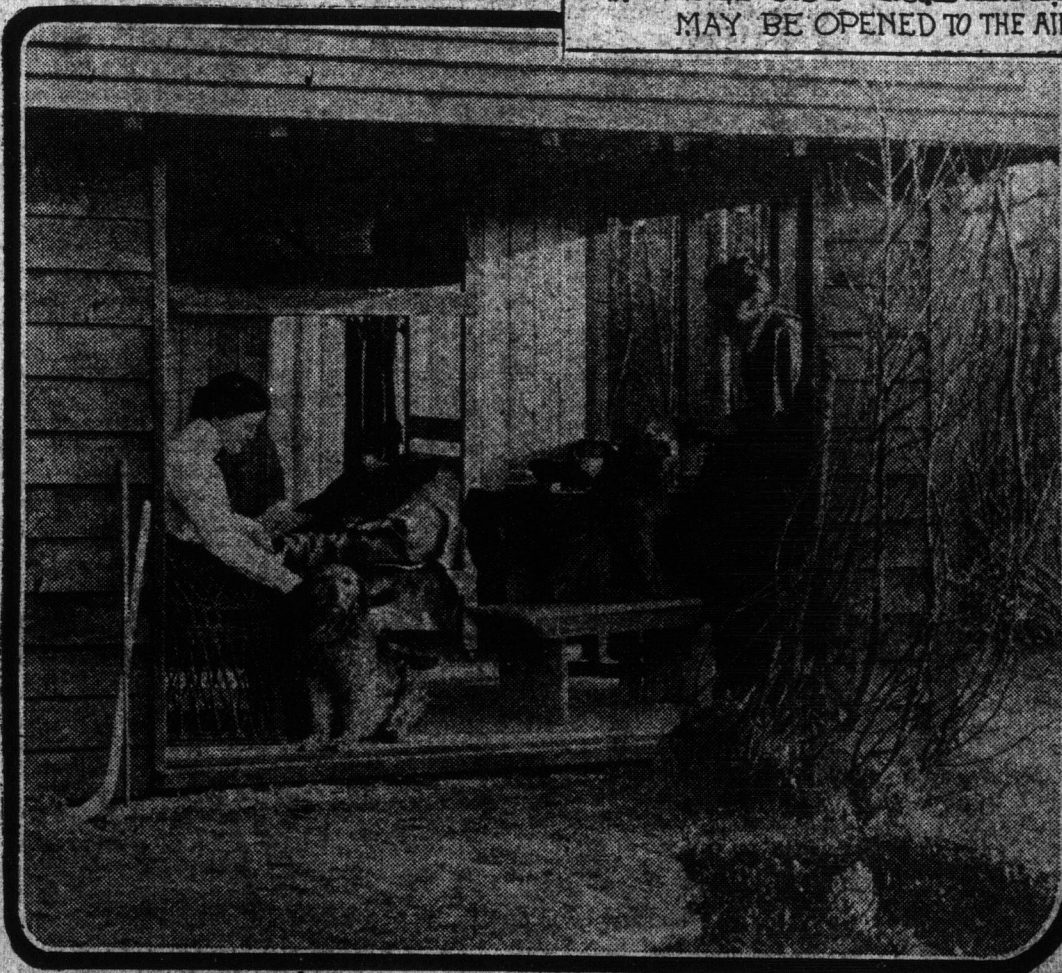
Everyone can live out of doors in hot weather, but there is so much in-between weather when it is just too cold or too windy to be quite in the open and when one yet longs to be out of doors. It was just such a time when a bright sun was shining and a very cold wind blowing that my sister Joan and I thought of having a hut built in our garden that should be a kind of garden room. And such a success has it been, and so much pleasure have we had out of it, that I can confidently recommend it to all those who love an open-air life.

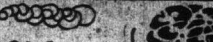
We had also been bitten with the craze for sleeping out of doors, so that our hut was also to be our night abode as well as our garden room.

We interviewed our local builder and carpenter and explained what we wanted. Our ideas on the subject—just a little house, with two sides open and a few shutters to put up—seemed so lucid and clear to ourselves, but when our village architect arrived with plans that looked like a cross between a chapel and



A WHOLE SIDE  MAY BE OPENED TO THE AIR



SLEEPING BUNKS  WITHIN THE ROOM



THE ROOM IN THE WOODS



INSIDE AN OPEN-AIR BEDROOM

a stable we had to get the advice of a practical cousin. And for the sake of those who for health's or pleasure's sake wish to live or sleep more in the open I will describe our little garden room. It is a square hut, ten by ten feet, built of weather boarding, with a boarded floor. It has two sides solid and two sides open (namely, south and west) so that there will almost always be a shelter. The roof slants to a point so that the rain can run off. It is well tarred and has felt as well, for unless the little room is quite weatherproof it would lose half its value, and it would be a cheerless experience to wake up one rainy night with the wet dripping through on to one's face.

The west side opens to the ground, and has three large shutters which can be put up for shelter, should the wind draw from that quarter; the south side has what the local carpenter called a "dado" of about three feet in height, and a door in the middle the same height. This side has five small shutters, so that one can make it a solid wall or only shut off a corner or part of it just as the vagaries of the wind demand. With all these shutters it will be seen one has a good deal of latitude, and it is amusing how soon necessity teaches one to be weather-wise, and one soon learns which parts to shut up and which to have open. One boisterous night that blew our hair about on our pillows taught us more than all our practical cousin's explanations.

Of course, we could have had a revolving house, but the size we wanted would have been most ruinously expensive, and our little room has only cost us under seventy-five dollars.

We gave a good deal of thought to the furnishing, our idea being to have as little in it as possible, no hangings or upholstery or anything unnecessary that should make it like an indoor place. As two beds would have taken up too much room, our cousin designed one for us on the principle of ship's berths, one bed on top of the other. It is fitted with good castors, so that it can easily be moved about and its position altered according to how the room is opened. A rough table, also on castors, and a deal form and basket chair complete our outfit, as we do all our dressing in our bedrooms. Each side of the dado is a seat, so that we are quite able to entertain. The bed, like the sofa of the Germans, is considered the place of honor, which is always accorded to our most important visitor. The walls inside are match-boarded; we wished to keep them as natural looking as possible, so instead of paint or varnish we rubbed them ourselves with a little linseed oil, which preserves the wood and is yet not at all expensive.

"And are you two lone women not afraid of sleeping out?" asked a friend. "Not with Tim and Ann," we answered, pointing to our two trusty dogs, and we did not add that we often wished them a little less trusty, and that they would not guard us in such an officious and noisy manner from the tentative visits of a robin, or be so loudly furious with the inquisitiveness of a harmless cat. The birds, too, as the summer comes along, seem to make it their business that we shall not miss the best of the early morning, still one soon gets accustomed to the out-of-door sounds, and they only mingle in an amusing way with one's dreams. The lower berth has a little dark green curtain—our only one—that can be drawn should the morning light be too bright, as it is more exposed to the light than the top one.

We have now slept out through a winter—with blanket suits and hot bottles—and the difference it has made to our health is remarkable, and we are getting used to being asked where we have been for a change. As the weather gets hot we intend pulling our bed just outside and sleeping really under the stars, but quite near our hut, so that should the elements not approve we can always just

push it back, the big castors making it easy to move.

I need hardly say we have grown very fond of our garden room, and much of our working time and leisure has been spent in it. Our friends, too, seem to have enjoyed the spells they have spent with us out of doors, and with our children friends our makeshift picnic teas have been quite a success; altogether our garden room has been a continual pleasure to us, and we only regret the years before we had it.

## THE FASTING CURE

To dwellers on the tableland of Mexico who are counselled to eat heartily if they would keep up their strength, always menaced by anemia, it will come as a startling piece of advice to be told to fast to cure disease. Here almost all articles of food are said to be from twenty-five to thirty-three per cent less nutritious than similar articles in Europe, and we are told that we need more "fuel for the machine" than if we lived on the other side of the Atlantic.

To keep off the dreaded typhus one should, according to the older people, never allow the system to become debilitated by lack of food. Hence in times of epidemics of the dreaded

fever one is told never to let the stomach get empty. But according to a bulky book by Hereward Carrington, published in London, the main cause of disease is the "accumulation of waste food material in the body." In his book, entitled "Vitality, Fasting and Nutrition," Mr. Carrington gravely argues that even the poor eat too much (he should make the acquaintance of the frugal peon of Mexico!) and that babies are grossly overfed. Babies from birth should never be allowed but three meals a day. A fat baby is not a healthy baby, for fat in anyone is diseased tissue, "no matter in what locality it may be found."

This author urges that if twelve ounces of food are sufficient, and we eat forty or more, as most people do, then the eliminating organs are overtaxed. Effete material beings to accumulate within the system. The process continues as the overfeeding continues. The system becomes more and more clogged, and, by auto-infection, poisoned throughout by this corrupt material. This process is the true cause of disease. It is unduly retained mal-assimilated material which is thus seen to be the real and chief cause of all disease.

Here the author would appear to have taken a hint from the teachings of Horace Fletcher, who advocates less food and more thorough mastication so that what is swallowed may be assimilated.

Disease, according to Mr. Carrington, is a curative effort of the body to rid itself of disease. So it comes to this, that "it is disease that saves life. It is disease that actually cures the body." Even in epidemics, he declares disease is "never caught," but arises in each person from the presence in his body of effete food material on which the germs come to feed. Fasting, argues this author, is curative, for deprivation of food for a reasonable time does not weaken; but on the contrary, strengthens the body, for the energy otherwise used in digesting the food is saved when we fast. But the faster must be prudent; he must gradually diminish the quantity of food taken, then reduce it more, and then stop it entirely until natural hunger returns, and this natural hunger may not return for some time. Neither liquids nor solids should be taken during the fast. Mr. Carrington asserts that the results are surprising, for instead of growing weak, and having to go to bed a person becomes stronger and more energetic.

This may be good advice for sea-level regions, but it might not be wise to fast much here, where the organism has to work hard. Still everywhere overfeeding must be bad. The few local Fletcherites claim to be in much better health than formerly. They eat lightly, and assimilate all they eat.—Mexican Herald.