

The Habit of Eating Sugar

I am one of those delicate individuals who came into the world with a frail constitution that during my infancy I had to be fed upon sweetened milk.

The fires of life therefore flame so faintly within me that I have to be carefully lest I blow them out and cease to be. By reason of this handicap I am continually upon the lookout for dangers upon my vital forces, and being more sensitive to them, can discern more dangers which menace health long before they would be noted by a strong-lived man.

While I had thus a slender thread of life I did not forbear to test it, and have attained fair proficiency in many forms of muscular and mental occupation, which require both effort and endurance.

The result of this has been that I have had to take many precautions and make unusual efforts to conserve strength, and it is to the most interesting of these experiments that this story relates.

One day I was a child I have had a particular fondness for sugar. One of the favorite day-dreams of my early youth was to stand in front of a baker's window and wish that I could buy all the cream puffs and pies in sight and eat my fill. As I grew older my ambitions increased, and I began planning with a companion a financial combination which would enable us to buy a whole paillful of ready-made mince meat, to be eaten of libitum with a soup spoon.

As I grew older sugar came to be my worst temptation. I cared but little for tobacco and less for liquor. Of sugar I was so fond that it always grew with the eating. The more I ate the more I wanted. Ice cream, custards, puddings, pies and cakes baited the pitiable which best my path.

For years I have been making observations on the effect of sugar as food. I was particularly interested in the reason that beside my own liking for it, two distant members of my family had died from causes which the physicians said had been caused by excessive use of sugar.

As a result of this about a year ago I began to doubt the healthfulness of sugar as an article of food. Of course no one has ever claimed it as a health diet, except some of the more radical vegetarians. In chemical composition it is but one remove from alcohol, which is always taken from sugar in some form, and the fact that the appetite for sugar seems never satisfied, as with true foods, I became suspicious that it was more stimulating than nutrient in its properties.

If this were the case there would always result from the use of sugar an excitement or stimulation, followed by languor, weariness and weakness of the jaded nerves, and various forms of neuritic disturbance.

To test this I determined to leave for an indefinite time long enough to show some results, the use of all stimulants, such as white and brown sugar, honey, molasses and glucose, and their substitutes glycerin and sorbitol, together with every condiment sustaining them. This meant I must give up every kind of sweet, preserved fruits of all kinds, such as were dried without sugar, all sweetened drinks, even to the cakes in which it is sold. Pickles usually contain more or less sugar according to homemade recipes, and taking it altogether were busy times for me if I could successfully dodge sugar in all the forms in which it appears on the market.

I have a wider field of observation and to get some person to join in making the experiment, so that the results could not be entirely assumed to personal idiosyncrasy. I begged to find out what a sugar habit had upon people. I was easy to get a smoker to stop the use of tobacco for a day, some a week or often more. Drunkards often wish to, and sometimes give up their vice; but not for money, not for gold or silver stones, did I ever succeed in getting one person to go without sugar. People who professed that they were willing to die for me said that they loved sugar first, for they would rather die than lead a sugarless life.

Some foods never obtain such a hold upon any person. To go without sugar a week would be thought no hardship and is often done as a mat-

ter of course. A week's deprivation of vegetables would be noticed by no one. A week without flour or any of its products would not be considered a hardship, and yet those things are staple articles upon which humanity has been born and bred, with ages of inherited taste back of their own lives. While therefore my experiment lacks the verification of a dual or confirmatory experience, the fact that I failed in my earnest endeavors to get some person to temporarily break off the habit shows in itself what the strength of the sugar habit is.

Of course at hospitals and training tables where science could command and enforce its decrees, some interesting data were obtained, but of all the free persons who were requested, not one of them even for a week gave up the use of sugar, so as far as voluntary abstinence went I made the experiment alone.

The first day was a hard one. There were strawberries for breakfast. They were the sweetest I ever tasted, it seemed to me, and I made a face for every berry. Oatmeal was flat and insipid with only milk in it; coffee, bitter and flavorless, had lost all its charm, and I drank but half a cup instead of three or four. Waffles with butter alone were not so bad, but I remembered a happier day when they swam in syrup of the golden maple.

The noon meal at a restaurant was not such a deprivation. Soup, roast beef, baked macaroni and cheese, bread and butter and a glass of milk were satisfying, called up no sugar cravings and made an ideal combination for one who would escape the slavery of the sugar bowl.

Dinner again was a hard fight. There was currant jelly with the roast, Roman punch in between times somewhere, ice cream, tempting cake and sugar for the black coffee - five temptations to the meal.

During the day and evening, too, there were various sugary temptations to be put behind me. Candy seemed to spring up from the most unexpected places. Ice cream sodas and all temperance drinks, except the plain mineral waters, contained sugar and had to be forsworn. Even the thrice wicked cocktail did not omit to give a lurking place to the sugar demon who assailed me from every point, and most of the tropical fruits contained more of it than was compatible with the regimen which I had adopted.

My experience was unique as far as I have been able to hear, for though many people give up sugar and even starch under doctor's orders they are always permitted the use of glycerine or saccharin to take its place, but rather than to fly to those evils of which I knew not the possible effects I preferred to live an absolutely unsweetened life. Giving up coffee was the hardest trial, and as coffee without sugar had no charms for me it amounted to giving it up when I stopped using sugar in it.

It is possibly for this reason that sugar does much of its harm. The stomach ordinarily knows when it has enough of food; but by deceiving the taste with sugar added, then more can be taken - far more than the system demands, and it was to this that much of my overeating had been due.

It was trying work leaving off the sugar, but with it I left other things beside that were not particularly good for me.

A certain uncomfortable sensation of the mouth, a hankering which only smokers can understand, had kept me in the way of using cigars, although the effect of them was always disagreeable to me. This ceased shortly after stopping the use of sugar. While I could smoke if I wished, I had no desire for it as formerly. It seemed as though the sugar had caused an irritation of the salivary glands, as can easily be tested by putting a spoonful of it on the tongue and attempting to hold it there. When this irritation following the ingestion of sugar had ceased the craving for tobacco disappeared with it.

In less than a week from the time when I stopped sugar-curing myself I began to feel some of the rewards. Neuralgic pains, to which I had been subject after swimming long in cold water, entirely disappeared, and a rheumatic twinge in my shoulder, which formerly gave me notice of coming bad weather, failed to make its appearance. Overindulgence in bicycling had given me symptoms of "athletic heart," the pain from which had at times been so severe as to cause the frightful feeling of approaching death. That, too, vanished with the rest of the imp's pain.

My nerves strengthened in every way, I had previously been in death-

ly fear of the dentist. For years, I had not dared to think of enduring the pain which the buzzers, prods and scrapers caused. I could not even mention them without setting my teeth on edge.

By the time that I had been three months without sugar I was able to march gleefully up the front steps of a dentist's office with actually pleasant anticipations of the work he was to do in preparation for cutting my third teeth, and the hours that I spent in his chair were among my pleasantest recollections of last summer. No one will believe that, perhaps, I do not ask it.

Cold water had previously been another source of terror to me, and I had always firmly believed that I should die of heart disease if I jumped into it too suddenly, although I loved swimming. This fear too disappeared, and I became presently capable of going and staying in water with comparative comfort.

Injuries seemed to have less effect upon me, just as the dentist's work did, and although it was a difficult matter to compare, I am positive that I suffered less from bruises received after ceasing sugar, than from similar ones received before.

To test my being more proof against pain, and to see whether it were not purely imagination, on two or three occasions I ate as much sugar in desserts as would amount to a couple of table-spoonfuls. I noticed no difference during the night or next day, but thirty-six hours afterward, a neuralgic pain of the fifth nerve, to which I had been subject, returned with all its former intensity, and I think a little more for interest.

I tried this again and again until I was sure of the time interval.

After finding the time which elapsed between the eating of the sugar and the appearance of its effects, I was able to keep much better track of my eating. I found that some of the tropical fruits, sweet pickles and occasionally, though not always, chocolate, were causing twinges of pain. On several occasions I would find out by the occurrence of the pain thirty-six hours afterward that I had eaten something sweet without suspecting at the table, and would have to do quite a bit of thinking before I could just place it.

To prove this more thoroughly, I secured the co-operation of a physician friend who was in charge of a hospital with surgical cases under his care. The patients deprived of sugar and all saccharines manifested much less uneasiness physically in the seat of their injuries, and in two cases where suppuration was in progress it entirely ceased after a few days and began again within thirty-six hours after feeding of sugar was recommenced.

It is generally considered among training masters that the abolition of sugar and sweets from training tables of football players has a hardening effect upon the nerves as well as the muscles, and that it is partly for that reason that they are able to endure shocks that would kill ordinary men.

The taste for sugar is a hard one to lose. During all the time that I have gone without it, if my appetite for sweet things has diminished I have not noticed it. I sighed for even an imitation of a dessert. A very young lady who was just learning the art of cookery wanted to make a cake for me. When I told her that I was trying experiments with myself and could not eat cake, because it had sugar in it, she kindly offered to make a cake without sugar in it. It was a success as far as the absence of sugar went, but it was not a cake. I ate it thankfully, nevertheless realizing that it takes sugar to make a cake. The same kind young person then invented and made for me a sugarless pumpkin pie, which was a glorious, golden success, and was eagerly bitten into by sugar eaters as well as myself.

Sugar is, of course, good fuel food, and that is one of the arguments upon which sugar users always rely. Gunpowder is also an ideal fuel, yet no one would for that reason think of employing it in a stove.

Acting as a nervous stimulant and irritant and as a fuel, sugar has much in common with alcohol, and in its effects upon sensitively organized persons, such as children and young girls, it produces results almost identical.

Candy drunkenness of girls is not an uncommon thing, and the stimulating effects of candy are well appreciated by young gentlemen who make evening calls. The experiment may be easily tried by presenting a box of candy to any young woman and noticing the sprightliness of conversation which ensues.

Sugar eating results in starvation of the muscles and irritation of the nerves. The muscles are starved because the demands of appetite are met with sugar instead of healthy muscle-making, nitrogenous foods, such as meats and vegetables. Again,

there is a lack of bulk to sugar. It gives no exercise to the jaws, and without that there cannot be healthy fullness of the cheeks, such as comes from the exercise of the masticatory muscles.

The people of the United States are the greatest sugar users of the world; two million tons a year and an ache in every spoonful of it! No wonder that the "painful face" is becoming a national characteristic and that our hills multiply faster than the doctors can catalogue them.

It is easy for me to appreciate the fact that you do not, believe a word of all that I have told you; but some time, if that pain of yours hurts so that you cannot stand it any longer, leave off sugar and everything that has a morsel of sweet in it - cakes, pies, puddings, candies, buns, preserves, canned fruits, cookies, sweet crackers, sweet pickles, jams, jellies, sugar, molasses, honey, ice cream and all sweetened drinks. Too much pleasure to lose, you say. Very well, then, keep your pleasures and keep your pain. The pain can stand it as long as you can.

Within a few weeks after stopping the use of sugar every other article of food commences to give a new taste. There are flavors in meats and vegetables, delicate and tempting, which you never noticed before. Oatmeal with milk alone has a better flavor than it ever had with sugar and cream. The taste of some with sugar will strike you as being medicinal and sickish. The appetite for all normal food improves and the digestion becomes stronger. With growing strength comes more endurance of pain and cold, while terror of them disappears. With better muscular nutrition from the proper foods comes more muscular ability and the courage to use it. Fear vanishes into the distance and the happiness promised to those who wear galvanic girdles and take bottled tonics becomes a reality.

There is with sugar, as with all stimulants and narcotics, a soothing effect upon the nerves; but nervous force is intended to be used, not to be "soothed away." It is there for a purpose. Half of the feelings which are called nervousness are simply demands of the body for action of some sort.

Weak, irritated nerves fear danger, for they know they are in no condition to meet it. Excessive use of sweets irritates the nerves. Candy is not good diet for soldiers.

Weariness is a sort of muscle-poisoning from the exhaustion of its reserve strength. The well-fed, properly nourished muscle cannot weary without hard labor and plenty of it. Mind-weariness is from the same cause. A full-nourished brain thinks rapidly; but it needs nitrogen and phosphates, and something else besides charcoal and water, which is all that sugar contains when chemically analyzed.

Sugar eating makes nerve soreness. Every nerve in your body has a touch in it, and sore nerves, like any other sore thing, cannot endure the thought of pain. Would you like to be so that you enjoy the prospect of going to the dentist and march up his stairs with pleasurable anticipation? Stop eating sugar for a few months. And mind you use no tobacco.

If you want to feel like a new person and find out why life is so well worth living, just stop being a Slave of the Sugar Bowl - Frank Morrison, in Examiner.

who should not be presented by his minister. I had Mr. Lincourt informed by my friends of the motives which obliged me to deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing him, an advantage which I desired so much, and that as soon as I should be out of the administration I should want to see him. But it appears that he took it badly.

"And, after all," he added, "I read in Mr. Monroe's book that the French government reproached me with having received French emigrants."

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