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Advice on Health (No. 94)

Keeping the Doctor Away

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL,
Nutritionist to the Department of Health)

A CHEMIST, referring in a recent scientific article to the vitamin C content of apples, makes the assertion that the doctor is very easily kept away if he is kept away by an apple a day. However, speaking from the medical and physiological standpoints, I wish to challenge his bright remark. In the same article he refers to the fact that onions are not very good sources of vitamin C, and says that "as a war-time vegetable the onion stands in bad odour!" Well, he is welcome to his jokes, and may be forgiven when, as a chemist, he has contributed greatly to our knowledge of foods, and is Deputy Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Food, even though he is a bit off the track when it comes to the medical side of the picture. For apples, and onions as well, have decided values when viewed from the physiological and medical angle.

The apple has introduced us to a new aspect of foods: there has been a gradual elucidation of the problem as to why the apple has medicinal properties. On the continent of Europe, it has been the custom for a century to treat diarrhoea in infants by giving them grated, raw, ripe apple. This seemed surprising when we were aware of its opposite tendency to have laxative qualities. The effect it has in diarrhoea and other infections of

the elementary track has been investigated by doctors and found to be a curative effect.

This curative property is being unravelled, and as far as can be stated at the present stage of our knowledge, it is due to a combination of the pectin, and the acids, and the sugars, and the traces of copper present in the apple. These things combine to remove the toxins produced by bacteria, and thus to nullify the effects of those toxins; added to which, these substances collaborate in preventing the bacteria from multiplying. Here, then, is a marvellous two-way mechanism that is anti-constipation and anti-diarrhoea, both at the same time.

Housewives are familiar with the fact that pectin is the substance responsible for the jellying properties of apples. The pectin is present in greatest amount just when the apple is hard-ripe, i.e., before it begins to soften. The pectin is freed from the apple pulp by the aid of the acids when it is cooked. Thus one argued that to get the maximum effect, one should get more pectin by taking the juice of a large number of cooked apples, preferably those containing a large amount of pectin, like the Dunn's Favourite. Tried out by a local doctor, this has been found effective.

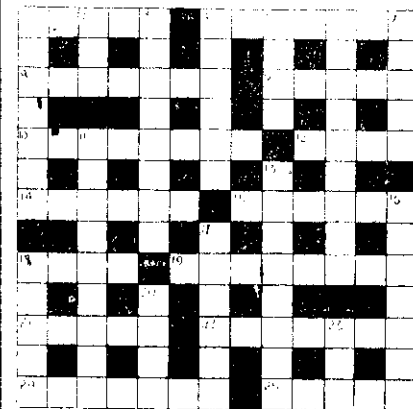


The suggestion is, therefore, that an attack of diarrhoea should be nipped in the bud by washing and slicing six to eight apples (skins and cores may be included), barely covering with water, cooking them for 15 minutes, then when they are cool enough to handle, squeezing the juice through a jelly bag. If you can manage to drink the whole of this juice (unsweetened), inside about two hours, you may perhaps feel so much better that you will soon be able to resume your meals.

It is possible that you may even like to try making some of this extract and preserving it.

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

(No. 133: Constructed by R.W.C.)



Clues Across

- Snare (anag.).
- Reclaim in a marvellous way.
- Give me a coin, sir, for my front tooth.
- This flower will move to tears.
- Best coal may be a hindrance.
- Stigma.
- Border.
- Behead this hound for a bird.
- Clinkers.
- Dunce, Tom! (anag.).
- This girl conceals a hoard.
- This is the last ice, so make it stretch out.
- Neat boy offers a weapon.
- A form of death which is detested.

Clues Down

- I depose, to create an incident.
- Fabulous bird hidden in 8 across.
- Encourages.
- Try with elm to form a flowering 18 down.
- Dora is muddled here.
- A cute gaul (anag.).
- This is a mistake.
- Gory stain (anag.).
- Leave by will.
- This is nice, Ted!
- She was poor but she was —? Not shel!
- Brush found in gardens.
- Profit from 11 down.
- Add up.

(Answer to No. 132)

P	H	I	L	A	N	T	H	R	O	P	Y
A	E	E	A	E	R	E					
L	E	A	N	D	E	R	C	O	C	O	A
M	D	A	R	A	H	S					
O	U	S	T	C	O	N	T	R	A	C	T
N		C	W	O	R						
D	E	S	P	O	T	A	M	I	D	S	T
A	V	S	B								
F	A	T	T	E	N	E	D	M	A	G	I
L	I	R	L	P	R	R					
A	V	A	I	L	D	E	A	C	O	N	S
S	T	E	O	I	M	T					
K	L	E	P	T	O	M	A	N	I	A	C

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