

ALUMINIUM PARESIS

Only a few years ago one had an impatient idea that the crusade against aluminium was a fad, and that the people who inveighed against it were bores; and one had a vague notion that it only produced little pains in strange places. Anyway the matter did not appear, to ignorance, at all interesting, let alone vital.

Then a doctor friend, who had "given her heart to a dog to tear", began to tell of its mysterious illness. The puppy was wasting away, and the best of vets, could make nothing of it—it was dying. But just before the last gasp, someone gave her a pamphlet on Aluminium Poisonings. . . . And...had she not bought a special aluminium saucepan, and cooked its food carefully herself?.....Under the circumstances any old iron pot was worth trying!..... and the puppy, forthwith, recovered. No question with her any longer as to the poisonous quality of food cooked in the lightweight, bright, useful and altogether desirable metal!

Evidence since then has been gradually accumulating. This man, wasted and dying of some mysterious malady, restored to life by the change back to old fashioned, heavy, grubby-looking saucepans. Other dogs . . . other victims.....Even a patient far gone with cancer of oesophagus—aluminium saucepans: and aluminium was found to vent much of its malign energy on the lower end of the oesophagus—so materia medica tells us!

And now, the climax. An aluminium electric radiator, not particularly solid or 'classy' to look at, but light, clean, and giving out an enormous amount of heat. It was used for months, but only occasionally; and one felt often, that after a short time, it was well to turn it off: the room did not feel all right! Then in the bitter weather of this winter, a large one, which warmed a whole room, and saved firing in the early mornings; but, again, when it was on for a longer time, and the room shut up, one 'couldn't bear it!' Why? . . . Then another to warm the bedroom for an hour in the evening, and again for dressing: whereupon the fun began. One had never allowed any aluminium cooking utensil in the house, but the radiator was not suspect. At first one referred any unpleasant sensations to the black-out and consequent unusual shutting up. But—what was happening? Some rather alarming sensations! A kind of vertigo, quite sudden, at odd times—even when walking in the street, when eyes went out of focus, and one had to wait a few minutes, lest one should fall. The same thing, when typewriting; and one had to wait for proper sight, with the, as sudden, end of what one called, for want of a better word, visual vertigo. Or, again, one felt one was not seeing properly, and there would be a dense yellow-grey cloud over the upper part of the right vision, with the same feeling of instability: hard to define. Then one noticed that ones feet were clumsy—all the time. It became almost essential to walk with an umbrella to steady oneself, especially up and down

steps; and one was glad to have something to touch, when moving about a room, especially when turning round. Added to all one found a difficulty in tying anything rather fine in the way of silk or thread, even where there was a fair sized knob at each end, to guide. Of course one excused it, as due to 'cold fingers'; till in a warm room, with warm hands, one tried to sew, and found not only threading the needle a difficulty, but that it took repeated efforts to roll the thread on the moistened finger-tip, to make the usual knot! This was really too much! and at last it dawned—*aluminium symptoms?* and materia medica answered, yes. And results confirmed: for, with the radiators banished, in really only a few days, normality is returning: fingers and feet are no longer clumsy; eyes are no longer playing tricks; or pulses! one forgot that! and one can turn one's head to be sure that a car is not running one down, without risk of losing balance. By the way, one did fall alarmingly and unaccountably, but at home.

The story has a sequel: for today a patient appeared, a sturdy woman, some 60 years of age—Could I help her? She was developing symptoms of paralysis. "Her last powders were no good, but the previous ones had been splendid! Might she have those again?"

One heard a few details. Then, "Are you having heat from an aluminium radiator?" Well, she had been looking after someone ill, "and the girl had kept the aluminium radiator going in her bedroom all day in the cold weather". Her left side was weak, felt paralysed; it gave way and she was in constant danger of falling. Legs jerked at night. She had tried to do some sewing but found she could not manage her needle and thread.....and so on.

By the way, both cases had sharp pain below right patella, and laming stiffness on first rising from a seat. One just explained, and deferred prescribing till she should report in a couple of weeks. She departed with great joy, having got her reprieve.

One wonders how many thousands there may be today, to whom Fate is whispering. "The end is forbidden! Thy use is fulfilled!" One meets so many people in the streets, walking wearily with the aid of an umbrella. One longs to ask, "Pardon me, but have you a splendid aluminium radiator? If so, lift up your head, and take a new lease of life."

By the way, Americans are crusading, some of them vigorously, against aluminium for cooking purposes; and they include *alum* in their indictment. And indeed alum is a mighty agent. One has, ages ago, heard of its danger, when used to render bread white; and one used to be told how to detect its presence with a hot knife. Recently one was asked to help a hospital patient, a suffering mother who had stopped nursing her babe, and whose breasts were terribly swollen and painful. Remembering the old trick of the discharged milkmaid, intent on revenge, who puts a pinch of alum into the cows' food, and so ends lactation for the nonce, one gave the little woman a dose of alum. It worked; and in a couple of days her breasts were empty and painless.

Alumina, then, taken by the mouth, in the foods poisoned during cooking, seems to determine all sorts of gastric and intestinal disorders; according to American claim, even conducing to malignant disease; whereas, breathed with impregnated air, it seems to exhibit most fiendishly, its nerve effects. Happily, in this form, at all events, it seems to be rapidly recovered from.

—*Homoeopathy*, March 1940
