

June 14, 1951

*HVS never met her.  
Per pds.*

Dear Hilda,

Been reading through some of your letters and thought I'd write you a little note.

We never did get the Peppe gram to plant - nobody here seems to know about it though I suppose if I sent away to the seed company itself -- one of the big ones, that is, they'd send it to me. Just ~~that~~ one of those things I'll have to get around to doing.

I was going to try your dietary suggestions but was ill first - and after several weeks of the virus I lost all my ambition - and have been worse than ever about eating since - now I'm satisfied with tea and bread or coffee and bread - and inbetween some more staple items. That's the trouble with being alltired out - it's such a yask to prepare meals and keep to a regim. I think if someone were here who would prepare the stuff for me and put it in front of me at regular intervals I'd eat it. I had tried the raw oatmeal (didn't have the grain so used the old fashioned oats) dish and found it delicious. Altho it took an effort to get the first spoonful to my lips - I was sure it would be horrible. To my surprise it tasted wonderful. I had to eat it very slowly because it was so new to me - but it was good. And I'd fix myself a bowl of it each night and bring it up to bed with me - and then sit up in bed reading (usually one of your books) and sipping my oatmeal. I had first tried it for breakfast but that didn't work out because the mornings are too hectic - what with the boys needing to get off to school - and the little babies usually needing a serious change of diapers and new bottles (how I wish I had been able to breast-feed these as with the first four) . So what I did was - after things quieted down a bit and I could think clearly I'd put the oats to soak - and they'd have all day to be soaking . Then at night - when everything was gain quiet and I had time to myself I'd prepare the dish. I might have continued it but the kids kept eating up all the apples and so many times I wanted to fix it and discovered the apples were all gone. I'll tell you an odd thing about that dish. For months I've been craving aple pie. Bill bought many in the stores but I wasn't satisfied with the store kind. And soon I began baking them myself - several times a week - I just had to have apple pie (this from a woman who isn't even pregnant !) and no matter how much apple pie I ate I was still craving more - but when I began to eat the oatmeal and apple dish (I used honey insted of condensed milk) I said to myself: "This is it ! This is what my body's been craving ! It wasn't apple pie at all...it was this !" If I can find a way to keep the apples from being eaten all up on me - I'm going to continue with that dish as a going to bed snakk - it's very good to sleep on.

I noticed an article in this month's CATHOLIC DIGEST - a condensed chapter from a book called, MAN ALIVE, YOU'RE HALF DEAD ! - and it was on nutrition. I don't know if the author's (Dr. Munro) ideas are the same as the Swiss doctors you mentioned but his theories come out the same in he practising. He says you mustn't mix proteins with carbohydrates. And in reading through the article I see much the same food combinations you mentioned in your letter. I would like to buy the book (perhaps I will) and see what else there is to it. Perhaps he suggests menus for meals.

A visitor here has her own theory that all these things work out so well (I mentioned your experience with the Swiss doctors ideas and also the stay at the sanitarium) because people follow the regime so faithfully.

She pointed out that I, for one, do not eat much at all - grabbing only a snack here and there and filling up on coffee and tea or milk in between (quite true) whereas she, being a worker - following exact hours and an exact schedule eats all her meals on time - and they are prepared and served to it. She has nothing to do but sit down at specific times and eat and she does that with clock-like regularity. And she is very healthy - has good teeth, etc. Yet eats whatever is put in front of her and not thought of what combinations of food, etc. Another visitor with us agreed with that line of reasoning. She too being a career woman and having all her meals regularly - she too eating whatever she's served. However the second one allowed that altho she never gets colds and is healthy - her teeth are no good. I didn't want to seem rude but I could have pointed to the first one that altho she says she is healthy she was suffering at that precise moment from a terrible allergy - which afflicts her every year at this time. And last year when she visited - toward the end of summer - she had it then. And she really suffers with it. These doctors we mention always bring up the subject of allergies and diet.

I would like to seriously try one of those programs for a while. Bill is in favor of it - since he's always dieting anyhow - to keep his weight down...and he won't miss meat too much since he doesn't eat meat anyhow on Wednesdays and Saturdays - and you know it isn't permitted on Friday-

I just finished CANADIAN SUMMER. I loved it. It reminded me of a month I spent in the mountains - shortly after Mark was born - I packed up the children and went away for a month. I had been wanting Bill to move out of the city and buy a house - all during the war when I wanted to buy a bungalow he kept saying "Wait till I come home before doing anything like that." Actually at the time I wanted to, there were more homes available and the prices hadn't yet sky-rocketed. Because a lot of people were selling their homes and moving all over the place - what with men being called into service and so many families breaking up, etc. But when he did get home - he was so darn glad to be off the ship and in a place "where the walls don't move and the floor doesn't rock" that he wouldn't take any interest in my talk of buying a home and getting away from the city. Especially if I mentioned living near a coastal place - because I love the beaches (he said he wouldn't care if he never saw a beach again in his life) he'd been in the Pacific, you see. Well I finally couldn't stand it any longer and I just packed up and went that year - it was May 15th. Stayed one month. I planned to go away again during the summer - but he didn't wait - he bought the house while I was still in the mountains - he didn't want us to leave him again on trips to the country. I gained fifteen pounds in that wonderful month. I ate as much as I could every day there. It was wonderful - I had two purposes in mind - to get away from the pressures of tenement life - and to get re-acquainted with my children. I accomplished both. I don't know what put on the weight - whether it was really all the eating - but I'm more inclined to believe it was the air. I felt so good. Really - people didn't recognize me at first glance back home again in the city - everyone wanted to know what had happened to change me so. I told them "mountain air." It was wonderful to meet people on the street and have them comment on how splendid you look. What a change from people saying "Hello Peggy, what's the matter, don't you feel all right?" However even that lasted only two weeks - exactly two weeks to the day - I had lost the entire fifteen pounds - and was back to 96.

We're reading Gerrit now. It takes longer reading to the children so I just went ahead and read all your books - after they were asleep. You sure can write good books! But what I would like most I think is for you to write a book of your memoirs - so I could get all the people straightened out - in my mind - and hear more about your studies at the art academies, etc.  
Have to stop now. Love,  
Peggy Mark