

A

# GUIDE TO HEALTH,

BEING AN

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES

OF THE

**THOMSONIAN SYSTEM OF PRACTICE,**

AND THEIR

MODE OF APPLICATION

IN THE

CURE OF EVERY FORM OF DISEASE;

EMBRACING A CONCISE VIEW OF

THE VARIOUS THEORIES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN PRACTICE.

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BY BENJAMIN COLBY.

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Third Edition, enlarged and revised.

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Let us strip our profession of every thing that looks like mystery.—RUSH.

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MILFORD, N. H.

JOHN BURNS.

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1846.

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Quaint and antiquarian though this book may seem, Colby, a more polished voice than his mentor, Samuel Thomson, was dealing as best as possible with the arrogant, hubristic and mechanistic disarray of Medicine between 1800 and 1860. The Thomsonians were radical populists that espoused the rude concept that common sense and a little learning was a better doctor than professionals seemingly addicted to bloodletting, purging with heavy metals, and heroic cleanses. They were a popular and robust "sect", with lay practitioners crawling all over the woodwork like ticks on a feeble dog.

The substantial presence in later years of "irregular" physicians (licensed M.D.s) such as the Eclectics and the Physio-Medicalists, as well as medical Homeopathy, was opposed with almost religious fervor by the "regulars" of the Eastern Establishment. Better funded (often by public moneys) and with close ties to full universities, the regulars prevailed in almost all arenas by the first decade of the twentieth century. The last Eclectic Medical School closed to resounding indifference in 1938. Well before that time, mainstream American Medicine had responded to the CAUSE of opposition by cleaning its house, and reestablishing the general trust of most Americans. The populist movements, by whatever name, had served the greater good...and sealed their own doom.

Frankly, the problems of mid-nineteenth-century medicine uncomfortably resemble the state of medicine at the end of the twentieth century, with alternative medicine/healing/therapy presenting a populist resistance to Standard Practice Medicine that seems to be growing almost exponentially. The slow, ritually scathing indictment by Colby of Medicine in his day may seem quaint...unless you remember that the physicians he verbally eviscerates were products of the most rigorous training available anywhere. His denouncement of the quack remedies of his age are blamed upon the people's loss of faith in regular medicine, a state disturbingly similar to our present circumstance.

In my life I have seen DES therapy and the standard practice of thymus implants with radium come and go...a few brief years later scoffed at as "primitive". Yet hundreds of thousands of physicians still in practice dutifully used BOTH of these modalities at the time, with nary a question (until later). To the educated outsider, it seems astonishing how little attention is given by Medicine to its own history...even that of a decade or two past. History of Medicine as taught in medical schools consists of the exposition of its SUCCESSFUL lineage, whereas the most important parts are not who first observed the circulation of blood or saw the potential of the Digitalis in a Herb Woman's brew. The greatest lessons medicine has learned in the last several centuries has come from CORRECTING its mistakes.

If the last century is an example to learn from, it will be many frantic years before we "irregulars" bring about the re-ordination of mainstream medicine back into the vitalist center. In that context, as well as for some of its surprisingly sound observations, this popular little book from 150 years ago can serve as a parable for our present perceptions of the early-stages of medical decline.

Michael Moore

# A GUIDE TO HEALTH

by Benjamin Colby  
Milford, N.H., 1846

## PART II.

### CHAPTER I

#### HEALTH

**Health—the poor man's riches, and the rich man's bliss.**

A STATE of health consists in the power of all the different organs to perform, in an easy and regular manner, all their proper offices.. This state, on which our happiness so much depends, is the legitimate result of a correct mode of living. The man, woman, or child, who daily transgresses the physical laws of their nature, can no more expect to be healthy, than they can expect to breathe without air or live under water.

Ask the man who has not been free from pain a single day for a series of years, what he considers the greatest earthly blessing, and he will tell you, health. When deprived of this, all nature wears a gloomy aspect. The glistening sun beams, the opening flowers, the green-clad trees, the rippling streams, or the soul-cheering notes of the feathered songsters, have for him no charms. The aching head, the hacking cough, and the hectic flush, admonish him, that soon he must close his eyes on all things earthly. Then it is he looks back with sorrow and deep remorse on a life spent in constant violation of the laws of nature, the result of which is always to produce misery and disease in proportion to the extent of those violations.

Thousands there are, who are this moment rolling in wealth, who would give a quit-claim deed of all creation, and place themselves in the condition of the man who depends on his daily labor for his daily bread, if they could enjoy perfect health.

If health be thus valuable, that the miser will pour out his gold, the epicure give up his sumptuous fare, and the young lady bid defiance to the life-destroying fashions of the age, that they may obtain it when lost, is it not worth preserving ?

*How then can we preserve our health ?* Here is a question of more importance than any other of the great questions that are now agitating the world. Any question or enterprise, having for its object

the accumulation or preservation of wealth, would weigh as little in comparison with this, as the bubble in the opposite scale with the mountain. It may be argued that health is a blessing conferred upon us by Divine Providence, and He continues or destroys it according to his own pleasure, without any agency of our own. This doctrine has prevailed to an alarming extent, and has been sanctioned by those who profess to know more about the mysterious dealings of Providence than they do the physiological laws of our nature. Is it not the height of injustice to charge upon Him, whose "tender mercies are over all the works of his hands," our own folly? He, in infinite wisdom and goodness, has established certain unchangeable laws, by which all matter, animate and inanimate, is governed. Obedience to these laws secures to us health and all its blessings, with as much certainty as obedience to moral laws secures peace of mind.

In order therefore to preserve health, a proper regard must be had to food, drink, clothing, exercise, air, and bathing.

**FOOD AND DRINK** —On no one thing does perfect health so much depend, as on the quantity, quality, and proper mastication of food; notwithstanding which, a majority of mankind swallow down, half chewed, and in large quantities, a heterogeneous mass of beef, pork, butter, cheese, mince pies, cakes, &c., regardless of consequences or the object of eating and drinking. So long as we thus transgress nature's laws, so long we must suffer the consequences; which are pain, debility, and untimely death, in spite of physicians, regular or irregular, homœopathic, hydropathic, or Thomsonian even. Such is the difference in the habits and constitution of man, that no universal system of diet can be prescribed, adapted to the circumstances of all; but a few simple rules should always be observed. Eat, three times a day only, a moderate quantity of such food as is the most easily digested, which should be well chewed or mixed with the saliva before it is swallowed. The best food is coarse wheat bread, potatoes, rice, ripe fruit, rye pudding, peas, beans, &c., and the best drink is pure cold water; avoiding tea, coffee, fat meat, butter, cheese, &c. The real object of eating should be kept in view, viz. to supply the system with a proper amount of nutriment, varying according to the amount of active exercise taken, and the power of the digestive apparatus, and not to gratify a depraved appetite. Every man and woman should become acquainted with the physiological laws of their nature, so as to eat and drink and provide for their children in accordance therewith.

**CLOTHING.**—The principal object of clothing is to protect the body from cold and inclement weather, and therefore should be adapted to the climate, season of the year, age, &c. The practice of

dressing children very warm, serves to enfeeble and relax the system, rendering them subject to colds and all their attendant evils. They should be accustomed to wear but little clothing when indoors, and that perfectly loose about them. It will be observed that those children who, from necessity, are poorly clad and coarsely fed, are usually more robust than those who are warmly clad, and are pampered with all the nice things a fond mother can obtain; the good intentions of whom do not prevent the suffering she is unavoidably bringing upon herself and offspring. This consideration only should be kept in view in dress, regardless of fashion, that is, its adaptedness to the convenience and comfort of the wearer, and the season of the year. Too much cannot be said against compressing the chest, as is the custom of many females, who have thereby sacrificed themselves to the goddess fashion, and we fear many more must be sacrificed at the same shrine before the practice will be abandoned. Tight bandages about the neck, or any part of the system, should be avoided, as they obstruct the free circulation of blood.

If a man would live in accordance with his nature, take proper exercise in the open air, and thereby produce a free circulation of blood, but little clothing would be required; but as he is enfeebled by disease, want of exercise, &c., he must keep himself warm by flannels, stoves, and stimulating meats and drinks, until exhausted nature gives up the struggle to sustain its requisite quantity of heat, which suddenly sinks to the temperature of the ground six feet from the surface.

The real object of clothing seems, at the present day, to be almost entirely overlooked; fashion, instead of convenience and comfort, must be consulted. How many render themselves miserable because they have not the means of following every foolish fashion that is introduced! while others toil incessantly, giving themselves no opportunity for the improvement of the mind or innocent amusement, destroying their health and happiness to obtain the means of rendering themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the really wise. But so the world goes, and so it must continue to go, until dress and shape become so ridiculous and fantastical as to be a laughing-stock for each other. Says the celebrated Cobbett on this subject, " Let our dress be as cheap as may be without shabbiness; attend more to the color of your shirt than to the gloss and texture of your coat; be always clean as your situation will, without inconvenience, permit; but never, no, not for one moment, believe that any human being, with sense in his skull, will love or respect you on account of your fine, costly clothes."

The man or woman, who has independence enough to dare dress consistently and decently, in defiance of a foolish and pernicious fashion, if holding a rank in society that gives them influence, will do much for the benefit of his or her race. Ye professed followers of the

despised Nazarene, shall we not look to you for the example ? or must Christianity itself yield to fashion, and its professors vie with each other in obtaining the most gaudy and costly apparel ?

**EXERCISE.**—It is a law of our nature that a certain amount of active exercise in the open air must be taken every day in order to be perfectly healthy; and it is supposed that the amount necessary to procure all the food, clothing, &c., for the whole, together with what would be naturally taken in amusement and walks of pleasure, if divided equally among those who were competent to labor, would be the proper amount of exercise for each; but in the present arrangement of society, the few must labor incessantly in active employment, exhausting the powers of nature, and leaving the moral and intellectual powers uncultivated; while the many are engaged entirely in sedentary employments, or no employment, except to consume what the hard labor of the few produces. Both classes transgress the laws of nature—the one, in not exercising enough; the other, in exercising too much. The facilities for locomotion are such at the present time, and the disposition of man to avail himself of them so general, that nearly all action of the lower extremities will be suspended by those who have the means of paying the expense of being trucked or cabbed to the cars, and by the cars to their desired town or city, and then trucked or cabbed again to the residence of a friend or the travelers home. The result of which is invariably, coldness of the extremities, costiveness, head-ache, indigestion, lowness of spirits, weakness; then come Indian purgative pills, calomel, blue pills, steam and lobelia, a visit to the springs, a miserable existence, and premature death. This is no picture of the imagination, but a facsimile of what is daily transpiring around us, and he whose eyes are open cannot help seeing it. But we do not expect to turn the tide that is thus carrying so many on the bosom of its waters to the grave. But the law and its penalties cannot be evaded by its violators.

Walking is probably the most healthy exercise; riding on horseback, sawing wood, digging the soil, are also excellent modes of exercise. Those who cannot exercise in the open air in consequence of ill-health or the inclemency of the weather, should engage in such exercise as they can bear within doors; and if not able to take active exercise, make use of the flesh-brush or a coarse towel two or three times a day.

**AIR.**—But few are aware of the importance of inhaling pure air, or duly consider the consequences of inhaling that which is impure. A fruitful cause of pulmonary complaints, colds, coughs, &c., at the present time, is the practice of heating rooms with stoves, which

destroy, to a certain extent, the oxygen, and leave the air unfit for respiration; and if the rooms were kept perfectly tight, the air would soon be rendered incapable of sustaining life. Our forefathers, by living in houses well ventilated, and being almost constantly in the open air, and sleeping in apartments where the pure air of heaven was permitted to circulate freely, were robust and healthy; while their posterity are so enfeebled by the pernicious customs of the age, as to be under the necessity of wrapping up head, ears and mouth, when they go out, lest they should take cold, and by this very means predispose the system to take cold.

**BATHING.**—Ablution, or bathing the surface once a day in cold water, is a very important means of preserving health. It invigorates and strengthens the system, cleanses the surface, and renders a person less liable to take cold. It should be done in the morning on rising from bed. Take a bowl of water, and with the hand bathe the whole surface, and rub briskly with a coarse towel. Those who are feeble can use the tepid weak lye-water, followed by brisk friction. We shall treat of baths as remedial agents in another part of this work.

Let those who consider health of more importance than the gratification of a depraved appetite, or conformity to foolish and destructive fashions, seek them a healthy location in the country, if they are not already thus situated; eat the fruits of the field and garden alone; dress consistently, with reference to comfort rather than fashion; construct houses so as to be well ventilated; throw aside feather beds, air-tight stoves, tea and coffee, beef, pork, butter, &c., take four hours active exercise in the open air every day when the weather will permit, and bathe the surface in cold water every day; and above all, keep a conscience void of offense: and with as much certainty as the earth revolves round the sun, or water inclines to run down hill, will they enjoy health, peace, and competence. But those who are determined to follow the foolish customs of the age; live in indolence or in constant toil, breathe the contaminated air of cities and large villages; eat hogs and sheep, rich pies and cakes, and live in constant violation of the laws of nature, must suffer the consequences—pain, suffering, anxiety, parting with loved children, constant sickness, &c. When will mankind be wise, and observe the laws of their nature, and thereby avoid the suffering that inevitably follows their transgression? In consequence of the unnatural state in which man lives, his body is constantly diseased, requiring the aid of medicine to assist nature in her efforts to regain lost energy. To supply this demand, physicians and secret medicine-manufacturers, as thick as the frogs of Egypt, have sprung up in every town and city, many of whose remedies are as well adapted to cure disease as a hand-saw would be

for shaving, and the aggregate of whom, undoubtedly, increase vastly the amount of disease and suffering.

The following remarks on the promotion of health and longevity are from the pen of the celebrated Dr. COURTNEY, surgeon, R. N., of Ramsgate, England:—

“The human frame is so constituted that it may, by wise training, not only be brought to bear with impunity every vicissitude of climate, but even be strengthened and hardened thereby. The stomach—the great store-house of the body, and without the integrity of whose functions life itself is but a burden—can be rendered capable of digesting any kind of food, and our bodies of performing almost any amount of labor, so long as we observe the rules which experience, physiology, reason and common sense dictate. Of these rules, the most important, perhaps, are the following:— moderation in eating and drinking, great personal cleanliness, early rising, fearless and daily frequent exposure to the weather in all its vicissitudes, and total abstinence from intoxicating liquors. Persons who would enjoy health and length of days must give up the effeminate and luxurious habits now so fashionable; and must not live in rooms defended from the breath of heaven, by means of closely-fitting doors and windows, and heated by enormous fires to a temperature that must relax and enervate—rendering them living barometers, or like so many hot-house plants, to whom every change is blight or death. The so-called “comforts” of life are the very bane of health. Lounging on sofas and in carriages, late hours, soft beds, lying in bed till nine or ten in the morning—these, and the like luxurious habits, combined with the sedentary amusements of card playing, novel-reading, &c., are of themselves sufficient to dilapidate the strongest constitution.

“The more exercise any person takes, the larger is the quantity of oxygen he inhales, and the warmer he becomes; consequently the person who takes but little exercise, inhaling little oxygen, loses in a great measure its warming, vivifying, and strengthening agency. When there is a deficiency of oxygen in the system, the black blood from the veins is but imperfectly changed by the air in the lungs, and a blood unfit for the purposes of life flows through the body; the consequence of which is—must be, a falling off in the health, to a greater or less extent. Hence arise those very prevalent affections—chilliness, languor, low spirits, head-aches of different kinds, faintness, palpitations, stupor, apoplexy, &c.

“It has been imagined by persons ignorant of the mechanism and physiology of the human frame, that females cannot bear much exercise or exposure to atmospherical vicissitudes, and that passive



exercise is more suited to their constitutions. This is a mistake altogether—an error which has caused the loss of health in thousands of instances. Constant and daily exercise in the open air, early rising, a daily ablution of the body with cold water, and the avoidance of over-heated and badly-ventilated rooms, are essentials in the code of health, which can no more be dispensed with by the female than the male. Indeed, when we take into consideration the many causes that tend to weaken and impair the health of the female, which do not at all interfere with man, this necessity of the avoidance of enervating habits is even more requisite on the part of the weaker sex. To both sexes we would say, avoid easy chairs, and cushioned sofas and carriages, and sleep not on beds of down, but on hard mattresses, and keep not on these beyond the time that nature requires for repose. Let the pure breath of heaven gain free admission to your apartments, but especially to your sleeping apartments: and if you would not, as you ought not, respire over and over again the same corrupted air, do not stop its free circulation by surrounding your bed with curtains. Our fashionable habits are “the silken fetters of delicious ease,” which entail spleen, melancholy, &c., on so many of the fair sex, and too many of whom contrast, alas! too forcibly, with Gay’s vivid but correct description of a country girl:—

“She never felt the spleen’s imagined pains,  
Nor melancholy stagnates in her veins;  
She never loses life in thoughtless ease,  
Nor on the velvet couch invites disease.”

“It is more essential to have our bed-rooms well ventilated than our drawing-rooms, because we pass more time in them; and when we consider that the oxygen (oxygen is the great supporter of life and heat) contained in a gallon of air is consumed by one person in a minute, and that a lighted candle consumes about the same quantity in the same time, it must be evident to all that thorough ventilation is essential to health—that perfect health, in fact, cannot be maintained without it; and that lights in our bed-rooms, when a frequent renewal of the air in them cannot be maintained, are exceedingly pernicious. According to Dr. Arbuthnot’s calculation, three thousand human beings, within the compass of an acre of ground, would make an atmosphere of their own steam, about seventy-one feet high; which, if not carried away by winds, would become pestiferous in a moment. It should be remembered that the same air cannot enter the lungs more than four times without carrying with it properties inimical to the principles of life. A moment’s consideration of the state in which the air must be, that is confined all night within bed-curtains, and is

respired innumerable times, will explain how it is that many persons rise in the morning with pale faces, bad taste in the mouth, want of appetite, &c.; symptoms, however, which often arise from other causes, and especially from the use of intoxicating liquors. 'Being buried every night in feathers,' says the celebrated Locke, 'melts and dissolves the body, is often the cause of weakness, and is the forerunner of an early grave.' "

The following remarks on health are from the pen of O. S. Fowler, who combines in his writings sound reason and a firm and fearless advocacy of unpopular truths. He attacks the inconsistencies and physiological errors of the age with the spirit of a Luther.

" The plain inference drawn from this principle, that the principal temperaments and functions of our nature require to be equally balanced, is that mankind should exercise his muscular system by labor, or being on foot in the open air, about one third of the time; should eat and sleep, (that is, lay in his re-supply of animal life,) about one third of the time; and exercise his brain in thinking, studying, &c., about the other third of his time *each day*."

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"I fully concur with Jefferson's opinion that mankind have probably *lost* more by subduing the horse, than they have gained by his labor. Riding in carriages is so easy, so luxurious, to the dainty belle, that all classes are, as it were, horse crazy, and by shifting all their burdens, and most of their locomotion, upon the horse, they stand in the light of their own muscular action, which bids fair soon to be obliged to employ horse-power, (or perhaps steam-power,) with which to *breathe* and *eat*."

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" Let us open our eyes upon what we see daily and continually in our city. See that young merchant, or lawyer, or clerk, or broker, whose business shuts him up all day in his store, or at his desk, till his circulation, digestion, cerebral action, and all the powers of life are enfeebled, walk merely from his door on to the side-walk, possibly one or two blocks, and wait for an *omnibus*, to carry him a few blocks farther to his meals or bed ! One would think that, starved almost to death as he is for want of exercise, he would embrace every opportunity to take exercise, instead of which, he embraces every opportunity to avoid it. As well avoid *living*, which indeed it is. And then too, see that delicate, fashionable lady, so very prim, nice, refined, delicate, and all this besides much more, that she does not get out of doors once a week, order her carriage just to take her and her pale-faced, sickly child to church on Sunday, because it is two or three

blocks off—too far for them to walk.”

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“ And what shall we say of those who sit and sew all day, or work at any of the confining branches of industry that preclude the exercise except of a few muscles, and perhaps keep themselves bent over forward on to their stomachs, lungs, heart, bowels, and over eat at that ! Oh! when will man learn to live—learn by what constitutional laws he is governed, and how to obey these laws ? When *Physiology and Phrenology* are studied; never till then.

“ Fly swifter round, ye wheels of time,  
And bring that welcome day.”—WATTS.

## CHAPTER II.

### DISEASE .

Medical theorists have arranged diseases into different orders, classes, and kinds, according to their symptoms, giving to each a different name, and recommending for each a different mode of treatment. This course has involved the practice of medicine in darkness, perplexity, and doubt. No physician can decide for a certainty, what organ is primarily affected, or what name to give the disease. He must therefore do nothing until the symptoms are so far developed as to enable him to give it a name, or lift his club and strike at random.

Said Dr. Abercrombie, a distinguished physician, “ I am under the necessity of acknowledging, that since medicine was first cultivated as a science, a leading object of attention has ever been to ascertain the characters and symptoms by which particular internal diseases are indicated, and by which they are distinguished from other diseases, which resemble them. But, with the accumulated experience of ages bearing upon this important subject, our extended observation has only served to convince us how deficient we are in this department, and how often, in the first step of our progress, we are left to conjecture. A writer of high eminence, Morgagni, has even hazarded the assertion that persons are the most confident in regard to the characters of disease, whose knowledge is most limited, and that more extended observation generally leads to doubt.

“Disease is nothing more nor less than a deviation from a state of health, consisting in, or depending on, an obstruction or diminution of the vital energies; exhibiting different symptoms according to the extent of the deviation, the importance of the organ affected, or peculiar state of the person coming under influences capable of producing a state of disease.

He who does not enjoy perfect health is more or less under the influence of disease; the cause of which being continued, disease progresses, acting on different organs, deranging different functions, and exhibiting new symptoms, until the powers of nature yield, and death is the result.

A disease is either general or local, functional or organic. It is general, when the whole system is affected; and local, when it is confined to a particular part. A disease is functional, when an organ is laboring under some derangement; and organic, when there is an alteration in the structure of the organ.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE UNITY OF DISEASE

The doctrine of the unity of disease, as advocated by Thomsonians, has not generally been understood, and therefore the medical faculty have endeavored to bring the Thomsonian system into disrepute by ridiculing it. We do not say every form of disease is characterized by the same symptoms, or is located primarily or principally on the same organ; but that for the purpose of applying medicine safely and scientifically, a division of disease into classes, orders, and kinds, is not necessary, neither is it possible. When we transgress the laws of nature by constantly overloading the stomach, the effect is general, every organ is more or less deranged and debilitated, consequently not capable of performing its functions. To what organ should medicine be applied to remove the cause and effect of disease? Would not the only rational course be to remove the first cause by taking food in a proper quantity and quality, and then, by general stimulants and relaxants, arouse the different organs to action to throw off the morbid accumulations, and thereby relieve nature by removing the obstructions to her free operations? Let the form of disease or symptoms be what they may, the business of the physician is to remove the obstructions to nature's efforts, and assist her in her operations. We may as consistently divide hunger into a thousand different kinds, and prescribe one particular article of food to nourish one portion of the system, and another article to nourish another part, as to prescribe a medicine to remove disease from a particular portion of the system, without having its natural effect on the whole system. An experience of fifty years by millions of patients afflicted with every conceivable form of disease, has sufficiently tested and established the fact, that a Thomsonian course of medicine, judiciously administered, is adapted to the cure of every form of disease, that is curable; although in many cases it may not be necessary to resort to it, as something more mild and pleasant in its operation will frequently accomplish the object in the early stage of disease; neither is it necessary to administer it when the powers of nature are so far exhausted as to render a recovery impossible. On this one fact does the safety of the Thomsonian system depend in the hands of the people—that disease, wherever located in the human system, whatever its form or the symptoms by which it is characterized, may be successfully treated on general principles, with remedies operating in harmony with the laws of nature. So that the mother may administer to her child, the husband to the wife, and the wife to the husband, with the most unshaken confidence; and thereby avoiding the quackery for which the present age will ever be memorable

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CAUSES OF DISEASE.

We stated in the first chapter that health was secured by obeying the physical laws of our nature; and in the second chapter, that disease was a deviation from a state of health, or an obstruction or diminution of vital energy. The cause of disease must therefore be a transgression or violation of the laws of our nature. This violation may be voluntary on our part, with or without a knowledge of the consequences; it may be produced by circumstances beyond our control, as when we come in contact, inhale or take into our stomachs poisonous substances or gases, or it may be, according to the proverb, "the fathers [or mothers] have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," or hereditary disease, depending on the transgressions of our forefathers. A fruitful cause of disease is the pernicious fashions of the age. While reason and experience would lead us to obey the laws of our nature, fashion says, Follow me—I will lead you into the paths of pleasure: My laws require no self denial;—eat, drink, sleep, dress, just as the fancy of my directors may dictate, which you will find pleasing to the eye and gratifying to the taste, after you have become accustomed to their use.— Disease you need not fear, as my friends, the medical faculty, are always ready to administer to you relief; and although they may give you poisons, calculated to produce incurable disease, you should submit patiently, and kiss the rod that inflicts the fatal blow.— Who would not rather live fashionable, though it produces constant headache, debility, nervous disease, palsy, consumption, rheumatism, gout, &c., and employ fashionable physicians, and take fashionable medicines, though death was the result, than to be called a Grahamite or a Thomsonian ?

To be sure, says fashion, the pleasures I offer you are but for a season, but who would not rather be respected by the rich, and flattered by all, though it lead to sorrow and death, than to live consistently and die in obscurity ?

It is so refined to enjoy a social glass of wine, so beautiful to appear at church with waists of the size of a broom-handle, net-work stockings and slippers in the month of March—so delicious to eat hogs and sheep swimming in grease, rich cakes and pies, bread well buttered and washed down with strong tea and coffee—so gentleman and lady-like to lie in bed till nine o'clock, ride out at eleven, dine at three, and eat a hearty supper at ten—so exquisitely beautiful to appear abroad in curls and ruffles, cane and spectacles, with feet and waists compressed into fashionable shape, with delicate hands and unbrowned face, it is evidence that one does not have to labor for a

living. Labor ! says fashion, the bare mention of such a thing would shock the feeble nerves of any of my followers. Labor !! never !—cheat, lie, steal, rob, anything, rather than submit to work for a living,. Let them do the labor who have not wit enough to get a living without, or so much of that foolish conscientiousness, that they will not cheat when they have an opportunity, to obtain the means of following me.

Thus following such pernicious and foolish fashions is one of the most common causes of disease.

The evils of fashionable life are not confined to the rich, but the laboring portion of community have so mistaken their true interest, as to sacrifice their health and comfort to obtain the means of imitating the rich, and also by the using those means when obtained.

*He noble is who noble does.* The farmer, mechanic, and manufacturer of that which is useful, are the true nobility. Let them, then, take their proper station in the scale of beings—establish their own customs in accordance with reason and the laws of our nature, so that a proper amount of labor would be made attractive to all, and all be under the necessity of doing their proportion of all the needful labor—none exempt except from inability, and consequently none over-taxed or over-burdened. All would then have time and opportunity to become acquainted with the physiological laws of their nature, so as to avoid those customs and agents that bring upon them so much disease. The cause of all disease can be clearly traced to the violation of some one or more of the laws of our nature:—

1st. By our forefathers; producing in us *hereditary taints*, such as consumption, scrofula, liver complaints, &c.

2d. Insufficient or too great an amount of exercise. The former producing an inactive state of the organs—the latter producing an exhaustion, in both of which states they do not perform their proper offices. The stomach ceases to secrete the necessary quantity of gastric juice to carry on digestion, the bowels are costive, the morbidic agents generated in the system retained, the wheels of life clogged until exhausted nature gives up the struggle to keep in motion its machinery.

3d. Sudden changes from heat to cold, or cold to heat.

4th. Eating and drinking that which is injurious in itself, or if not injurious in itself, made so by the quantity taken.

5th. Poisons, coming in contact with the surface, taken into the

stomach, inhaled into the lungs, or inoculated into the veins; such as the miasma of swamps and lakes, the bite of snakes or any poisonous reptile or animal; the inhalation or inoculation of a poison virus, as the small pox, measles, &c.; taking any substance into the stomach capable of destroying life, in small quantities, although the destruction of life may be prevented by the efforts of nature in expelling it from the system, or protecting herself against its immediate destructive effect, yet rapidly diminishing the vitality of the system, and dragging its victim slowly but surely to the grave.

6th. Mechanical or chemical injuries; such as wounds, cuts, burns, freezes, &c. These causes, acting separately or combined on the human system a length of time, impede the vital functions, obstruct the free operation of the organs, and produce disease.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE EFFECTS OF DISEASE.

We have said that disease was an obstruction or diminution of vital energy, caused by a violation of the laws of nature. The effects of this obstruction are various, depending on the organ obstructed or disenabled, the extent of that obstruction, and the vital power existing in the system to overcome the offending causes. The different symptoms by which the different forms of disease are characterized, are arranged by medical authors into classes or kinds, giving to each class a different name, as fever, which is subdivided into ten or twelve kinds or colors, as scarlet, yellow, &c.; consumption, fits, dropsy, rheumatism, &c. These are not separate and distinct diseases, but a manifestation or effect of disease.

Fever is not a disease. but the effect of an effort of nature to overcome disease. Let an individual be exposed to the cold after sweating, without any exercise, and what is the result ? Pain in the head and back, cold chills succeeded by a preternatural degree of heat, pulse strong and quick. What is the cause of these symptoms ? A contraction of the minute blood-vessels of the surface and the pores of the skin, in consequence of which the circulation is thrown upon the large blood-vessels, occasioning fullness and pain in the head, back, &c., and retention of morbid agents, occasioning an increased action of the heart and arteries. This increased action generates more heat than in a healthy state, which is retained in consequence of the pores of the skin being closed, through which medium the extra heat escapes in a healthy state. This retained heat gives a name to the disease, as fever means heat. It must appear evident that this retained heat, called fever, is not the disease, but the effect of disease. Disease assumes the most dangerous forms when there is a deficiency of fever, as in low typhus fever, cholera, cold plague, paralysis, &c. Fever is an evidence that nature is active; whereas a loss of fever, before the cause is removed, would be a certain indication of approaching death.

The effect of disease, then, is to produce all those different phenomena that physicians have classed under different names, as so many different diseases.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

We have so long been accustomed to consider the most prominent symptom attending any form of disease to be the disease itself, to destroy which all our efforts should be employed, that it will be somewhat difficult to present the subject in a true light, and be clearly understood.

The belief generally prevails, that each form of disease has a specific remedy, the knowledge of which may be obtained by study or experience. But I ask what specific remedy has the medical faculty discovered for any form of disease ? Have they a remedy for fever ? If so, why let it run three or four weeks ?—for consumption ? if so, why so many die ?—for dropsy ? if so, why fail to cure in nearly every instance ?—for dyspepsia ? if so, why send patients to the salt water, or some fashionable place of resort ? Perhaps we must admit that the four thousand years' experience and study of the learned and wise have made the discovery that brimstone will cure the itch some times; but we are not quite sure that this discovery was not made by some old lady !

The reason why so much unwearied effort, so much experimenting, so much hard study and close thinking, as has been bestowed on this subject, has not led to the discovery of a cure for disease, is that, in their eagerness to grasp some mysterious theory, far above the comprehension of the unlearned, to discover some far-fetched and dear-bought remedy; they have overlooked plain, simple truth, that lies directly in their path, over which they have stumbled into darkness and error. They have trampled under feet the simple plants of nature's garden, and ransacked the bowels of the earth for poisons that would operate scientifically. But so long as the physical system is under the control of established laws, so long will such remedies fail to accomplish the object of medical science, viz. to prevent and cure disease.

We have said that disease was obstructed or diminished vital action, exhibiting different symptoms, according to the extent of the obstruction, the importance of the organs affected, and the vigor of constitution, &c., caused by a violation of the physical laws of our natures; the effects of which are fever, consumption, rheumatism, &c.

One or more of the following indications should be accomplished in the cure of every form of disease, viz., relaxation, contraction, stimulation, soothing, nutrition, and neutralization. These indications assist nature in her efforts to remove obstructions, and regain lost energy.

The only remedial agents necessary to be used in the cure of any form of disease, are those that are innocent in themselves, acting in harmony with the laws of nature.

In order to make the subject plain, simple, and intelligible to all, we shall give a description of the roots, plants, barks, and other remedial agents and processes used in accomplishing the necessary indications, under the head of “**MATERIA MEDICA;**” also a description of a general process adapted to the cure of nearly every form of disease, with some variations; usually termed a “**COURSE OF MEDICINE.**” And for the satisfaction of those who may expect to find each form of disease, as classed by regular physicians, treated upon separately, we will do so in a brief but plain manner.