

THE
PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH REFORM;

— OR —

What Health Reform Is, and What it Is Not.

A GENERAL demand for reformation is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the nineteenth century. The common people, as well as the more enlightened and refined, are being emancipated from the slavery of conservatism and superstition which has held the masses in gross ignorance during a large portion of the world's history, and in the time of the "dark ages" came near obliterating the last glimmer of truth. Dogmatic asseveration and blind empiricism are losing caste among the intelligent classes of all countries. People are beginning to think for themselves, and so regard authority much less than argument. Men and women are no longer willing that a few individuals should dictate to them what must be their sentiments or opinions; they claim the right to solve for themselves the great questions of the day, and demand that the general good of humanity shall be respected.

As the result of this general awakening, we see, on every hand, unmistakable evidences of reformatory action. Political, social, and religious reforms are demanded, and presently they are successfully inaugurated. Progress is the watchword of the age; and revolution is the ve-

hicle which carries truth to victory. Not the least prominent among the various leading questions now agitating the public mind is the subject of *health reform*, the character and scope of which it is the object of this tract to explain.

For more than thirty years the subject of health reform has been agitated in this country; hence there are now few localities in which it has not been heard of, and nearly every town contains one or more who claim to be believers in the doctrines which it inculcates. But, unfortunately, the opinions held with reference to this movement are more generally erroneous than otherwise; and, consequently, the judgment of its merits is often a mistaken one, being founded in error and prompted by prejudice. In order to disabuse the mind of the reader who may have been thus biased, we will briefly describe

WHAT HEALTH REFORM IS NOT.

Like every other great reform, this movement has its quacks, tyros, extremists, fanatics, and pretenders, as well as its true, consistent advocates and adherents. On this account, it is always liable to misrepresentation before the public, and so receives stigma and opprobrium which may be justly due to individuals, but in no proper sense attach to the system. By far the largest share of this reproach arises from the eccentric and fanatical freaks of narrow-minded individuals who seize upon a single idea, make it a hobby, and allow it to carry them to such ridiculous extremes that they are made the legitimate laughing-stock of all sensible individuals, and are subjected to the mortification of ignominious failure. We earnestly protest against the con-

sideration of such individuals as proper representatives of health reformers in general. Nor can they be considered as the natural result of the principles of the system, any more than gluttons are the natural result of eating, or religious enthusiasts of the principles of Christianity.

"Cold-water cure," "hunger cure," and like epithets, are misnomers when applied to the system advocated by true health reformers. The terms originated in the ignorant and unsuccessful practices of certain specialists in their attempts to find a panacea for all diseases. "Water cure," "hydropathy," and "vegetarianism," are also epithets which cannot be justly applied to the system comprehended by the term, *health reform*. They are appropriate names for certain branches of the subject; but neither one of the terms includes the whole.

It must not be supposed that everything which lays claim to connection with health reform can support such a claim. Many who claim to advocate the system are as ignorant of its principles as are the great majority of those who the most bitterly oppose it. Subject to the test of careful scrutiny and comparison with true principles every proposition before accepting it.

WHAT HEALTH REFORM IS.

Health is one of the chief requisites of happiness. As such, its preservation has always been the object of the greatest solicitude with all nations. Still more earnest and untiring have been the efforts of mankind in their vain search for some panacea or philosopher's stone which would effectually eradicate every disease and cure every

ill. Few value health as they should until disease has invaded their systems and made them physically bankrupt. Then they realize their loss, and eagerly seek to regain their treasure. Health reform is of equal interest to both classes. To the well, it offers the means of procuring immunity from sickness, and prolonging life to the utmost limit of human possibility. To the suffering invalid, it affords the only true means of successfully resisting the advances of disease, and extends a prospect of recovery to all but those whose physical natures are hopelessly depraved. The object of health reform, then, is really twofold: 1. The preservation of health and prevention of disease; 2. The restoration of health, or treatment of disease. Under these two heads we will consider a little more carefully its nature.

The Preservation of Health.

It has been the fortune of modern observers to re-discover the important truth so beautifully developed by Hippocrates, the father of medicine, more than two thousand years ago, that disease is the result of the violation of physiological laws. It is, consequently, most incontrovertibly true that the only way to prevent disease is to avoid the causes. Like every other object in the universe, man is a creature subject to law; and being the highest of all created beings, he is the most fully amenable to law. Man's moral nature is subject to moral law; his mental faculties are governed by the laws of mind; and his physical nature is regulated by physical laws. These laws are not mere arbitrary enactments; they are immutable principles which are founded in man's nature and exist as

necessary consequences of his existence. When any of these laws are transgressed, the penalty, disease, inevitably follows.

It is a fully established fact that health is only to be preserved, and disease prevented, by a strict adherence to the laws upon which it is dependent. To inculcate a knowledge of these laws is one of the prime objects of health reform. That such a reformation is necessary, is a fact too plain to require demonstration; for do we not see on every hand the evidences of violation of nature's laws? Whence come the eight hundred and ninety-nine diseases of mankind except as penalties for transgression. Health reform shows the relation between the transgression and the penalty; between wrong habits and disease. It points out the causes of disease and premature death, and teaches how to avoid them and so preserve health and prolong life.

Health reform takes from a man nothing that is really good. It deprives a person of no real pleasure. On the contrary, it enables him to appreciate pleasures and enjoyments of which he never dreamed. It corrects his bad habits and educates him in good ones. It shows him the depravity of his nature, and restores him to natural, normal relations with his surroundings in life. In short, health reform includes and supports everything clean, healthy, wholesome, and desirable, and only repudiates that which is abnormal, unwholesome, destructive, undesirable and unhealthful.

The following is the code of laws to the advocacy of which health reform is devoted, and the careful observance of which is requisite for the maintenance of health:—

1. *The lungs must be constantly supplied with an abundance of pure air.*

The first demand made by an individual when ushered into the world is for air. All through life, this requirement remains the most imperative of all the wants of the system. When pure air is not supplied, the whole body suffers; and if the degree of contamination or deprivation is extreme, almost instant death occurs. Hence this reform calls the attention of the people to the subject of ventilation and out-of-door exercise for all classes. It calls for the employment of efficient means to secure a pure, untainted atmosphere in churches, lecture halls, and other public places where thousands of poisoned breaths are mingled together. It teaches the mother that pure air is as necessary for the successful rearing of her children as is wholesome food; and that in closing tightly the windows of her sleeping rooms to exclude the "night air," she is keeping out the invigorating, life-giving oxygen of out-door air and confining her family in a poisoned atmosphere.

Health reform also demands that the air shall be untainted by the products of organic decomposition, and so requires that no kind of putrescent or excrementitious matter shall be allowed to accumulate in any locality where it can become a source of contamination and so of disease.

Health reform insists that the breathing of impure air is the chief cause of that much-dreaded disease, consumption, and so advocates the avoidance of the cause as the proper preventive.

2. *The system should be supplied with food which is proper in quantity and quality, at regular and appropriate intervals.*

PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

Next to air, food is required as one of the most essential requisites for the maintenance of life. While this fact is universally recognized in the practice of the people, it is apparently forgotten, or rather unobserved, that although food is very necessary to support life, yet it may become a most prolific source of disease. Bad dietetic habits have made the American people a nation of dyspeptics. Overeating, hasty eating, eating at irregular and improper hours, and especially, eating *improper kinds* of food, are the evils which lead to indigestion and all its accompanying train of ills, and which are thoroughly exposed by the teachings of health reform.

Health reform investigates the nature and properties of food and its relation to the living system, and to the digestive apparatus in particular. It points out the reasons why certain kinds of food are wholesome while others are injurious. Perhaps this reform deals more with dietetic abuses than with any other class of evils; but the reason for this is that less attention is generally paid to this subject than to any other requiring attention.

With reference to quality of food it is maintained, by logical reasoning founded upon scientific facts, that the use of spices, condiments, and all irritating and pungent articles is not only unnecessary, but absolutely injurious. It is also shown by science, reason, and experience, that the use of animal fats, and especially of "fried" food, is a most common cause of ill-health and indigestion. It is further shown from anatomy and physiology, as well as experience, that the most natural food for man consists wholly of fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple and healthful man-

ner. Indeed, it is clearly proved that the use of animal food is actually unsafe on account of the great liability to disease to which all animals are subject. However, the use of carefully selected animal food is not indiscriminately proscribed to all individuals alike, and under all circumstances. The effects of long-continued habit, and the influence of particular conditions and circumstances, are duly considered. Pork is regarded as unclean, unhealthful, and entirely unfit for food under the most favorable circumstances, and in many cases extremely dangerous from its liability to trichinæ poisoning. Hundreds of persons have died from the effects of eating pork thus poisoned, being literally devoured by worms; and hundreds of others have suffered the agonies of death a hundred times from horrible tape-worms which originated in measly pork.

Highly seasoned foods of all kinds are discarded as unwholesome and pernicious. The use of graham or wheat-meal bread is recommended in the place of that which is made from superfine white flour which has been deprived of its most valuable nutritive elements. Unleavened bread is also considered preferable to that which has been partially decomposed by fermentation, or rendered caustic and unwholesome by the use of irritating chemicals like soda, saleratus, cream of tartar, etc.

But it should be distinctly understood that health reform does not recommend or tolerate an impoverished diet. Its adherents do not live on "bran bread and water" as many suppose. The true principles of health reform require that a person adopting the reform should not only exclude from his dietary all pernicious and injurious articles of food, but that as soon as an un-

wholesome article is discarded it should be immediately replaced by something better, more healthful, more nutritious, and, to a natural appetite, more palatable.

In regard to time and frequency of meals it is held, that, as a general rule, which admits of few exceptions, the wants of the human system would be better supplied, and the body better and more easily nourished by returning to the practice of eating but two meals each day, a custom which was universally prevalent among the earlier and more hardy nations of the world. Not only the experience of the nations of antiquity, but that of thousands of individuals now living and practicing this system, confirms and establishes the superiority of the two-meal system over the more common custom of eating three, four, or five meals a day. Some carry the matter to the extreme of one meal a day; but health reform offers no reason or apology for such a course.

It should be mentioned that in urging the dietetic reforms noticed, the main object is not the saving of expense, a sort of pecuniary speculation, although every genuine reformer soon finds that economy is not the least of the benefits which health reform affords; the great end in view is the securing of that condition of health and happiness which always comes from right doing, obedience to law. The table of a genuine reformer will be spread with a good variety and abundant quantity of the various nutritious grains and vegetables prepared in a simple manner, together with abundance of delicious fruits.

3. *Pure soft water is the ONLY DRINK, and should be the only beverage.*

Health reformers are the most radical of all

temperance advocates. Teetotalism in its broadest sense is the true temperance platform. And in this sense the term is made to cover not only the use of alcoholic liquors, but the use of tea, coffee, chocolate, opium, and tobacco. The two last-mentioned articles are never employed as drinks, yet we speak of them in this connection because their influence upon the system is in many respects identical with that of the other articles mentioned. Tea, coffee, opium, tobacco, and alcohol, are all stimulants. In other words, they are all poisons; for every stimulant is a poison. Pure alcohol is deadly. Opium is often fatal, even in moderate doses. Caffeine, or theine, the poisonous principle of tea and coffee, is also a deadly poison. Nicotine, the active constituent of tobacco, ranks next to prussic acid as a poison. Tea and coffee are less injurious than opium, tobacco, or alcohol; but they lead to the use of stronger stimulants, and so, in connection with tobacco, become the stepping-stones to drunkenness and opium-eating.

4. *The clothing must be so adapted to the conditions and circumstances of the wearer that a proper temperature of all parts of the body shall be maintained, while the action of every organ is unrestrained.*

Improper dress is another of the great evils of the day against which health reform raises its warning voice. Fashion instead of nature is allowed to control the arrangement of the clothing, especially that of ladies and children. Little children are allowed to be exposed to the damp, chilling air of spring and autumn, and even winter, with thinly clad or wholly nude arms and limbs, while their mothers are still greater trans-

gressors of the law of nature given above. Young ladies and matrons as well, encase themselves in steel or whalebone frames, and then tighten their corset bands until nearly the last breath of life is effectually expelled from their bodies, displacing and compressing the internal vital organs to such a degree that the performance of healthy and natural functions is entirely impossible. The chest and trunk are covered with many thicknesses of substantial clothing, shawls, capes, and furs, while the extremities are almost wholly unclad, a single thin covering being usually considered sufficient. The body is deformed by stays and panniers, and the feet are pinched in narrow-toed, high-heeled, pasteboard shoes or slippers. Perhaps, also, the head will be loaded with a prodigious quantity of adventitious hair in the shape of a chignon, creating irritation of the scalp and almost incessant headache. Still more prevalent than either of the errors in dress yet mentioned is the custom of suspending from the waist a number of heavy skirts to drag down and displace the organs of the abdomen and pelvis. This habit gives rise to an immense number of painful and chronic diseases.

Health reform corrects these abuses, and educates the people in the proper modes of dress. It requires that no part of the clothing should be so confining as to prevent unrestrained movement of every organ and limb. It requires, also, that the feet and limbs shall be as warmly clothed as any other portion of the body. It also recommends the substitution for the ordinary trailing skirts a dress more in accordance with nature's requirements, which is known and worn as the reform dress. Especially does it insist that every

particle of clothing should be suspended from the shoulders instead of hanging from the waist or hips.

5. *Adequate physical exercise must be taken systematically and persistently.*

Sedentary habits annually send to untimely graves thousands of the most useful and talented members of society. Health reform enforces the importance of careful attention to this subject as well as others of greater apparent moment.

6. *A sufficient amount of rest and sleep must be daily secured to allow the system to recuperate its wasted energies and repair its broken-down tissues.*

The general tendency of modern civilization is to rob nature of her required time for repairs and restoration. The result is premature decay and death. Late hours spent either in labor or in amusement are a gross insult to nature which will surely be met by adequate resentment and retribution in due time. Health reform attacks this evil also, and earnestly remonstrates with every transgressor of nature's laws to reform his habits before the terrible penalty of disease is visited upon him.

7. *Recreation adapted to the wants and circumstances of each individual must be obtained at proper intervals.*

Health reform instructs the literary worker to find in physical exercise, accompanied by cheerful social intercourse, the relaxation which is required by his overwrought brain. It teaches the physical laborer, on the other hand, to seek in mental pursuits the recreation necessary to maintain the healthy activity of his intellectual faculties.

8. *Personal cleanliness must be maintained by frequent bathing.*

Far too little importance is generally paid to bathing. Many people seek to hide their dirt by the use of perfumes. Many diseases have their origin in a dirty, torpid skin. Health reform indorses the ancient regulations of the Mosaic-law, and enjoins so frequent bathing that the person shall never acquire an offensive odor, even in the sweltering months of summer, when a daily ablution is necessary.

9. *Mental and social influences and surroundings must be such as to encourage cheerfulness and contentment.*

Health reform recognizes to the fullest extent the wonderfully intimate relation which exists between the mind and the body, and often discovers to the poor victim of despair that his difficulty is wholly in his liver. It not only recommends cheerfulness and contentment, but encourages it in the most effectual way, by promoting health.

10. *Proper bodily positions and correct attitudes should be cultivated and preserved.*

Another of the objects of health reform is to call attention to the evil results of allowing the body to habitually assume unnatural and constrained attitudes and positions. Deformity is the enevitable result.

Restoration of Health, or Treatment of Disease.

For centuries it has been the prevailing belief that disease was some sort of malignant entity, something to be attacked, fought, and destroyed.

With this theory of the nature of disease, it is easily comprehended why the practice of physicians has been such as it has. Supposing it to be something to be destroyed, it would seem very appropriate that poisons, the most destructive agents, should be employed for the purpose. But the world is rapidly becoming enlightened upon this subject through the influence of this movement, which advocates the following principles relating to disease:—

1. *Disease is remedial effort.* In other words, it is an effort of nature to remove obstructions or correct abnormal conditions.

2. *All curative power exists in the living system.* Men may supply conditions, and thus facilitate recovery; but nature does all the healing work.

3. *Drugs and medicines never CURE.* They may change the seat of disease, may create new diseases, but they never cure the patient.

4. The agencies which nature can use in her healing work are those known as hygienic, the chief of which are *pure air, proper food, pure soft water, proper clothing, sunlight, exercise, rest, mental influences, and electricity.* Disease originates in an abuse or non-use of these agents; health is only to be obtained by their proper employment.

We say that the world is becoming enlightened upon this subject; this is the case with the more intelligent classes, and especially does the medical profession seem to be awakening to a recognition of the truth of the principles above stated. It may be said that drugs are still largely employed by allopathic, homeopathic, and eclectic physicians; this is true, notwithstanding

the fact that many of the most eminent men in these different schools have unhesitatingly declared their unbelief in the efficacy of drugs as remedies for disease. Here is the chief ground of complaint which health reform finds against the medical profession. Their college professors and learned doctors admit and even declare the truth, but in their practice persist in perpetuating methods of treatment which are only consistent with old and exploded theories. Listen to the following admissions of some of the most eminent of the doctors of allopathic medication, and then attempt to harmonize such confessions with the nearly universal practice of drugging and dosing every ailment:—

“Modern medicine inclines to regard diseases no longer as distinct entities, but, rather, as perverted life processes.—*N. A. Review* for July, 1873.

Says Reynolds, in his compendious work on practice, “No specific remedy will cure.” Again, “Energetic antiphlogistic treatment is energetic mischief.”

Said Prof. Alonzo Clarke, M. D., “All our curative agents are poisonous; and, as a consequence, every dose diminishes the patient’s vitality.”

Says Prof. St. John., M. D., “All medicines are poisonous.”

Says Prof. Martyn Paine, M. D., LL. D., “Drug medicines do but cure one disease by producing another.”

Said Prof. Jos. M. Smith, M. D., “Drugs do not cure disease.”

John Mason Good, M. D., F. R. S., said of medicines, “They have destroyed more lives than war, pestilence, and famine combined.”

Said Dr. Bostwick, "Every dose of medicine given, is a blind experiment on the vitality of the patient."

The above are but a very few of the testimonies which might be presented against the use of drugs; but are not the eminent authorities quoted, and the cogent sentences uttered by them, sufficient to convince any candid man of the truth of the propositions for the support of which they are presented? We think this is the case; but if further evidence is required, we have only to point to the thousands of chronic invalids who have been made such by the use of powerful drugs—the unnumbered throng of miserable dyspeptics who have ruined their digestion by making apothecary shops of their stomachs—the hundreds of cripples whose prospects for life have been ruined by mercury and like poisons.

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