

Hippocrates nearly four hundred years before Christ, and his statement of the case has not been improved upon or refuted since. Galen merely restated the same truth when he said: "The greatest danger to health results from complete inactivity, in the same manner the greatest benefit results from moderate exercise." It is this one Therapeutic agent in its various applications that I would take up for discussion.

The body has been looked upon by many, in fact by most of the medical profession as a chemical compound, and disease has been treated by the administration of chemical substances to restore the stability of the compound. This view of the body has been held almost to the exclusion of its other aspects and the natural reaction has swung the pendulum of thought into the mazes of Psychological research. Schools have sprung up in which disease is looked upon as a mental state. Healing is to be accomplished by faith, accompanied by the laying on of hands, bottled electricity or infinitesimal globules. The body is the expression of the soul, which controls its workings absolutely, so that disease is merely the imperfect expression of the spiritual element in man.

Another view of the body sees it as a complex machine, tolerating a good deal of interference and abuse with comparative impunity, with this advantage over the ordinary machine that it always tends to repair injuries to itself. It has within it the capacity of self-renewal as well as that of dissolution and unlike any other mechanism, the more it is used within physiological limits the better will it work, and the longer will it last.

Bodily movements are among the most potent measures that keep the human machinery in working order. The active use of the various muscle masses affects more than their own tissues. There is pressure on the abdominal contents, stretching of contracted chest walls, and removal of excess of blood from the head and torso out to the periphery where it circulates in the extremities.

A brief resume of the principal effects of exercise would perhaps express the idea I have in mind with greater clearness.

The two-fold function of muscular tissue is to be noted.