

DRINKING WATER AND HEALTH.*

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Of the many natural blessings we possess, good health is easily first in importance, if for no other reason than that it enables us to enjoy life—to make the most of life—and to do our duty by ourselves, our families and the State. Good health means something more than freedom from disease and pain, it implies strength and activity, physical and mental, to do our work in the world and to do it at our best. It is indeed something to be prized and well guarded, for it is easier to maintain than to get back again once having lost it.

While still enjoying good health it is doubtful if we recognize the obligation—the religious obligation I might call it—to protect and preserve our health. To do so we must oftentimes be willing to forego temporary pleasure and enjoyment. Too many take little heed, until perhaps they come to middle life or later, of those things and conditions that contribute towards the conservation of health. Perhaps a better day is dawning. The fundamentals of hygiene are being taught in our schools and the rising generation should know something of the laws of health. Hitherto, as a people, we have had to pick up here a little and there a little, oftentimes learning by bitter experience—and perhaps too late. Forewarned is in a large measure to be forearmed. At all events those who are to take our places will not be able to urge ignorance in matters relating to food, water, fresh air and a great many other things all closely connected with the preservation of health.

But I would point out that a knowledge of these things, necessary as it is, will not in itself be sufficient, there must be the desire to profit thereby, to put it into practise. And with all there must be the exercise of common sense, nothing can take its place. We shall find if we will only cultivate this gift it will help us along very satisfactorily many a time when science is apparently silent as to which path to choose, what action to take.

Our health, as we all must know, is largely dependent upon the character and amount of the food we eat and its freedom from adulteration, the purity of the water we drink, the freshness of the air we breathe, and the character of the exercise we take or of the work we do. To-night we are to consider one of the more important of these factors—the water we use for drinking purposes.

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