

It follows from these facts and considerations that the secret of avoiding the unpleasant consequences thought to spring wholly from the action of cold upon the body has very little dependence upon exposure, but a great deal upon an impure and weak condition of all the vital processes. In other words, with an average or superior constitution and an intelligent observance of all the laws of health, men and women could not take cold if they wanted to, they might be exposed to the action of cold to a degree equal to the beast of the field, and with like impunity. But in the case of persons with feeble constitutions, and who disregard knowingly or otherwise, and most frequently otherwise, the conditions of healthy existence, no degree of care will prevent the taking of cold, as it is termed. They may live in houses regulated with all the precision of a hot-house—they may cover themselves with the most highly protective clothing the market provides, and yet they will take cold. I do not think the consumptive person lives, or ever will live, even if kept in a temperature absolutely uniform, and clothed in a wholly faultless manner, in whom the well-known signs of one cold after another will not be apparent. But, on the other hand, there are those who, like the late Sir Henry Holland, of good constitutions and living in accordance with the laws of health, may travel as he did from the tropics to the poles again and again, clad only in an ordinary dress coat, and yet scarcely know what it is to have a cold or sickness of any kind. The truth is, that in order to avoid taking cold from ordinary, or even extraordinary exposure, the vital processes of the body must be made strong enough to rise above the untoward influence of external conditions. If the body is not thus superior, it is so weak that it can only act harmoniously under the most favorable conditions, and a continued state of health is not among the possibilities.

The conclusion from all this is, that neglecting the conditions upon which strength of constitution and purity of blood depend, and then striving to avoid in a sedulously careful manner the evil influence of cold upon the body, is like neglecting the substance for the shadow of health, or, more properly, it is like one who starves his body, and then strives to keep quiet in order that his strength shall not be exhausted. Let food be taken, and the exhaustion from exercise will not ensue; let all the conditions of health be observed, and then the natural changes of the weather will fall harmlessly on the healthy functions of the body.