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## PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

A human being, supposing him to be soundly constituted at first, will continue in health till he reaches old age, provided that certain conditions are observed, and no injurious accident shall befall. This is a proposition so well supported by extensive observation of facts, that it may be regarded as an established axiom. It becomes, therefore, important to ascertain which are the conditions essential to health, that, by their observance, we may preserve for ourselves what is justly esteemed as the greatest of earthly blessings; and dwell for our naturally appointed time upon the earth. A general acquaintance with these conditions may be easily attained by all, and to render them obedience is much more within the power of individuals than is commonly supposed.

The leading conditions essential to health are:—1. A constant supply of pure air; 2. A sufficiency of nourishing food, rightly taken; 3. Cleanliness; 4. A sufficiency of exercise to the various organs of the system; 5. A proper temperature; 6. A sufficiency of cheerful and innocent enjoyments; and, 7. Exemption from harassing cares. These conditions we shall now treat in succession, taking as our guides the most recent and eminent of physiological authorities.

## AIR.

The common air is a fluid composed mainly of two gases, in certain proportions; namely, 20 parts of oxygen and 80 of nitrogen in 100, with very minute addition of carbonic acid gas. Such is the air in its pure and normal state, and such is the state in which we require it for respiration. When it is loaded with any admixture of a different kind, or its natural proportions are in any way deranged, it cannot be breathed without producing injurious results. We also require what is apt to appear a large quantity of this element for healthy existence. The lungs of a healthy full-grown man will inhale the bulk of twenty cubic inches at every inspiration, and he will use no less

than fifty-seven hogsheads in twenty-four hours. And not only is this large quantity necessary, but the air that surrounds us must be in free circulation, in order that what we expire may be speedily carried away, and allowed to commingle with the atmosphere, which is subject to never-ceasing causes tending to its restoration and renewal.

Now there are various circumstances which tend to surround us at times with vitiated air, and which must accordingly be guarded against. That first calling for attention is the miasma or noxious quality imparted to the atmosphere in certain districts by stagnant water and decaying vegetable matter. It is now generally acknowledged that this noxious quality is, in reality, a subtle poison, which acts on the human system through the medium of the lungs, producing fevers and other epidemics. A noted instance of its acting on a great scale is presented in the Campagna di Roma, where a large surface is retained in a marshy state. The exhalations arising from that territory at certain seasons of the year, oblige the inhabitants of the adjacent districts of the city to desert their homes, to escape its pernicious influence. All marshes, and low damp grounds of every kind, produce more or less miasma; and it is consequently dangerous to live upon or near them. Slightly-elevated ground, with a free exposure to light and air, should accordingly in all cases be chosen for the sites of both single houses and towns. Tanks and collections of water of every kind are dangerous beneath or near a house, because, unless their contents be constantly in a state of change, which is rarely the case, their tendency is to send up exhalations of a noxious kind. Some years ago, Viscount Milton—a youth of great promise, and who had recently become a husband and father—died of a fever which was traced to the opening of an old reservoir of water underneath the country-house in which he dwelt. More recently, a similar but more extensively fatal tragedy took place at a farmhouse in the south of Scotland. Not only did the farmer, his wife and a female servant sink under a malignant fever, but a son and daughter, and several other servants, narrowly escaped with their lives, and only by removing from the house. It was observed in this case that removal produced instantaneous improvement of health, but a return to the devoted dwelling at once removed the ailment. On proper investigation, it was found that immediately behind the house was a kind of mill-pond, into which every kind of refuse was thrown, or allowed to discharge itself; and that this collection of putrid matter had not been once cleared out for a long series of years, no one dreaming of any harm