

DR. HUNTER'S LETTER ON THE LUNGS—NO. V.

WHY CONSUMPTIVES LOSE FLESH.

The nutrition of the body depends on something more than proper food and good digestion. No amount of food, however nutritious, or carefully prepared, can add the weight of a grain to the body, beyond its organic power of assimilation. The stomach may digest it perfectly, and yet the patient lose flesh from day to day. It is surprising how few understand why this is. They suppose assimilation takes place in the stomach, and that if the food be good and the digestion perfect the patient ought either to gain flesh or at least hold his own. But the stomach has nothing to do with the making of new blood from the food eaten. It is simply a mill to grind and dissolve the food so that its nutritious elements may be separated from the crude mass and absorbed. These elements are taken up as a milky liquid and carried to the lungs to be there transformed into red blood, endowed with life and made capable of repairing the wastes of the body. This change is what is meant by the term assimilation. It depends on the lungs and can only take place in proportion to the volume of air breathed. With large lungs a man is fleshy and strong because he can assimilate, i. e., transform into blood a large quantity of food. With small lungs a man is thin and weak, because he can only assimilate a small quantity.

Our standard weight is fixed by the volume of air we habitually take in at a breath. This we call the vital capacity. Poor blood and bad digestion may keep us below this standard, but nothing can ever make us rise above it.

When the lungs become diseased their capacity for air is diminished, and to exactly the same extent the power to make new blood from food is reduced, and a corresponding loss of flesh and strength must take place. If the disease increases the obstruction to breathing also increases and the body keeps on wasting or consuming away, and no diet can prevent it.

This is a law of our being, fixed upon it by the God of nature, and there can be no exception to its operation. You cannot find in all the world a strong, muscular man who has not large lungs and great breathing power, or a man with small lungs, and feeble breathing power, who is not thin and weak.

How absurd, then, in the light of science, appears the hackneyed promise, so often made by physicians in lung cases, to build up the wasting body by food. They have no more power to stop the loss of flesh, by food, than they have to stop the revolutions of the earth upon its axis. The only way the body can be built up is to stop the disease and improve the breathing. Accomplish this and nature will do the building up. ROBT. HUNTER, M. D.

71 Bay St., Toronto, Nov. 28.

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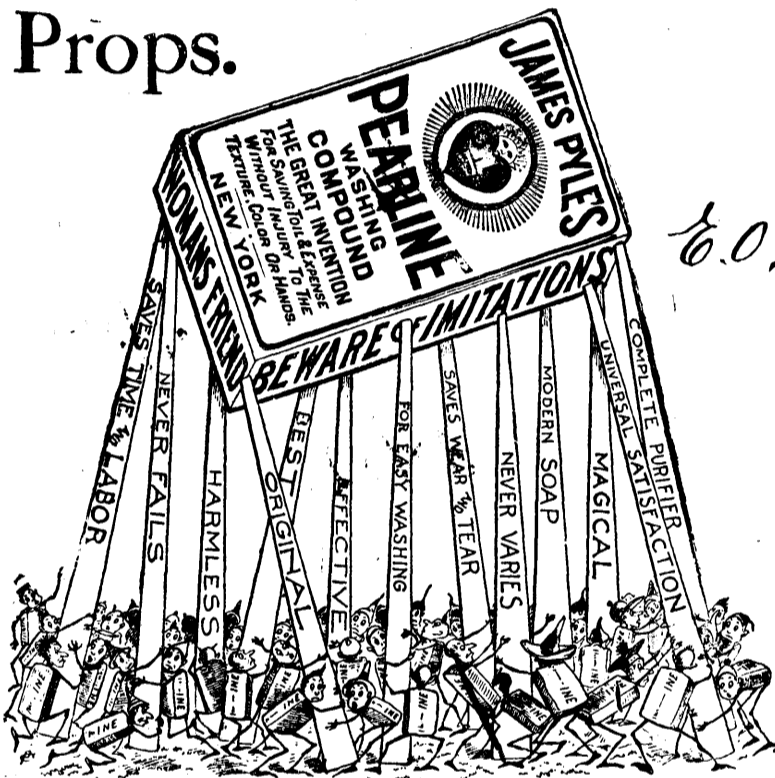
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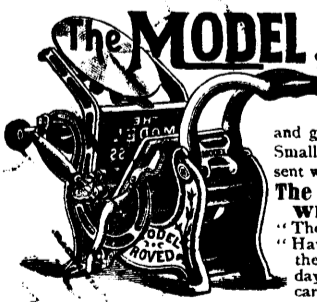


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