

Of two constitutions equally sound but unequally strong, the strongest will require the greatest amount of exercise. Two levers whose arms are unequal will have, to establish an equilibrium, to describe unequal curves.

13. The appreciation of the force of respiration is not so difficult to determine as might generally be imagined; and the physician who perceives its importance and the manner of determining it, can prognosticate with a quasi-certitude, the duration of life of each constitution.

Without heeding the recriminations of the inexorable fatalist, or the doubts of the indifferent sceptic, we shall presently prove not only that our days are counted, but that we are at liberty to shorten their duration.

The instinct of self-preservation which is innate in man renders life dear to him, and makes him adopt every device to prolong it. The sick man adheres to life by the hope of a return to health, and the healthy man aspires to the continuance of his actual well-being.

The indications to attain that condition are not numerous. They consist:—

I. In deviating as little as possible from the laws of nature.

“Cédons, conformons-nous aux lois de la nature;
La route qu'elle trace est toujours la plus sûre.”

II. In observing the precepts of morality, which, well interpreted and understood, give us the best and simplest hygienic rules. III. In placing confidence in the enlightened physician, whose experience and correct judgment enable him to appreciate with exactitude the force of vital capacity inherent in each constitution. The first and second indications, being more social than medical, will not be here touched upon. I will therefore confine myself within the limits of the third. I will have an opportunity of developing, in a more advanced part of my subject, the means which I consider the best adapted for determining the force of the respiratory apparatus, and point out the modifications induced by a pathological state.

14. *Second consideration. Man not respiring enough of air.* We have to examine him here under three different conditions:

I. From want of exercise.

II. From insufficient quantity of air.

III. From congenital defects of the constitution.

I. A healthy man, well developed, who does not go through every day an amount of work or exercise consonant with the strength of his constitution, will soon experience a disturbance in his health. As the effects of the respiratory process are experienced throughout the system, so in order to maintain an equilibrium of action, the latter must necessarily undergo a corresponding change; but if it remains inactive in one or more of its parts, the effects of the action can no longer reach their full development; and the result is a rupture of the general equilibrium whose immediate consequence is a reduction in the force of the respiratory apparatus. Animal heat, circulation and nervous influence are thereby secondarily modified and their action becomes unequally distributed. We need not add that unequal circulation will produce local congestions with the various disorders which are connected with it.