

# TREATMENT OF CHRONIC DISORDERS BY SWEDISH MOVEMENTS AND MASSAGE.

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For about seventy-five years the Swedish movements have been applied in Sweden, where Prof. Henry Ling, the originator of the system, opened the first institution in 1813. Thanks to the successful results of the treatment, Prof. Ling was granted a stipend by the Government, to enable him to enlarge the establishment. After the founding of the Royal Central Institute in Stockholm, other institutions gradually sprung up, not only in Sweden, but also in different parts of Europe, all under the direction of graduates of the Central Institution. The institutions on a large scale throughout Europe number at present about thirty-five. In the United States the system has of late years taken a firm hold; thanks to the zeal of Drs. Geo. Taylor and Wm. Karlsive, of New York; Dr. Benj. Lee, of Philadelphia; Dr. Sparre, of Chicago, and others, and being acknowledged and supported by such men as Prof. Louis Sayre, Drs. Pepper, Weber, and other prominent medical men, there is little doubt of its getting as good a foothold here as in Europe.

The system is divided into two classes of movements, Medical and Hygienic. The medical, calculated to improve imperfect physiological relations, and to break up long-standing ailments; and the hygienic, to produce a harmonious development of the whole organism. The former have exclusively to deal with disease, and the latter act as preventives to disease, inasmuch as the movements are essential, not only to the development of the growing generation, but also to keeping aloof ailments peculiar to persons of sedentary habits, and to old age.

The medical movements are divided into three kinds: Passive, Active, and Duplicated.

Passive movements (under which group we place massage) are given without any exertion on the part of the patient, and are usually administered until the patient has gained sufficient strength to take active and duplicated movements. Active movements are made by the will and power of the patient, and duplicated under resistance of operator or apparatus. It is an undeniable fact, that

persons of sedentary or "one-sided" habits are more subject to divers ailments, than those whose position affords them opportunities to put all their physical as well as mental powers into action. If the movements have the power to aid the development, and to prevent functional disturbances in growing humanity—as well as the mature—there is no reason why the organs impaired by disease should not, by the same means, be wholly or partially restored to the performance of their respective duties.

I propose, in as few words as possible, to explain some of the influences of the movements upon the various functions which constitute *health*.

1. What influence have the movements upon the blood?

Movements accelerate circulation and respiration. Increased circulation assists absorption of nutritive substances from the alimentary canal, and increased respiration supplies the blood with more oxygen (the chemical action of which is so essential in the reproduction of the organic bodies) and causes a decrease of carbonic acid. The increased supply of oxygen and absorption of nutritive substances gives a richer deposit of nutriment to the tissues, and causes an increased oxidation and absorption from them of substances useful for nutrition. The increased circulation also promotes separation from the blood of substances injurious to the organism.

2. What influence have the movements upon the nervous system?

We seldom meet sufferers from nervous disease among the working classes, or among those who—by means of health-giving exercises—keep their systems in good condition; whereas we very frequently find them among people who lead an inactive life. This is a fact so well known, that an answer to our question might seem unnecessary. The impulse of the will for active movements issues from the brain, and is distributed by the nerves to the muscles. An active movement consists, consequently, in a harmonious action of the will, nerves and muscles. According to physiological laws, muscular action develops and increases tissue, therefore it also must strengthen the nerves situated in the tissues, and the nerve centres with which they are connected. From this we also draw the conclusion, that muscular action has a beneficial influence upon the will.