

HEALTH AND DISEASE

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Health and disease by W. Leslie Mackenzie

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W. LESLIE MACKENZIE

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AND DISEASE**

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HEALTH AND DISEASE

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THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

1703

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HEALTH AND DISEASE

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS HEALTH ?

“AND what a strong, healthy man he looked!” This was the comment at the funeral of a burly farmer. He was of middle age; ruddy in countenance; muscular; of large bone, deep chest, irrepressible activity. His laugh was strong and clear. His eye was active. He knew no fatigue. He took more than his share in business, in social life, in public affairs. From the cradle, he had enjoyed good nurture. In his youth, he had been an all-round athlete. As he grew older, he turned his energies to the more complex matters of life. Every one said of him,—“Here is a strong, healthy man.” Yet, under fifty, he suddenly took pneumonia and in three or four days was dead.

“What a thin, pale creature he looks!” This was the common remark about a dis-

tinguished physician. Like the farmer, he had come of good stock. He had been well nurtured in infancy. He had enjoyed all the advantages of physical and general education. But he had always been more or less high strung and "delicate." He had been persevering and studious at College; he became an accomplished man; he had an eye for details; he had skill in speculation. Early in his day, he set himself to analyse the conditions of long life. He concluded that the climax of health was a healthy brain. The condition of maintaining it he found to be regular habits of food, sleep, and exercise. He established, by a study of his own nature, certain normals of life. These, once determined, he kept to rigidly, seeing always through the day to the day after. He decided that to maintain elasticity of brain was a greater total gain than to go under to the impulses of the hour. In a word, he fulfilled, as nearly as the conditions of climate, education, and duty permitted, the aims of the "simple life." He lived at low pressure. He achieved a great reputation. He died at the age of ninety-four. In this country, such an age is accounted "advanced."

These two are extremes. But let us look round on the society of every day. Here is a beautiful child of ten. From earliest