

Mc Neil (D)

TREATISE

ON THE CURE OF

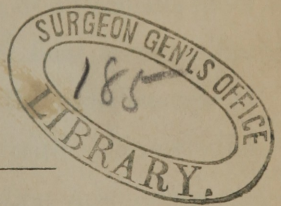
CONSUMPTION

AT THE NORTH,

BY

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WEST HOBOKEN, N. J.



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**Price 10 Cents.**  
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NEW-YORK:
JAMES EGBERT, PRINTER, 321 PEARL-STREET.

1859.

CONSUMPTION CURED

AT THE NORTH.

It is not the design of the writer of this essay, to enter on any new theory, or discussion of the nature of this well-known disease. Science has unfolded, books have described, medical men of all schools have defined its symptoms, nature, and final termination. Unfortunately, for individuals and the race, success in the treatment has not kept pace with a knowledge of the disease. Cases of consumption are on the increase, especially in crowded cities, where causes exist, over which medical or hygienic laws, have no control. The first thing that meets the eye of a medical man, grappling with this formidable, and hitherto unconquerable foe, is emaciation, and degeneracy of the physical, and sinking of all the vital powers. The necessity of arresting the disease is evident to all; but

this end is sought in numberless ways, which have but one thing in common—their fatal termination, too often hastened by the very means intended to cure the patient, whose last days are thus uselessly tortured. The skin that covers the body,—whose healthy functions, it would seem, ought to be preserved,—is often injured by so-called counter-irritation, to such an extent, as not only to destroy its healthy action, but even cause deep-seated disease in the parts underneath; thus adding at least one very serious difficulty to the existing disease. So of the Seton, used to change the seat of the disease, but which serves only as an additional drain upon the sinking vitality. The inhalation of medicated vapors, however beneficial they may prove when received into the general system, (where they must act, if at all,) taxes the organs designed to relieve, beyond their natural powers, and must help to break down the already sinking force.

Opiates which form the basis of most patent compounds, and are too often an ingredient in the Physician's prescription, if they alleviate present symptoms, must do so at the expense of the natural strength, so important to preserve and build up.

Tartar Emetic, that deadly drug, antimonials, and all pretended expectorants, disturb the appetite, weaken the digestive organs, and as far as they go, tend to add to the waste, steadily going on.

Alteratives, mostly compound mineral drugs, it is pretended, absorb or disperse the disease; but really, their only effect is, to diminish the powers of life. Cod liver oil, for the last ten years at least, has had more reputation for curing the disease, than all other remedies combined; and no doubt it has been the means in many instances, of promoting a cure, as it is now found, to be nothing more nor less than nourishment, of a kind which rapidly forms blood, to supply the waste which tubercle always makes on the subject. But on account of its extremely repulsive effects on the stomach, destroying the appetite for other food, many Physicians have discarded its use, and sought a substitute in other nutritious food, which we fortunately have in new milk, cream and butter, perfectly agreeable to all palates.

Can Consumption be cured? Undoubtedly in a large number of cases it can;—and these will be in proportion to the Hygienic means, and atmospheric causes, made use of, and adopted, in the cure. “Vis

medicatrix natura," so much overlooked in the cure of all diseases, but especially in this, clearly points out, and furnishes the elements of treatment, and only needs to be modified by the laws of hygiene, and guided by the careful and studious Physician, who must regulate each case. It is not pretended that this treatise, or any other, should take the place of the ever-watchful medical adviser; whether he prescribe medicine, or regulate diet, or exercise, he is the one to give rules; which ought as strictly to be obeyed, as the orders of the commander are by the soldier. *Hope of relief*, is the most constant symptom of this disease, and the last to desert the patient, who is too often encouraged to look principally to artificial remedies for relief; and that medical system is to be preferred, which tends the least to destroy the natural powers, and at the same time, repairs the waste of the vital energies.

The immediate and exciting causes of disease, first demand the Physician's attention; every thing that is incompatible with present relief, must be removed.

Climate and atmospheric changes, are thought to exert a powerful influence on this disease, both as its cause and as a means of cure. A changeable climate,

like that of this region, is supposed to be one of the great causes of this complaint; for which reason, a mild one, of uniform temperature, not subject to these variations, is eagerly sought after in order to promote a cure—but this hope fails, and the patient only sinks more rapidly in consequence of the change. This seems to confirm the law of cure.

“*Similia similibus curantur,*” that changes of atmosphere, and low temperature, being the cause of disease, must contribute to its cure; and experience has confirmed the truth of this principle, when modified by hygienic laws and medical science.

The breathing of air, filled with dust, smoke and gas, which must always be the case in the city, is perfectly inconsistent with even present relief, to say nothing of a permanent cure. This, the writer himself experienced, when, a few years ago, in the pursuit of his profession in the City, he contracted a bronchial disease; a cough was one of the attendant symptoms which could not be removed until after breathing for a few weeks, the air on these heights, it entirely disappeared and has never returned.

It is highly necessary to protect the surface of the body with flannels, and outward clothing sufficient at all times, and in all weathers, to render the patient comfortable in the open air.

Whatever have been the premonitory symptoms, or how long soever continued, when tubercle is developed, a waste commences ; and if this cannot be supplied, no matter what medical treatment is adopted, the patient will inevitably sink more or less speedily, in proportion to the rapidity of the tuberculous formation. The production and diffusion of blood, into all parts of the animal economy, is the only way discovered, to supply a waste going on at all times, in all living animals. Now, how can blood be the most surely, rapidly, and naturally formed ?

The first requisite is pure air, above the temperature that prostrates, or relaxes the muscular system, and at an elevation as near mountain air as possible, that it may be invigorating to the body, and exhilarating to the mind ; and this pure air should be breathed as much as possible when the body is in motion. The very best mode of exercise in this disease, is found to be *walking* as far as the strength will permit, or *riding*

on horseback, by which the body is kept in motion and the mind stimulated, without overtaking the muscular system, already enfeebled by waste. Riding in a carriage, is of but little use.

The Palisades of the Hudson, opposite and overlooking New-York, furnish the air described, with scenery unrivaled for beauty and variety.

Air and exercise, enjoyed under such circumstances, answer three objects indispensable in the cure of the disease :

First. The oxygen inhaled by that portion of the lung yet undiseased, is of a nature to produce those changes on the blood, necessary to promote health.

Secondly. The motion in exercise, gives an appetite for such food as is required to sustain the body and build up the waste.

Thirdly. The vigor of the digestive organs is preserved and increased, so that food after being taken into the stomach, to satisfy the appetite created, is quickly assimilated into blood, and other fluids so desirable to sustain a healthy condition.

“In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread,” is not only a Divine law, it is also a law of nature, which means simply, that he who expects to have a good appetite, and enjoy the good things of this life *must work*. This may seem hard to those who seek for health and its concomitants, in the luxurious ease which wealth may procure; but we did not make this law, nor can we substitute others for it, without being ourselves the losers.

A Physician, now in his eighty-fifth year, was supposed while a student, to have consumption. He was advised by his Preceptor, to accept the office of deputy sheriff of the county, which required almost constant riding on horseback, in a mountainous region of country. One year of this kind of duty, restored him to robust health; he has practiced his profession in that same region for fifty years, his present age shows how permanent the cure.

The balmy air of the South, and some of the Islands of the Sea, which are eagerly resorted to for the cure of this disease, only, in many instances, lures to death; because, while the effect may be, to mitigate some of the symptoms, and so, for a time, flatter the patient,

yet the inclination to repose, and indolence, is such as cannot be resisted by persons in health, much less by one wasted, and weakened, by disease.

Next to exercise in mountain air, and varied scenery, is a voyage to sea; because sea air is exhilarating, excites an appetite and invigorates the digestive organs, and is vastly to be preferred to city life; but the sea voyage is apt to become too monotonous, and depressing to the mind, and cannot be long enough continued to produce a cure.

There is no disease in which *nourishment* is so much depended upon as in consumption; the supply of blood is the great thing to be kept in view. The Physician must watch over this particular, and advise such articles of food as will supply the greatest amount of blood, with the least injury to the assimilating organs.

Milk is so important and indispensable an article of nutriment, in the treatment of this disease, that the writer cannot pass it over, without giving his views on the subject.

In speaking of MILK, he will be understood not to mean that produced by distillery swill. Scientific bo-

dies, chemists, and *some* medical men, he cannot but think, have given themselves much useless trouble on this question during the past year. If the whole subject had been submitted to a committee of dairymen, in some of the distant counties, where the quality of milk, butter and cheese, is more an object than the quantity of fluid produced; facts and results would have been obtained, which, for truth and practical benefit, would have been far more interesting and instructive to the masses, who are deeply interested in this subject, than all that has yet resulted, or is likely to result, from the investigation. Indeed, it is extremely doubtful whether a pure standard has ever been obtained for experiment and analysis. It would be safer now, to trust the palate of an epicure, than anything that has been settled by scientific investigation. It does not require much learning and experiment, to arrive at the fact, that milk obtained from swill feed, is increased in quantity, at the expense of quality.

Pure milk is produced from healthy cows fed on clover and timothy hay, and grass: pure grains—corn, oats, buckwheat, rye: with a mixture of vegetables—pumpkins, carrots, beets and potatoes.

How much milk, thus produced, is obtained for market, within one hundred miles of New-York, the writer does not pretend to say; but the materials can be obtained, and pure milk can be produced, and it would be safe to say, that one quart of this, to make blood, in cases of Marasmus and Consumption, would be worth more than six from swill-fed cows.

It is contemplated by the writer, if he can obtain the co-operation of medical men, and others believing as he does, to provide an INSTITUTION on these heights, where all the suggestions contained in this treatise can be carried out.

He has, during his residence here for a few years past, observed the influence of the atmosphere of this locality, (elevated, as it is, about two hundred and fifty feet above tide-water,) with a special reference to its effects on diseases of the lungs; and certainly, the results of his observations, have been very favorable, as the cases of this diseases, that have come under his care, *where the plan could be carried out*, have all yielded to treatment very satisfactorily; and in most instances, a cure has been effected.

The writer is very desirous of attracting the atten-

tion of medical men, to these facts; and as the place must be seen, to be properly understood and appreciated, if any one feels an interest in this matter, and can spare a few hours, the writer will be most happy to point out the locality, and make such other explanations, as his observations shall have enabled him to offer.

The village is a mile and a half from Hoboken Ferry, on the Patterson Plank Road. A Stage, marked "West Hoboken," leaves the Ferry and returns frequently through the day, at the rate of ten cents, each way.

D. McNEIL.

West Hoboken, N. J.

