Home hygiene and prevention of disease

Ditman Norman Edward
Copyright 1912, by
DUFFIELD & COMPANY
INTRODUCTION

One of the most important developments of modern medicine has been the fact that it is now realized that it is far better to avoid than to contract illness, even if the modern methods of treatment have robbed disease of many of its old-time terrors. A consequence of this has been that the modern physician takes every opportunity to instruct his clientele how to avoid contracting disease.

It is with a belief that this part of the physician's instructions can be advantageously supplemented with information which the average person can have constantly at hand that has made the publishing of this book seem distinctly called for. Simple as a physician's advice may seem for the avoidance of any disease, it is often necessary to have this advice in a form where it can be more carefully studied and digested if we are to develop a "hygienic sense" which will enable us more or less instinctively to avoid the paths which lead to disease.

The public as a class has been saved much suffering and avoidance of future inconvenience by the knowledge which it has assimilated on first aid to the injured. Similar benefit should result from popular appreciation of the methods of first aid to the sick. For often, in the case of illness "a stitch in time saves nine."

One justification of a popular work of this kind is that not only can its readers render the best aid to the incipient or slight invalid; but they should be enabled to better appreciate when an ailment has become serious enough to require expert medical attendance, or when a disease is from the outset beyond the aid of unskilled hands.

There are few in our modern era of civilization who do not understand the workings and failings of automobiles, engines, phonographs, sewing machines and household appliances. It would seem the part of discretion therefore if we knew at least as much about a few of the commoner workings and failings of the human body—a machine of
INTRODUCTION

far more importance to all of us than all the mechanical appliances in the world.

It is with this purpose in view that the author of this work ventures to place it in the hands of the public, expressing, at the same time, the hope that some of the more technical of the information imparted will be employed with discretion. To those living in rural districts where the service of physicians is difficultly obtainable it is hoped that the information herein contained will be a means of saving life and avoiding unnecessary suffering. To those living less far from the trodden highways it is hoped this work will prove to be an aid to the physician—educating the human kind to a more intelligent appreciation of his efforts, lessening the numberless irritations and infinite inconvenience resulting from the human gad-fly “minor ailments”; and materially lightening the load of long-suffering humanity from preventable sickness.

In many cases it is difficult to judge from a patient’s symptoms the precise character of the disease from which he is suffering, and it is obvious that except in the simplest cases no one but a medical man can form a reliable opinion. It must be made clear that the object of this book is not to displace the family doctor, but to furnish the reader with general information regarding medical subjects; and that while pains have been taken to ensure accuracy, the author and publishers can accept no responsibility for errors. Nearly all the medicines mentioned in the text (except those marked Poison) may be obtained from licensed druggists without the prescription or signature of a medical man, but persons who treat themselves in accordance with the directions contained in the book must realize that they do so on their own responsibility.

N. E. D.