

EDWARD ELLIS

ELLIS'S PRIMARY
PHYSIOLOGY. OR GOOD
HEALTH FOR BOYS AND
GIRLS

Edward Ellis

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Good Health for Boys and Girls**

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Edward Sylvester Ellis

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Introduction

Nothing need be said concerning the importance of the study of good health. The first lesson that a child should learn is the law of his being. Hitherto the aim has been mainly to train the mind regardless of the requirements of the body. The vital connection of the two has been ignored with a persistency little short of criminality.

Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene have their places in the curriculum of our leading schools, but the knowledge too often is simply technical and without practical results. What greater travesty than to listen to a glib discourse on nutrition, digestion, circulation, respiration, the muscles, nerves, bones or brain by a pupil with thin chest, lack-lustre eye, sallow complexion, and weak frame?

With no wish to slight the value of a thorough knowledge of Physiology, this little volume seeks to give the fundamental laws of health, in such simple language that every boy and girl advanced enough to read, can understand them. Accompanied and supplemented by the earnest words of the teacher, who shall estimate the good that may be accomplished?

In the preparation of these pages, the author is glad to acknowledge the valuable assistance received from C. Shepherd, M.D., Superintendent for many years of Public Schools, Trenton, N. J., and Washington Hasbrouck, Ph.D., Principal of the New Jersey State Normal School.

TO THE MALE TEACHER

It is your bounden duty to instruct your pupils in the laws of health. If you fail to do so, you are not fit to be their teacher.

The vices of cigarette smoking, of tobacco chewing, of beer and alcoholic drinking, threaten the very existence of the rising generation. You cannot be too earnest and persistent in impressing this truth upon the boys who look up to you for counsel.

You need not be reminded that the most powerful teacher is your own example. Boys respect and admire manly vigor. You ought to be able to outrun, outjump, outthrow, outswim, outwrestle, outspar, and outplay, at all points, the largest and most active boy in school. Many a teacher, when he attempts to take part in an athletic game, becomes the laughing-stock of the youngest urchin, by reason of his flabby awkwardness.

While our youth often need to be restrained rather than encouraged to cultivate their muscles, yet they should be told to play when the opportunity is theirs. You ought to take the lead in their games. Your eye should be as bright, your sight as true, your cheeks as rosy, your step as elastic and your physical prowess the equal at least of any lad in school.

All the text-books in the land are less effective than a few timely words from you. Occasions are continually presenting themselves which should be utilized. When a boy has been playing too violently, or when he neglects play, when he is careless as to his clothing or shows evidence of falling into any bad habit, a kind but pointed warning will accomplish more than weeks of study.

There are other dangers to which boys are peculiarly exposed, and which obviously cannot be referred to in these pages, concerning which it would be criminal for you to remain silent, but in all such cases, your warning must be uttered to the offender in private, or by the father to whom you may make the suggestion.

Of course you will see that the school-room is properly warmed and ventilated; that the pupils are kept out of all drafts; and that the air is as pure as possible. The faithful teacher will find almost hourly opportunities for impressing these vital truths upon the children, and, only by doing so to the fullest extent, can he approach a proper fulfillment of his own mission as the friend, counselor, and guide of the coming generations.

TO THE FEMALE TEACHER

What has been said to your co-laborer about assuming the lead in observing the laws of health, applies with equal force to you. Your experience and knowledge give you invaluable opportunities for instructing the girls in what is truly the great question of life and death.

Cleanliness, clothing, food, and all the subjects treated of in the following pages, should be supplemented by the practical illustrations which the girls themselves continually present. No observant teacher can have failed to become acquainted with the rudimentary laws of her being, and to none is given so golden an opportunity to make that knowledge a living truth as to her whose calling it is to instruct the future mothers of our country.

CHAPTER I

WHY THE LAWS OF GOOD HEALTH SHOULD BE STUDIED

Every boy and girl ought to live a hundred years. When worn out at last by old age, death will come like sweet sleep, without pain, or suffering.

No one can live very long, unless he obeys the laws of health. These laws are so simple that all can learn them. Many people remain ignorant of them until they grow to be men and women, when they find it too late to escape the penalty which nature visits on those who break her laws.

One of the first things that boys and girls should study is how to keep the health which their kind Creator has given them. Such knowledge will save them days and nights of suffering and perhaps bring them many years of enjoyment.

Children give little thought to the care of their bodies, and often form habits whose ill effects are not seen for a long time. Let them, therefore, try to learn, in early life, what is right and wrong in this respect.

It is not a hard study. What is more interesting than to learn about the most wonderful machine in the world? That machine is yourself. There never can be any invention to compare with it. God alone can create it, and it is your duty to do all you can to keep it running until worn out.

Anatomy is the study of the structure or make-up of our bodies. Physiology tells of the offices or purposes of all the parts of our bodies. Hygiene, or Good Health, is the knowledge of the laws by which all the organs and parts of our bodies are kept in the best possible condition.

How long ought every boy and girl to live? What is said of death from old age?

What is necessary to secure long life? Are these laws simple? What mistake is made by many people?

What should be one of the first things for boys and girls to learn? What will such knowledge save them?

What do children do? What, therefore, should they try to learn?

Is it a hard study? What is the most wonderful machine in the world? What is your duty?

What is Anatomy? Physiology? Hygiene, or Good Health?

CHAPTER II

CLEANLINESS. – BATHING

One of the first things to remember is the need of keeping your bodies clean. Of course you wash your hands and face as soon as you rise in the morning, and if necessary through the day, but that is not enough.

The skin is composed of two layers, the outer or scarf skin and the inner or true skin. The outer is continually wearing out and falls from the body in fine scales. The skin is pierced by thousands upon thousands of pores, or tiny openings, through which a large part of the waste of the body passes. If these pores are allowed to become clogged by want of cleanliness, the waste matter enters the blood and may cause disease and death.

The way to keep the pores open is by bathing or cleanliness. When the weather is cold, you should bathe at least once a week at home. The water should be moderately cold. After bathing, rub yourself from head to foot with a coarse towel until the skin becomes warm and red. Then dress quickly and do not go out-of-doors for half an hour.

During summer it is well to bathe every day. Salt water is better than fresh. Boys are fond of bathing and are inclined to spend too much time in the water.

Avoid stagnant or impure water. Running streams, ponds into and from which water continually flows, creeks, rivers, lakes, and the ocean afford good bathing.

Do not bathe when the body is overheated or you are perspiring freely, or within two hours of breakfast, dinner or supper. Stay in as long as it is pleasant, but come out before you begin to feel chilly.

In entering, it is best to plunge at once under the surface. If you walk slowly, as many timid people do, until the water gradually reaches your neck, you leave the brain heated too long. It ought to be cooled at the first.

After bathing, rub your body dry and dress without delay. Do not lounge on the shore in your bathing dress. If you do, the body becomes chilled, and ill results are likely to follow.

What is one of the first things to remember?

Of what is the skin composed? What is said of the outer skin? What of the pores? What follows if the pores are allowed to become clogged?

How can the pores be kept open? Describe how one should bathe when the weather is cold?

How often is it well to bathe during summer?

Which, is the better, fresh or salt water? What are boys apt to do?

What should be avoided? What affords good bathing?

When should you avoid bathing? How long ought you to remain in the water?

What is the best manner of entering the water? Why?

What should be done after bathing? What should you avoid? Why?

CHAPTER III DRINKING

Many diseases of the body are caused by what we take into our stomachs. You can see, therefore, how important it is that we should know what and how to eat and drink.

TEA, COFFEE, MILK, AND CHOCOLATE

If I say that tea, coffee, and chocolate are poisonous, and that they shorten life, you will smile and shake your head. Very likely some of you have kind grandmothers who have drunk tea all their lives and still enjoy good health. Perhaps your father is fond of his coffee and feels no ill effects from its use.

No doubt it would be better for all if only water was drunk, but it cannot be said that a temperate use of tea, coffee or chocolate and what are known as temperance drinks, are injurious. Milk is a drink of nature, and therefore excellent, though it does not agree with every person.

WHEN AND HOW TO DRINK

If you have formed the habit of drinking while eating, stop it at once. At first your mouth will be dry and your thirst great, but persevere and in a short time you will not feel the least desire to drink until you have finished your meal, when a few swallows will be all you wish.

Nearly every one drinks too much. If you are thirsty, you fill a tumbler and drink its contents and sometimes take even more than that. Now if instead of doing so, you sip the water slowly, your thirst will be gone before half the water is consumed.

An hour or two after a hearty meal, you may feel a slight degree of thirst. This is caused by the digestion going on in the stomach. If you drink, you will soon be thirsty again and will be forced to drink often through the day; but, if you refrain, at first, the thirst will soon depart and will not return for hours.

During warm weather, or when perspiring from exercise, you need more water than at other times. Even if very cold, it will do no harm, if slowly sipped. Many people learn to like warm water, which is more healthful than cold.

LEMONADE, ROOT BEER, SODA WATER, ETC

Pure soda water, lemonade, root beer and similar drinks are not hurtful, but the sugar they contain increases our thirst and leads us to drink more than is good for us. Water is the provision of nature, and though it has no color, taste or smell, nothing in the world is so delicious and refreshing.

Very hot and very cold drinks are hurtful, but much of the ill effects may be averted by sipping them as I have already advised. Few will believe until they make the test, how little water is needed through the day. The less we take the more comfortable will we feel.

How are many diseases caused? What, therefore, is important?

What have you to say about tea, coffee, and chocolate?

What of a temperate use of those and of temperance drinks? Of milk?

What have you to say of the habit of drinking while eating?

What does nearly every one do? What is the best way to drink water?

What should be done when slightly thirsty an hour or two after a meal?

When do you need more water than at other times? In what manner may very cold water be drunk without harm? What of warm water?

What is said of soda water, lemonade, etc.? What of water?

What of very hot and cold drinks? What will be the effect if we drink only a small quantity of water?

CHAPTER IV

EATING

Always eat slowly and do not swallow your food until it is chewed to a pulp. The glands inside the mouth give out enough saliva to moisten the food and fit it for digestion in the stomach. Children love to soak their bread in coffee, or to sip the coffee while eating. By doing so they stop the flow of saliva and weaken a fluid which digests the food in the stomach.

WHAT BOYS AND GIRLS SHOULD EAT

In the way of food, bread and butter, well cooked meat, and fruits not too green nor over ripe, should form your principal diet. Pies and cakes are injurious, and if you eat them, do so sparingly. Never ask for a second piece.

Fat meat and butter cause heat and often make the blood gross. Such diet is improper during warm weather and, therefore, we do not crave it. If we lived in the arctic regions, we would soon learn to drink oil like water, and to eat tallow candles as though they were pieces of crisp celery.

Highly seasoned food should not be eaten. It may be salted to suit the taste, but pepper is harmful.

WHEN AND HOW MUCH TO EAT

Eat nothing between meals, which should always be at regular hours. Partake sparingly of sugar, candy, and sweetmeats. In eating the meat of walnuts, filberts, chestnuts, etc., use salt.

Children, like some grown persons, are apt to eat more food than is good for them. You have heard people say that you ought to leave the table while still hungry, but if that is true, there can be no need of sitting down to eat. The true course is to cease eating, while you still have a relish for food.

CHEERFULNESS AND APPETITE IN EATING

The table is not the place for argument or dispute. The conversation should be cheerful, and all should try to be happy. Do not begin any kind of work, physical or mental, until fully a half hour after the meal is finished.

Eat very little if the mind is excited, and do not eat at all, if you do not feel hungry. Never coax the appetite. Do not eat heartily within a few hours of bed-time.

If your appetite is poor, it is well to omit the last meal of the day. One of the best medicines in the world is a scant diet of wholesome food. Overeating and fasting are hurtful.

Remember that that which agrees with one may disagree with another. Rice is one of the most easily digested articles of food, and yet some persons cannot retain it on their stomachs. Your own sense will soon tell you what best agrees with you. Follow the advice of your parents, who know what is good for their children.

In what manner should we eat? Why? What bad habit are children likely to form?

What should constitute our principal diet? What is said of pies and cake?

What is said of fat meat, butter, and greasy food? How would our tastes change, if we lived in the arctic regions?

What is said of highly seasoned food? What is said of salt and pepper?
Of eating between meals? Of sugar, candy, and sweetmeats? How should
nuts be eaten?

What are children apt to do? What is the true course?

What of argument and dispute at the table? What advice is given?

What should be done if the mind is excited, or you do not feel hungry?
Should the appetite be coaxed?

Suppose your appetite is poor? What of overloading and fasting?

Is the same kind of food good for everybody? How can you learn what is
best to eat? What advice should be followed?

CHAPTER V

THE HAIR, EARS, EYES, AND FEET

The hair needs little attention. A boy should not wear it long and it should be carefully combed and brushed. Girls who let theirs grow longer should have it frequently clipped, as it gives it vigor.

Never put oil or grease on the hair, for it catches and holds the dirt in the air, soils clothing, clogs the pores at the roots, and tends to produce baldness.

If you will brush your hair vigorously for several minutes every morning, it will soon acquire a gloss and look better than if smeared with pomatum. The odor will be pleasant and the hair will not ruin articles and clothing with which it comes in contact. Now and then it is well to clean the hair with Castile soap, warm water and a strong brush. Shampooing is excellent.

Hair is a non-conductor of heat, – that is, very little heat or cold can be made to pass through it. It serves as a protection to the brain. While a great many men are baldheaded, you very rarely see a woman thus afflicted. This is because they do not wear air-tight coverings for their heads, but the scalp is kept cool and healthy. It is a good thing for children to leave off their hats and caps, except when necessary to protect them out-of-doors.

THE EAR

The ears need even less care than the hair, for that which is called by the name, is only the covering of the true ear. Every boy and girl will make sure that when the face and hands are washed, the neck and ears are not forgotten. The shape of the outer ear causes it to catch many of the particles always floating in the air. These can be easily removed with the end of the forefinger, covered by a portion of a moist towel.

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