

do it not, then the appetite will not take food,—or if the appetite does, it will not be converted into aliment. Hence, instead of the full development of the osseous system, (the bones,) and muscular system, they will be sparingly nourished, and attain but little size. Travellers, and indeed all persons, speak invariably of the diminutive size of the inhabitants of unhealthy districts, and of the puny stature of the denizens of closely-built manufacturing towns, in comparison with the large size of the inhabitants of mountainous countries. Experience and the laws of physiology, then, alike declare, that the best test of the health of a country is, the physical developement of its inhabitants.

I have visited many sections of our country, and in no part of it have I seen the mass of population looking more healthy, or having more of all the signs of health manifested in their appearance, than on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. I have seen some of the largest gatherings of men that have ever taken place in our Union, and with any of them, the assemblages of farmers that I have met in my professional tour will favorably compare. Going through every part of each of the counties during all seasons of the year, I have had an opportunity of knowing whatever amount of sickness might exist, and I have in the same extent of population, found as much in those sections of our Union accounted the most healthy, as I have found on the Eastern Shore. The only diseases at all prevalent are intermittent and remittant fevers. These only prevail during a portion of the year, and seem to be the best preventatives against the numerous and fatal class of diseases of the chest which are so fearfully present in other parts of the country. Consumption so prevalent in many parts, is here almost unknown. My own observation, and the experience of its resident physicians, fully sustain this assertion. The people, then, of this part of our State suffer for a brief period of the year under a class of maladies, which, with proper treatment, are speedily and easily cured, and have almost a total exemption from a numerous class of always dangerous and frequently incurable diseases. It may be asked here, why then has this section of our State a reputation for unhealthiness, which it does not deserve? The only reason which I can give is this: in all of the counties on the Shore, there is a custom of having what are called “public days,” in the county town, and frequently in other parts of the county. These days are set apart by common consent for the transaction of public and private business, and where very many meet who have no particular business to transact. In this way, several persons from each neighborhood always meet, and whatever cases of sickness occur in any particular section, are known and told with sympathy all over the county. So every case of sickness or death is known, and from the particular acquaintance and friendship engendered by frequent meetings of the people, is felt as a calamity to the whole community, although the number of cases do not exceed those in the healthiest parts of the Union.