

IV. CONCEPTIONS OF HEALTH AND DISEASE

The study of defensive hygiene will be rendered more effective if we have a definite conception of the terms "health" and "disease." Both are relative terms. The history of the human organism reveals that life is a continuous conflict between two sets of tendencies--one making for life; the other making for death.

Health

Health is a positive, not a negative thing. It is that quality of our physiology that gives us normal growth, normal development and normal function. It has been defined in many ways. "Complete health is mental, physical and spiritual. It is the product of the team work of cells and organs." (Storey) "The maintenance of physiological normals at their highest potency is health." (MacKenzie).

Objective signs of Health.

- (a) Readiness to act without external stimulus.
- (b) Capacity to act for long periods without undue fatigue.
- (c) Regularity in daily physiological cycles of:
 - 1. Appetite
 - 2. Muscular activities
 - 3. Excretion
 - 4. Sleep
 - 5. Rest

Subjective Signs of Health.

- (a) Feeling of satisfaction and ease in activities.
- (b) Freedom from sense of environmental oppression.
- (c) Freedom from feeling of being obsessed by work.
- (d) Freedom from inner uncontrollable moods and tempers.

Disease

Our conceptions of disease have undergone many changes during the ages. These conceptions have controlled the measures for defensive hygiene which were in use at the time of the acceptance of the particular conceptions.

The modern conception may be summed in the words of White--"Disease is a failure of adaptation both to conditions without the organism and to conditions within. It is a form of partial activity," or in statement of MacKenzie as--"Any departure from the normal that destroys the structure of an organ or impairs its capacity to repeat its function is disease."

Theories of Disease

A cursory review of the evolution of the various theories of disease will form an excellent background for an understanding and evaluation of the present status of our efforts in the field of defensive hygiene.