

Health and Hygiene

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Hygiene is the science that treats of the laws of preserving health.

The Mosaic laws recognize the three great principles of cleanliness, isolation and wholesome diet.

These principles of hygiene set out in the law of Moses were for the express purpose of preserving the health of persons unafflicted with disease and to prevent the spread of it.

The method with which leprosy and smallpox are managed at the present time is similar to that used 1450 years before Christ.

At this time, when cases of smallpox or leprosy are found, they are quarantined and removed to an isolation hospital. Persons having been in contact with these diseases are quarantined for a certain length of time and if no symptoms of the diseases develop they are released and the houses in which cases developed are disinfected.

1450 years before Christ practically the same procedure was followed. A person suffering with any disease of the skin was isolated until a positive diagnosis of the case could be made, on account of fear of leprosy. If a person had a boil on his neck, he would be isolated for seven days, so that should the boil develop to be leprosy, he would not jeopardize the health of others, but if the boil showed no symptoms of leprosy on the seventh day, he would be pronounced clean and released. Instead of disinfecting a house as we do now after a contagious disease, the walls of the house were scraped and the scrapings were thrown into a uninhabited place outside of the city; but should another case of leprosy develop in the same house, then the house would be destroyed.

The first scientific principles of hygiene became known in the 18th century: the prevention of scurvy by lemon juice and fresh vegetables; of jail fever, by less crowding and more cleanliness; and of smallpox by isolation and vaccination.

In the latter part of the 19th century, hygiene became a recognized science, covering a broad field. Since then epidemics of many dreadful diseases have been minimized; typhoid fever by cleanliness, disinfection and isolation; malaria by exterminating certain species of mosquitos; bubonic plague, by isolation and extermination of rats. Bubonic plague infected rats came in this country on steamships plying between the U. S. and countries where the plague is prevalent. The mortality and percentage of tuberculosis have been reduced by isolation, fresh air, sunshine and wholesome diet, and many other diseases are being minimized by hygienic measures.

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Hyman, John M. Langston, Jefferson B. Elliott, Jeremiah Haraludson, Johnier. Josiah T. Wall and George H. White.

The first colored men to be elected members of a state legislature were Edward G. Walker and Charles L. Mitchell, chosen to the Massachusetts house of representatives in 1866. Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett of Philadelphia was the first colored man to be given an appointment by the United States governor. In 1869 he was made minister resident and consul general to Haiti. There are a number of colored persons at present in the diplomatic and consular service of the United States.