

THE HUMAN MECHANISM THE MOST MARVELOUS

So wrote Dr. Lardner in his "Animal Physics"
some 40 years ago.

To be read by G. Baillairgé before section III of the Royal Society of
Canada at its May meeting 1901.

Yes, the human mechanism made up, as it is, of some 200 bones or rigid components and of more than 500 muscles—flexors and extensors, and thus comparable to so many springs—with elastic ligamentous media between the two; is indeed the most prolific of every kind or degree of motion and action; and in any and every direction is it adaptable to the most varied and varying circumstances. It is Universal. And the eye is there to oversee, the head to direct it in all its doings, in its multifarious functions, its displacements, its travelings.

It comprises within itself every known or conceivable mechanical device, motion and combination of motions and it is adequate to perform any and every duty which future discoveries, inventions, industries may require of it—in the same way as the possible combinations of which the traits of the human physiognomy are made up, explain the non-resemblances of the human race since the creation of man, and are in number sufficient to provide for like differences for all time to come.

The human machine ministers to all its own requirements: it supplies itself with the food fuel which becomes elaborated into the life sustaining, life repairing fluid which gives it power; as does steam to the steam engine—wind and water to the world at large.

It is its own lubricator, having constantly on hand at all its joints, articulations or rubbing surfaces, the synovia which the system is as constantly secreting to keep up the supply.

It is its own caretaker, cleanser, scavenger: getting rid of its waste products, eliminating them from the system—while the duplex pumping mechanism of the heart, after forcing the arterial fluid to the remotest ramifications of the body, whence it returns by the veins to the heart again, sends it off anew on its way to the