

digestible food is that which supplies the body with the greatest quantity of reparative elements, requiring in the meantime the less possible exertion from the digestive functions."

Now that we have made these few restrictions, perhaps it would not be without interest to examine the experiments made to determine the digestibility of food and the conclusions arrived at on the subject.

Were the human body transparent, it would be an easy matter to follow the phases which alimentary bolus undergoes from the moment it is formed in the mouth until it has given up all its nutritive particles in the depth of the digestive tract. If the Creator, instead of kneading our body with clay, had made our tissues in crystal, anybody would, at a glance, determine the precise moment that the mouthful of bread, the piece of meat cease to be what they were, to become absorbable paste. But the opaque substance, of which our integuments are formed, hide to our view the phenomena that take place within ourselves, and we have to resort to certain crafts in order to uncover the mysterious operations of the digestive system.

For instance, Spallanzani would introduce alimentary substances in tubes or hollowed balls which he would make his patients swallow. When these balls would be returned, either by vomiting or by a more indirect by-way, he would examine the modifications undergone by the substances contained inside.

But we may easily understand, that as these foreign bodies were rejected at indeterminate hours, it was difficult to obtain, by these experiments, anything like serious and reliable results.

Gosse, of Geneva, was endowed with a peculiar privilege: he could vomit whenever he wanted to. He availed himself of this talent to study the degree of digestibility of foods. He observed that the substances which he would most easily digest, that is, within one or two hours, were: Fresh boiled eggs, milk, lamb, veal, fresh fish, gruel, potatoes. He would take four to six hours to digest: pork, hard eggs, oysters and pastry—other substances would remain very long in the stomach such as: rind of pork, orange peels, mushrooms.

I must confess, gentlemen, that we cannot grant much credit to these experiments, deprived as they were of the accuracy exacted by a truly scientific method. But it is not so with regard to the knowledge