

## THE ALIMENTARY CANAL AND HUMAN DECAY IN RELATION TO THE NEURONS.<sup>1</sup>

BY

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Death is a complex problem. In the varied stages of growth in the human system, we trace frequent indications of decay. At an early age, the hair bulb dies, the hair drops out, and disappears. In the same way, teeth decay, and the masticatory process is being rapidly accomplished, more by artificial than natural grinders. Such evidences of lessened vitality, are not confined to these tissues alone. Nerves and nerve centres participate readily. No part of the human system is attracting closer or more careful observation than nerve tissue and the part it plays in the promotion of the vital spark, so essential to every act of life. The brain is the great battery, plastic, pliant, thought producing, and having as its matrix, cells, which communicate with the cells (nervous) in all parts of the human frame. This linking of cell agency is all important, any interruption to such connection being at once marked by functional inactivity. Recent discoveries, in the line of nerve tissue formation, have defined small cellular, almost rod shaped bodies, as component parts of cell nervous tissue, *known as neurons*, which doubtless play an exceedingly important part, as to the elimination of normal nerve power, without which, no positively healthy function can be established. For some time, my attention has been directed towards a study of the alimentary canal, so peculiarly constituted. Into this canal, from the mouth to the anus, are poured the secretions of the various glands, outside and inside of which, is more than a life's study. Sanitary science is making rapid progress, but outside sewage cannot compare, as to importance, with the internal sewage of the human system. It is a well known fact what the toxic effect of an impure gas is upon the system under the most ordinary circumstances. So in the intestinal canal supplied by a nervous system of a most elaborate and complex structure, it is most reasonable to suppose that the activity of these very neurons, in the ganglionic centres around this very canal, should in time become subject to marked functional inactivity, and long prior to any evidence whatever of organic disease. The gases of the human system are not so noxious as carbonic acid, and still, the want