

In this way I hope to make these lectures not only more interesting but more instructive than they otherwise might be to a general audience. By learning the functions of the constituents of foods in the system we may—as we shall see more clearly later on—be the better able to practise economy and preserve health.

To many of us civilized life has brought with it the accumulation of wealth, and wealth grants us comparative leisure and the means of obtaining not only necessities but luxuries in abundance. It gives us plenty of good, nutritious and palatable food, but it also gives us the opportunity of indulging in those luxuries of the table, the excessive use of which is so disastrous to our health. Leisure takes from us the *necessity* of that wholesome amount of exercise, which promotes a normal and healthful condition of the system.

On the other hand the conditions of society make us ambitious and encourage us to strain every muscle and nerve towards the attainment of more money and power, and thus it is that often we overwork ourselves, body and mind—become physical wrecks, not from the want of an ample supply of food, but because from the mode of our living we have not allowed it to nourish us properly.

I, therefore, wish to emphasize the great and, I may say, vital importance that a knowledge of the requirements of the human body and of the composition and character of our daily foods is to everyone nowadays. In the first place we are confronted with the statement on good authority that more suffer from over-eating than from over-drinking, though the number of victims of the latter vice, we must all admit, is not small. Over-eating is a term used not only to designate the more than sufficient use of simple, wholesome food but also to include the taking in excessive quantities of rich and concentrated foods, most of which may be called luxuries, and lastly, one-sided diets adopted either from necessity or from mere fancy. Such diets are sooner or later inevitably followed by disease or a disordered system. That dyspepsia and allied ailments, especially on this side of the Atlantic, are very prevalent, and that the same are due to an abnormal or excessive diet, is well known, but that probably over fifty per cent. of the common disorders now afflicting mankind are from the same causes, and which are preventable by a proper care of the body and a judicious diet, is cer