

FOOD AND ALIMENTATION

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I most sincerely thank the officers of this Association for having conferred upon me the honour of reading a paper before the "Field Naturalist's Club," which possesses, among its members, names already illustrious.

I am happy to have the opportunity of contributing, as far as my feeble means permit, to the achievement of its aim, which is intellectual progress and advancement of science.

The physician, gentlemen, has another role to play on earth besides relieving or curing the evils that afflict our poor humanity. His duty, above all, must be to ward off diseases, in pointing out their causes and the best means of avoiding them.

These causes, alas! are manifold. They accompany man from the cradle to the tomb; they surround him at his birth, escort him all his life, being for him a perpetual threatening. But the most common, undoubtedly, are those which arise from some disorders of the digestive system.

It is by the digestive tube that life enters our body, and by the digestive tube also that enters death.

The intestines and the stomach can be considered as true laboratories where the most deadly poisons are incessantly produced. Nature, it is true, has provided us with powerful means of defence, but, some day, the foes will swarm and overcome the barriers opposed to them by physiological laws; disease then is constituted with all its sufferings and dangers.

These disorders, in the greatest majority of cases, are owing to ignorance or contempt of the laws of hygiene. It is, therefore, our duty to teach these laws and point out their importance.

In preparing this paper, gentlemen, I dreamt a moment of trying to dazzle you with the depth of my science. I had almost made up my mind to enter into transcendent considerations upon the physiological machinery of nutritive phenomena, penetrating the essence itself of the