

**SUPERSALINITY OF THE
BLOOD: AN ACCELERATOR
OF SENILITY, AND A
CAUSE OF CATARACT**

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Supersalinity of the Blood: An Accelerator of Senility, and a Cause of Cataract by J. Compton Burnett

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J. COMPTON BURNETT

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BY

J. COMPTON BURNETT, M.D.

"L'habitude énoûsse le sentiment." — RICHAU.

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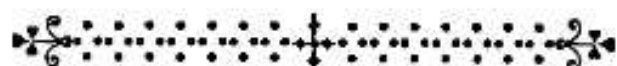
P R E F A C E .

THE writer having come to the conclusion that the habitual use of *too much* salt has a drying-up, a senescent, effect upon the organism and that *some cases* of Cataract are likewise due to eating *too much* salt, he has brought together in the following pages some evidence tending to shew that such is, at least, extremely probable. The ingestion of *too much* salt renders the blood supersaline, and when in this state its specific gravity is too high and the tissues become too dry and hardened. The stroma of the lens being transparent and the lens within visual observation, we are able to watch any changes that may take place in its physical characters and if the lens become retrogressively metamorphosed we are warranted in concluding that what we see expressed in the lens is merely a sample of the quality of the other tissues which are beyond our field of direct observation. It

is, of course, not maintained that *all* who partake of much salt necessarily become too soon senile, or that *all* cases of Cataract are due to eating too much salt, but that *some* cases only have probably that origin. Neither is the author able to say how much salt, or how little, a person in health should partake of, but that *too much* is distinctly deleterious he thinks he will be able to prove. And the direction of the change wrought by salt is clearly not of a juvenescent kind, whatever else it may be: for an opaque lens is not usually regarded as a youthful characteristic. The practical application of this view, if correct, is obvious. Any evidence on the subject, for or against, would be welcome. No single observer can settle any question, as he may be merely fondling a pet notion.

J. C. BURNETT.

5, HOLLES STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE, W.,
January, 1882.



*Supersalinity of the Blood:
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A STUDY of the causation of Cataract soon brings one to a consideration of the drying-up effect of salt upon the lens and by deduction upon the tissues generally, and this leads us inevitably to think also of the salt-eating habit of mankind. I am myself a salt-eater, though I have no special fondness for salt; and I have always considered salt a very essential part of one's food. This is the all but universally

accepted view. But there are a few thinking persons, who not only call that view of the subject in question, but actually affirm that our much belauded salt is a great evil-doer. In fact, according to a fanciful few, it is nothing less than the forbidden fruit of earliest biblical times!

We will not wander away into this fancy-land, and it would be quite foreign to the object of this little treatise were I to enter into the broad question of whether salt is, or is not, a food; those who may be desirous of studying the subject of salt in this wide sense will find Mr. Boddy's "History of Salt" not wanting in useful information and strong language; for him "Salt is good," and that very emphatically so, and vituperation in plenty is

poured on to the heads of the anti-salt people. At the other extreme, the late Dr. Robert Howard's "Consequences of the Use of Salt," may be read with advantage. Certainly salt is a very powerful agent and any thoughtful and careful observer may readily satisfy himself that not a few persons suffering from grave forms of disease are, and have long been, great salt-eaters; whether the salt has anything to do with their ill-health is not easily determined, but is certainly deserving of enquiry.

In these pages we shall keep as nearly as possible to the subject of the title: "Supersalinity of the Blood: an Accelerator of Senility, and a Cause of Cataract;" and we will try to avoid all controversy,