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ON POISONS AND DISEASE AND SOME EXPERIMENTS WITH THE TOXIN OF THE BACILLUS TETANI^{1, 2}

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SECTION N of our association has, as you are aware, the very wide field of the medical sciences for its subject-matter, and it seems appropriate for a member of that section to address you on a subject which, while a primary concern of medicine and biology, is yet not without interest to scientists in general. I am therefore presenting to-night some considerations on poisons and disease.

Many of us who are not students of the medical sciences are but little interested in theories of disease.

¹ Address of the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Boston, December 27, 1933.

² A grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York enabled my coworkers and myself to carry out the experimental work described in the second part of this address.

When illness overtakes us we wish to be cured “safely, quickly and pleasantly.” There lived in the first century B.C. in Rome a Greek, a very successful and learned physician who was also a writer and philosopher, who promised his patients to cure their diseases according to that excellent and oft-quoted formula, “*Curare tuto, celeriter et jucunde.*” We may be sure that this Greek scholar, the friend of the great writers and statesmen of his day, was a bit of a humbug as a physician, for only the God of healing himself could always make such a promise good. Nevertheless, the physicians of our day frequently succeed in curing certain diseases in accordance with this happy formula, but their greatest achievement in modern times is the prevention of disease.

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