

Halsted's method of curing dyspepsia, biliousness, etc.

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Halsted (O.)

A FULL AND ACCURATE ACCOUNT
OF
THE METHOD
OF
CURING DYSPEPSIA

DISCOVERED AND PRACTICED

BY DR. O. HALSTED,

OF NEW YORK;

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON DISEASES OF THE

Digestive Organs.

CINCINNATI:

PRINTED BY I. HART & CO., 41 SECOND STREET.

1852.



HALSTED'S METHOD
OF
CURING DYSPEPSIA, BILIOUSNESS, ETC.

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A question we often hear asked, is "how happens it, that this disease called Dyspepsia, is so prevalent at the present day, when formerly it was so little known?" The most common reason assigned is, the more luxurious and the less active habits of the present generation. There may be some truth in this. Excesses in eating and drinking will certainly produce diseases of the digestive organs, but after all, it may reasonably be doubted whether these diseases actually are more prevalent now, than in former times. The principal reason of their apparent increase, seems to be that what are now enumerated as symptoms of one disease, were then considered and treated as distinct affections. Thus many affections which were formely known under different names, and treated accordingly, as the Spleen, Vapours, Indigestion, Low Spirits, and Nervous Diseases, are now generally comprehended under the sweeping term, Dyspepsia. The organs which assist in performing digestion, it is well known, are numerous and complicated, and so linked together that no one of them can be long affected, without a participation of the others. The term Dyspepsia is commonly applied to a derangement of one or more of these functions, and is a disease, rather of a set of organs, than of one in particular. Hence the diversity, and variety of symptoms it exhibits, according as the derangement of one

or more of these functions predominates. Of these organs, the most important, the one most liable to derangement, and in whose affections the whole system seems most to sympathize, is the stomach. Though we cannot assert that every case of Dyspepsia, using the term in its common signification, originates in the stomach, yet by far the greater number that present themselves, will be found to have their seat and origin there. We need not go far to account for this. An obvious reason suggests itself to us in the fact, that this organ, above all the others, is placed more immediately under the control of the will, and entrusted, as it were to the guidance of the reasoning faculties; as far at least, as regards the quantity and quality of the food. Differing from most of the other important functions of the system, the quantity of action to be performed by the stomach, is left chiefly to the pleasure of the individual. How this trust is abused, is unfortunately too well known to us; and sad experience shows us that this law of our nature, instead of being a safe-guard to the organ, proves too often its destruction.

Another reason may be given for the universal prevalence of Dyspepsia, in the fact, no less strange than true, that Fashion, not content with the empire of our pleasures, extends her wide-spread dominion even over our maladies. It is the fashionable complaint; and whoever is so unwise as to neglect the simple dictates of nature and reason in his diet; and is paying the penalty of his excesses, prefers laying the fault to the weakness of his stomach, rather than to that of his head. In this way, the Gourmand and the Tippler lay claim to our sympathies, and seek to be considered Dyspeptics; while in truth, they are only pursuing the means of becoming so.

In the digestion of solid aliment the following changes

take place, and in the following order:—The food received by the mouth undergoes a great degree of comminution and softening by the organs of mastication. When thus duly prepared, it is transmitted to the stomach by the act of deglutition. In the stomach it is converted into a uniform and almost fluid mass, which is termed chyme. The chyme passes from the stomach into the first intestine or duodenum, in which organ it undergoes a further change. By the action of certain secretions which are here added to it, it is separated into two distinct and exceedingly different substances, one of which is termed chyle, and the other fœcula. The chyle is the nutritive portion of the aliment, and is conveyed by a particular set of vessels, (the structure and the course of which are hereafter to be described,) into the blood. The fœcula is that portion of the aliment which is not conducive to nourishment, and which is conveyed out of the body. The conversion of the crude aliment into these different substances involves processes of great complexity and obscurity; but the accumulated observations and experiments of physiologists have put us in possession of many curious and important facts relative to the phenomena which take place, and to their order of succession.

As the stomach is the part we consider to be chiefly and primarily affected in the disease called Dyspepsia, we will conclude the account of the digestive process with the following article, which more immediately refers to the functions of this organ.

OF THE ARRANGEMENT OF FOOD IN THE STOMACH.

We owe to Dr. Wilson Philip, an interesting account of the phenomena which take place immediately after the food

is received by the stomach. The alimentary mass passes first into the cardiac portion of the organ. It is in this part of the stomach that digestion is most actively performed. In cases of sudden death, after a full meal, taken when the person was in sound health, the coats of the stomach itself are apt to be digested; but this digestion of the organ is most commonly found in its cardiac portion. Dr. Philip states, that if a rabbit be killed soon after eating a hearty meal, the cardiac extremity will be found completely digested in almost every instance; but that, in the numerous experiments he had performed, he never saw the coats of the organ eaten through, excepting at its large end. Although, after death, the stomach must be equally subject to the action of gastric juice as an other dead animal matter, yet it is not a little extraordinary that the gastric juice of the rabbit, which in its natural state refuses food, should be capable of digesting its own stomach, so completely as to leave not a single trace of the parts on which it has acted.

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The new food is never mixed with the old: the new is always found in the center, surrounded on all sides by the old: if the old and the new are of different kinds, the line of separation between them is so evident, that the old may be completely removed without disturbing the new; and if they are of different colors, that line can often be distinctly traced through the walls of the organ before it is opened.

In proportion as the food is digested, it is gently moved along from the cardiac toward the pyloric end. As the

layer which lies next the surface of the stomach first undergoes the requisite change, and is propelled onward by the muscular action of the organ, so the portion which lies next it succeeds in turn to be submitted to the same process. The gastric juice, at the same time, pervades in a greater or less degree, the entire alimentary mass, so that when the central part comes into contact with the surface of the stomach, its digestion is already considerably advanced.

The food remains in the stomach upwards of an hour before any change in it becomes perceptible. It is supposed that a meal is completely digested in the human stomach in about four or five hours. It has been stated that, as the aliment is digested, it is gradually accumulated at the pyloric extremity of the stomach. This portion of the food has experienced the most complete digestion which it is capable of undergoing in this organ, and is termed chyme. Chyme is a pultaceous and almost fluid substance, of a greyish color, of a sharp odor, and of an acid taste, reddening paper colored with turnsole. It is commonly said to be perfectly homogeneous in its nature, and that, whatever be the species of the food, the resulting mass is uniformly the same, never exhibiting any one of the sensible properties of the crude alimentary matter. But this statement is not correct; for we learn by actual experiment that chyme produced from vegetable differs in color, in consistence, and in some other sensible properties from that procured from animal substance.

When thus completely formed in the stomach, the chyme is gradually propelled by the alternate contraction and relaxation of the muscular fibres of the organ toward its pyloric extremity. Here it accumulates in a certain quantity before it is permitted to pass through the pylorus; which consists of a ring of muscular fibres, of the structure and

arrangement of which it is impossible to convey an accurate idea by any description. It would appear that the accumulation of the chyme at this extremity of the stomach, never exceeds four ounces at any one time. M. Magendie states that in the numerous experiments in which he has had an opportunity of observing it, he has uniformly remarked that when it amounts to about two or three ounces, it is admitted through the opening of the pylorus into the duodenum. Nothing in the animal economy is more curious and wonderful than the action of that class of organs of which the pylorus affords a remarkable example. If a portion of the undigested food presents itself at this door of the stomach, it is not only not permitted to pass, but the door is closed against it with additional firmness: or, in other words, the muscular fibres of the pylorus instead of relaxing, contract with more than ordinary force. In certain cases, where the digestion is morbidly slow, or when very indigestible food has been taken, the mass is carried to the pylorus before it has been duly acted on by the gastric juice; then, instead of inducing the pylorus to relax, in order to allow of its transmission to the duodenum, it causes it to contract with so much violence as to produce pain, while the food thus retained in the stomach longer than natural, disorders the organ; and if the digestion cannot ultimately be performed that disorder goes on increasing until vomiting is excited, by which means the load that oppressed it, is expelled. The pylorus is a guardian, placed between the first and second stomach, in order to prevent any substance from passing from the former until it is in a condition to be acted upon by the latter: and so faithfully does this guardian perform its office, that it will often, (as we have seen,) force the stomach to reject the offending matter by vomiting, rather than allow it to pass in an unfit state; whereas, when chyme

duly prepared, presents itself, it readily opens a passage for it into the duodenum, where its further conversion into chyle is performed.

In addition to the foregoing anatomical Sketch of the Organs of Digestion, it may be remarked, that the stomach is principally supplied with nerves by a large pair proceeding directly from the brain, called the *Par Vagum*. These in their course send branches to the pharynx and larynx, the œsophagus, the vessels of the neck and heart, the lungs, the liver, the spleen, and sometimes to the diaphragm. This distribution will account for many of the sympathies which have been observed between the stomach and other parts; as for instance, the hysterical affection of the throat when the stomach is distended with wind; the effect of vomiting by tickling the throat; and the affections of the lungs and heart, consequent upon a disordered stomach.

From the preceding description, the reader will readily perceive the high and important station the stomach, from its situation, connections, and functions, holds among the digestive organs. It might indeed with propriety be termed the chief organ of digestion, to which the others are but subservient. It may here be mentioned as not a slight proof of the important rank this organ holds in the living system, that the first rudiment we have of animal life, in ascending upwards from the vegetable kingdom, is simply a stomach, which organ alone seems to constitute the being of the lower class of animals.

It is not therefore to be wondered at, that any derangement of the functions of the stomach should produce so great an effect upon the system generally. By understanding the relations it holds, either directly or indirectly, with the dif-

ferent parts of the body, the various symptoms that show themselves in distant parts, when this organ is affected, may readily be explained, and traced to their source. We need not thus, go farther than a primary derangement of the stomach, to account for the multitude of diverse, and often seemingly anomalous symptoms that present themselves in Dyspepsia.

The manner in which the disease makes its approaches is generally very insidious. Although, now and then, the powers of the stomach are suddenly prostrated, from causes producing a violent effect upon it, such as poisons, swallowed accidentally or taken in injudicious quantities as medicines, and the aggravated symptoms of Dyspepsia produced in a short space of time; yet, in most instances, its attacks come on in a gradual manner. Most commonly, it is only by looking back, after the disease has become established, that the patient is able to trace its hitherto unsuspected approach. The first indication he has of any thing being the matter with his stomach, is an occasional disagreement with it of particular articles of food; such, for instance, as rich-made dishes, or articles palpably indigestible, but which he has hitherto, (as the phrase goes,) always found to sit well on his stomach. Or he finds that a meal a little fuller than usual, produces more uncomfortable feelings than it was wont to do. He is troubled, on these occasions, with flatulence, a sense of oppression and load at the region of the stomach, and often with acidity; and not unfrequently there is a sense of constriction, as if a gridle was drawn tightly around the body. A general heaviness, and an indisposition to exertion, either bodily or mental, is experienced; as if the stomach being engaged with a harder task than usual, the energies of the system were concentrated to its support, by which the other parts were left to perform their functions

more languidly. A feeling of chilliness, or a slight shivering, frequently marks this condition of the system.

Habitual costiveness, or an irregular state of the bowels is usually the attendant upon this state of things. Often this is the first and only symptom of anything being wrong, and the patient will tell you, that could their regular action be restored, he should be perfectly well.

The uneasiness of the stomach after eating, from being occasional becomes constant. All the other symptoms above enumerated become more aggravated and permanent. The head now begins to sympathize with the disordered stomach. The patient does not complain so much of violence or acute pain, as of an unpleasant feeling in the head, which he cannot very well describe. He also now frequently complains of a mistiness and indistinctness of vision, particularly if the eyes have been exercised a little more than usual. The tongue in this stage of the complaint, is generally covered with a whitish coat, and there is an unpleasant taste in the mouth, particularly on rising in the morning; at which time a dull heavy pain, and sense of weight in the head is generally experienced. Often a dizziness, amounting sometimes to vertigo, with a sudden fear of falling, comes upon the patient. On these occasions he frequently experiences a temporary loss of memory, and knows not for the moment where he is. His complaints are now characterized as nervous.

A common sensation complained of by a Dyspeptic, is a sense of emptiness, or a void at the pit of the stomach, exciting a frequent desire of food, without the natural feeling of hunger. Nor is this morbid craving satisfied by eating. A slight nausea often occurs without any known cause, or upon eating an article of food that previously had always proved grateful to the palate. Often too, when the patient sits down with, as he supposes, a keen appetite to

some favourite dish, he feels a sudden disgust and repugnance to partake of it: at other times, articles usually distasteful, are sought after and swallowed with avidity. In short, the stomach is in that wayward, fickle state, that a desire to eat is sometimes felt without hunger; and again, the natural appetite, by some unaccountable caprice of the organ, is succeeded, before indulging it, by a sudden feeling of satiety.

Cold feet and hands are generally indicative of a confirmed state of Dyspepsia. The pulse is less frequent, and more feeble than usual. The movements, both of mind and body, are performed more slowly, and a general languor and exhaustion pervades the system. When the patient is addressed there is a tardiness in replying, as if it took him some time to comprehend and frame an answer to a simple question. The spirits are much depressed, the countenance exhibiting a peculiar settled character of despondency, and the eye a dull, leaden, lack-lustre expression, as if it regarded all things with equal indifference.

A peculiar torpor of the faculties of the mind, perceptible to none more sensibly than the unhappy subject of it, attends this state of things. Generally after eating, he is affected by an irresistible drowsiness, or stupor, which unfits him for the least mental exertion. He cannot command his attention sufficiently to peruse even a page of a novel, or a paragraph in a newspaper: and the simple operation of adding together a few figures, causes him as much mental labour as if it were one of the most difficult problems in mathematics. Though in health pleasant and good tempered, little things now vex and annoy him; and almost literally is "the grass-hopper a burden." A peculiar sense of tightness or constriction about the throat, accompanied with a secretion of tough viscid mucus, is often complained of. Fre-

quently, also, a palpitation of the heart, with irregularity of the pulse, is attendant upon a protracted case of Dyspepsia, and the horrors of an apprehended disease of this organ are added to the mental sufferings of the patient. The respiration is very commonly more or less affected, particularly on making slight exertions, such as ascending a flight of stairs; and frequently when no exertion is made, there is a tendency to sigh, or draw a long breath. The flatulence, which in the earlier stages of the complaint was a trifling inconvenience, and one that could easily be overcome, now assumes a more formidable and obstinate character.

An invariable symptom of protracted Dyspepsia, is a sense of tightness across the abdomen, accompanied with an obstinately constipated state of the bowels. There seems, indeed, to be a torpor, amounting almost to a complete suspension of the peristaltic motion, requiring the constant use of cathartic medicines.

This derangement of the functions of the stomach cannot continue for any length of time without other organs participating in the disorder. The organs that are most liable to become affected are, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, and the intestinal canal. More particular notice will be taken of these sympathetic affections, when we come to speak of the diseases that are apt to be confounded with Dyspepsia.

Although oftentimes the disease remains stationary for years, with very little increase or diminution of the symptoms, yet sometimes its progress is fearfully rapid. When this happens, all the symptoms become more aggravated in their character. The emaciation, at first not very great now becomes excessive. Extreme debility prevents the patient from taking his accustomed exercise; and at length confines him entirely to his bed. So completely enfeebled are the powers of the stomach, that the most simple food,

taken in the smallest quantities, produces the greatest distress of a surfeit. The faculties of the mind seem also prostrated with the energies of the body. An extreme nervous agitation, rendering the patient susceptible to the slightest impression, or else a state of torpor and apathy, in which the faculties seem completely benumbed, like the second childhood of old age, marks the last, and most commonly fatal stage of the disease.

We seldom, however, hear of persons dying with Dyspepsia. The reason of this seems to be, that when its progress has continued for any length of time, the disorders of organs secondarily affected, (the lungs or liver, for instance) are so predominant that they swallow up the original disease. This is not always the case, and we now and then see persons expire, as it were, from inanition, the powers of the stomach being completely lost.

In this summary, and as we are well aware, imperfect sketch of a disease, Protean in its symptoms, but in reality single and uniform in its nature, we have enumerated three stages, which may be termed,

1st. *The incipient stage*—in which the stomach is slightly, and occasionally affected; and the disease makes its appearance in paroxysms, at first occurring at long intervals, but by degrees becoming more frequent and aggravated. In this stage, the disease is entirely local in its character; the system at large, with the exception perhaps of the head, being very little effected.

2d. *The confirmed stage*—when the functions of the organ are permantely deranged, and the patient has no respite to his sufferings. The uneasiness at the stomach, the unpleasant feelings about the head, and the affection of the nervous system generally, though aggravated at particular periods, especially after eating, are constant. A slight cough, diffi-

culty of respiration, occasional pain in the region of the liver, emaciation, and debility felt particularly at the knees in walking, characterize this stage of the disease.

3d. *The complicated stage*—in which the functions of other organs, as the liver, the lungs, or the bowels become more particularly involved in the general derangement; and frequently an affection of one of these organs will assume the most prominent character in the disease. Thus the patient will be said to die of liver complaint, an affection of the lungs, marasmus, dysentery, diarrhoea, or some anomalous complication of all these affections, conveniently classed by the Doctor, when he renders his account to the Sexton, under the sweeping term consumption. Dyspepsia, in this manner, the original fountain of all the mischief, escapes the odium that ought in strict justice to be attached to it, and is generally considered a disease, which however aggravated and tedious, never proves fatal: and the poor dyspeptic, who has got a confused notion about the impossibility of two diseases prevailing in the system at the same time, comforts himself amidst his suffering, with the idea that his malady will be a preventive of all others.

It must not be supposed that these stages are distinct, and can always be discriminated by their symptoms. On the contrary, they often make their appearance without any regular order; different parts being affected not so much in proportion to the duration of the disease, as to the peculiar constitution of the individual, and the relative strength and soundness, or predisposition to disease of different organs. Thus, a person of nervous temperament will suffer more from nervous agitation and general irritability, than one of more rigid fibre, who is not so readily affected by external impressions. In an individual predisposed to affection of the liver, this disease will early show itself: and

in the same way, symptoms of pulmonary disease will manifest themselves in those of weak lungs. In short, in a disorder of this sweeping, and overwhelming character, where the whole and every part of the system is successively pervaded, the weakest organs will be the first to give way; as fire naturally spreads in the direction of the most combustible materials.

Without expatiating too largely on the melancholy detail of sufferings which characterize this disease, a few symptoms, which as they occur but occasionally, might be termed *anomalous*, may be added to the sad catalogue. So that the unhappy dyspeptic who peruses, these pages, must not imagine his sufferings peculiar to himself, but understand that if not precisely to be enumerated among the ordinary evils "which flesh is heir to," they are at least such as afflict many of his species.

Sometimes a coldness of a particular spot in the head, or peculiar throbbing behind the ear, or over the eyes, will usher in a paroxysm of the complaint. Often the voice is affected, and the patient complains of difficulty in speaking loud; and of experiencing a peculiar jarring sensation through the chest, when he does so. A sense of numbness, and coldness is often felt at the stomach; and sometimes a weight, as if a lump of lead were contained in it. More than once, have I been told by a sufferer, that he felt as if a number of wires passed up from the stomach to the brain, and there ramifying into innumerable small branches, communicated a sort of jarring, or vibrating sensation, to each particular nerve. Pains between the shoulders, and in the small of the back are common. Cramps of the extremities, stitches in the side, pains in the joints, and a general soreness, and weariness of the whole frame are often experienced. In short, every part and spot of the body seems

to be liable to pains, aches, and anomalous, indescribable feelings of some kind or other, in the progress of the disease; and we might almost fancy Shakspeare to have had a Dyspeptic in his mind's eye, when he makes Prospero, threatening Caliban, say:

“For this be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side stitches that shall pen thy breath up:
 Thou shalt be pinch'd
As thick as honey combs, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made them.”

And again:

“I'll rack thee with old cramps;
Fill all thy bones with aches; make thee roar
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.”

For Remedy. see next page.

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HALSTED'S

Anti-Dyspeptic and Anti-Bilious

VEGETABLE PILLS.



DR. O. HALSTED, (of Dyspeptic memory,) of the city of *New York*, has disposed of the exclusive right for the sale of his Pills.

Although these Restorative Pills have been used in private practice, with unprecedented success, for over twenty years, they have never before been offered to the public.

These Pills remove obstructions, open the natural passages of the fluids of the body—as the pores and *lacteal vessels*.

THEY ARE WHOLLY VEGETABLE,

and perfectly harmless in their effects; instead of weakening and debilitating the patient, (as is usually the case with other Pills,) they give *tone* to the *stomach*—strengthening and invigorating both stomach and bowels; and imparting new life and energy to every part of the system.

Being, wholly vegetable, they are mild in their operation, without griping, or any pain whatever. They are slow in their movement, but thorough in their renovating and restorative character; and need only be tried to be approved of, by all such as are afflicted with the horrible suffering arising from Dyspepsia, or any of the symptoms of a disordered stomach.

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In proportion as the food is digested, it is gently moved along from the cardiac toward the pyloric end. As the

layer which lies next the surface of the stomach first undergoes the requisite change, and is propelled onward by the muscular action of the organ, so the portion which lies next it succeeds in turn to be submitted to the same process. The gastric juice, at the same time, pervades in a greater or less degree, the entire alimentary mass, so that when the central part comes into contact with the surface of the stomach, its digestion is already considerably advanced.

The food remains in the stomach upwards of an hour before any change in it becomes perceptible. It is supposed that a meal is completely digested in the human stomach in about four or five hours. It has been stated that, as the aliment is digested, it is gradually accumulated at the pyloric extremity of the stomach. This portion of the food has experienced the most complete digestion which it is capable of undergoing in this organ, and is termed chyme. Chyme is a pultaceous and almost fluid substance, of a greyish color, of a sharp odor, and of an acid taste, reddening paper colored with turnsole. It is commonly said to be perfectly homogeneous in its nature, and that, whatever be the species of the food, the resulting mass is uniformly the same, never exhibiting any one of the sensible properties of the crude alimentary matter. But this statement is not correct; for we learn by actual experiment that chyme produced from vegetable differs in color, in consistence, and in some other sensible properties from that procured from animal substance.

When thus completely formed in the stomach, the chyme is gradually propelled by the alternate contraction and relaxation of the muscular fibres of the organ toward its pyloric extremity. Here it accumulates in a certain quantity before it is permitted to pass through the pylorus; which consists of a ring of muscular fibres, of the structure and

arrangement of which it is impossible to convey an accurate idea by any description. It would appear that the accumulation of the chyme at this extremity of the stomach, never exceeds four ounces at any one time. M. Magendie states that in the numerous experiments in which he has had an opportunity of observing it, he has uniformly remarked that when it amounts to about two or three ounces, it is admitted through the opening of the pylorus into the duodenum. Nothing in the animal economy is more curious and wonderful than the action of that class of organs of which the pylorus affords a remarkable example. If a portion of the undigested food presents itself at this door of the stomach, it is not only not permitted to pass, but the door is closed against it with additional firmness: or, in other words, the muscular fibres of the pylorus instead of relaxing, contract with more than ordinary force. In certain cases, where the digestion is morbidly slow, or when very indigestible food has been taken, the mass is carried to the pylorus before it has been duly acted on by the gastric juice; then, instead of inducing the pylorus to relax, in order to allow of its transmission to the duodenum, it causes it to contract with so much violence as to produce pain, while the food thus retained in the stomach longer than natural, disorders the organ; and if the digestion cannot ultimately be performed that disorder goes on increasing until vomiting is excited, by which means the load that oppressed it, is expelled. The pylorus is a guardian, placed between the first and second stomach, in order to prevent any substance from passing from the former until it is in a condition to be acted upon by the latter: and so faithfully does this guardian perform its office, that it will often, (as we have seen,) force the stomach to reject the offending matter by vomiting, rather than allow it to pass in an unfit state; whereas, when chyme

duly prepared, presents itself, it readily opens a passage for it into the duodenum, where its further conversion into chyle is performed.

In addition to the foregoing anatomical Sketch of the Organs of Digestion, it may be remarked, that the stomach is principally supplied with nerves by a large pair proceeding directly from the brain, called the *Par Vagum*. These in their course send branches to the pharynx and larynx, the œsophagus, the vessels of the neck and heart, the lungs, the liver, the spleen, and sometimes to the diaphragm. This distribution will account for many of the sympathies which have been observed between the stomach and other parts; as for instance, the hysterical affection of the throat when the stomach is distended with wind; the effect of vomiting by tickling the throat; and the affections of the lungs and heart, consequent upon a disordered stomach.

From the preceding description, the reader will readily perceive the high and important station the stomach, from its situation, connections, and functions, holds among the digestive organs. It might indeed with propriety be termed the chief organ of digestion, to which the others are but subservient. It may here be mentioned as not a slight proof of the important rank this organ holds in the living system, that the first rudiment we have of animal life, in ascending upwards from the vegetable kingdom, is simply a stomach, which organ alone seems to constitute the being of the lower class of animals.

It is not therefore to be wondered at, that any derangement of the functions of the stomach should produce so great an effect upon the system generally. By understanding the relations it holds, either directly or indirectly, with the dif-

ferent parts of the body, the various symptoms that show themselves in distant parts, when this organ is affected, may readily be explained, and traced to their source. We need not thus, go farther than a primary derangement of the stomach, to account for the multitude of diverse, and often seemingly anomalous symptoms that present themselves in Dyspepsia.

The manner in which the disease makes its approaches is generally very insidious. Although, now and then, the powers of the stomach are suddenly prostrated, from causes producing a violent effect upon it, such as poisons, swallowed accidentally or taken in injudicious quantities as medicines, and the aggravated symptoms of Dyspepsia produced in a short space of time; yet, in most instances, its attacks come on in a gradual manner. Most commonly, it is only by looking back, after the disease has become established, that the patient is able to trace its hitherto unsuspected approach. The first indication he has of any thing being the matter with his stomach, is an occasional disagreement with it of particular articles of food; such, for instance, as rich-made dishes, or articles palpably indigestible, but which he has hitherto, (as the phrase goes,) always found to sit well on his stomach. Or he finds that a meal a little fuller than usual, produces more uncomfortable feelings than it was wont to do. He is troubled, on these occasions, with flatulence, a sense of oppression and load at the region of the stomach, and often with acidity; and not unfrequently there is a sense of constriction, as if a gridle was drawn tightly around the body. A general heaviness, and an indisposition to exertion, either bodily or mental, is experienced; as if the stomach being engaged with a harder task than usual, the energies of the system were concentrated to its support, by which the other parts were left to perform their functions

more languidly. A feeling of chilliness, or a slight shivering, frequently marks this condition of the system.

Habitual costiveness, or an irregular state of the bowels is usually the attendant upon this state of things. Often this is the first and only symptom of anything being wrong, and the patient will tell you, that could their regular action be restored, he should be perfectly well.

The uneasiness of the stomach after eating, from being occasional becomes constant. All the other symptoms above enumerated become more aggravated and permanent. The head now begins to sympathize with the disordered stomach. The patient does not complain so much of violence or acute pain, as of an unpleasant feeling in the head, which he cannot very well describe. He also now frequently complains of a mistiness and indistinctness of vision, particularly if the eyes have been exercised a little more than usual. The tongue in this stage of the complaint, is generally covered with a whitish coat, and there is an unpleasant taste in the mouth, particularly on rising in the morning; at which time a dull heavy pain, and sense of weight in the head is generally experienced. Often a dizziness, amounting sometimes to vertigo, with a sudden fear of falling, comes upon the patient. On these occasions he frequently experiences a temporary loss of memory, and knows not for the moment where he is. His complaints are now characterized as nervous.

A common sensation complained of by a Dyspeptic, is a sense of emptiness, or a void at the pit of the stomach, exciting a frequent desire of food, without the natural feeling of hunger. Nor is this morbid craving satisfied by eating. A slight nausea often occurs without any known cause, or upon eating an article of food that previously had always proved grateful to the palate. Often too, when the patient sits down with, as he supposes, a keen appetite to

some favourite dish, he feels a sudden disgust and repugnance to partake of it: at other times, articles usually distasteful, are sought after and swallowed with avidity. In short, the stomach is in that wayward, fickle state, that a desire to eat is sometimes felt without hunger; and again, the natural appetite, by some unaccountable caprice of the organ, is succeeded, before indulging it, by a sudden feeling of satiety.

Cold feet and hands are generally indicative of a confirmed state of Dyspepsia. The pulse is less frequent, and more feeble than usual. The movements, both of mind and body, are performed more slowly, and a general languor and exhaustion pervades the system. When the patient is addressed there is a tardiness in replying, as if it took him some time to comprehend and frame an answer to a simple question. The spirits are much depressed, the countenance exhibiting a peculiar settled character of despondency, and the eye a dull, leaden, lack-lustre expression, as if it regarded all things with equal indifference.

A peculiar torpor of the faculties of the mind, perceptible to none more sensibly than the unhappy subject of it, attends this state of things. Generally after eating, he is affected by an irresistible drowsiness, or stupor, which unfits him for the least mental exertion. He cannot command his attention sufficiently to peruse even a page of a novel, or a paragraph in a newspaper: and the simple operation of adding together a few figures, causes him as much mental labour as if it were one of the most difficult problems in mathematics. Though in health pleasant and good tempered, little things now vex and annoy him; and almost literally is "the grass-hopper a burden." A peculiar sense of tightness or constriction about the throat, accompanied with a secretion of tough viscid mucus, is often complained of. Fre-

quently, also, a palpitation of the heart, with irregularity of the pulse, is attendant upon a protracted case of Dyspepsia, and the horrors of an apprehended disease of this organ are added to the mental sufferings of the patient. The respiration is very commonly more or less affected, particularly on making slight exertions, such as ascending a flight of stairs; and frequently when no exertion is made, there is a tendency to sigh, or draw a long breath. The flatulence, which in the earlier stages of the complaint was a trifling inconvenience, and one that could easily be overcome, now assumes a more formidable and obstinate character.

An invariable symptom of protracted Dyspepsia, is a sense of tightness across the abdomen, accompanied with an obstinately constipated state of the bowels. There seems, indeed, to be a torpor, amounting almost to a complete suspension of the peristaltic motion, requiring the constant use of cathartic medicines.

This derangement of the functions of the stomach cannot continue for any length of time without other organs participating in the disorder. The organs that are most liable to become affected are, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, and the intestinal canal. More particular notice will be taken of these sympathetic affections, when we come to speak of the diseases that are apt to be confounded with Dyspepsia.

Although oftentimes the disease remains stationary for years, with very little increase or diminution of the symptoms, yet sometimes its progress is fearfully rapid. When this happens, all the symptoms become more aggravated in their character. The emaciation, at first not very great now becomes excessive. Extreme debility prevents the patient from taking his accustomed exercise; and at length confines him entirely to his bed. So completely enfeebled are the powers of the stomach, that the most simple food,

taken in the smallest quantities, produces the greatest distress of a surfeit. The faculties of the mind seem also prostrated with the energies of the body. An extreme nervous agitation, rendering the patient susceptible to the slightest impression, or else a state of torpor and apathy, in which the faculties seem completely benumbed, like the second childhood of old age, marks the last, and most commonly fatal stage of the disease.

We seldom, however, hear of persons dying with Dyspepsia. The reason of this seems to be, that when its progress has continued for any length of time, the disorders of organs secondarily affected, (the lungs or liver, for instance) are so predominant that they swallow up the original disease. This is not always the case, and we now and then see persons expire, as it were, from inanition, the powers of the stomach being completely lost.

In this summary, and as we are well aware, imperfect sketch of a disease, Protean in its symptoms, but in reality single and uniform in its nature, we have enumerated three stages, which may be termed,

1st. *The incipient stage*—in which the stomach is slightly, and occasionally affected; and the disease makes its appearance in paroxysms, at first occurring at long intervals, but by degrees becoming more frequent and aggravated. In this stage, the disease is entirely local in its character; the system at large, with the exception perhaps of the head, being very little effected.

2d. *The confirmed stage*—when the functions of the organ are permantely deranged, and the patient has no respite to his sufferings. The uneasiness at the stomach, the unpleasant feelings about the head, and the affection of the nervous system generally, though aggravated at particular periods, especially after eating, are constant. A slight cough, diffi-

culty of respiration, occasional pain in the region of the liver, emaciation, and debility felt particularly at the knees in walking, characterize this stage of the disease.

3d. *The complicated stage*—in which the functions of other organs, as the liver, the lungs, or the bowels become more particularly involved in the general derangement; and frequently an affection of one of these organs will assume the most prominent character in the disease. Thus the patient will be said to die of liver complaint, an affection of the lungs, marasmus, dysentery, diarrhoea, or some anomalous complication of all these affections, conveniently classed by the Doctor, when he renders his account to the Sexton, under the sweeping term consumption. Dyspepsia, in this manner, the original fountain of all the mischief, escapes the odium that ought in strict justice to be attached to it, and is generally considered a disease, which however aggravated and tedious, never proves fatal: and the poor dyspeptic, who has got a confused notion about the impossibility of two diseases prevailing in the system at the same time, comforts himself amidst his suffering, with the idea that his malady will be a preventive of all others.

It must not be supposed that these stages are distinct, and can always be discriminated by their symptoms. On the contrary, they often make their appearance without any regular order; different parts being affected not so much in proportion to the duration of the disease, as to the peculiar constitution of the individual, and the relative strength and soundness, or predisposition to disease of different organs. Thus, a person of nervous temperament will suffer more from nervous agitation and general irritability, than one of more rigid fibre, who is not so readily affected by external impressions. In an individual predisposed to affection of the liver, this disease will early show itself: and

in the same way, symptoms of pulmonary disease will manifest themselves in those of weak lungs. In short, in a disorder of this sweeping, and overwhelming character, where the whole and every part of the system is successively pervaded, the weakest organs will be the first to give way; as fire naturally spreads in the direction of the most combustible materials.

Without expatiating too largely on the melancholy detail of sufferings which characterize this disease, a few symptoms, which as they occur but occasionally, might be termed *anomalous*, may be added to the sad catalogue. So that the unhappy dyspeptic who peruses, these pages, must not imagine his sufferings peculiar to himself, but understand that if not precisely to be enumerated among the ordinary evils "which flesh is heir to," they are at least such as afflict many of his species.

Sometimes a coldness of a particular spot in the head, or peculiar throbbing behind the ear, or over the eyes, will usher in a paroxysm of the complaint. Often the voice is affected, and the patient complains of difficulty in speaking loud; and of experiencing a peculiar jarring sensation through the chest, when he does so. A sense of numbness, and coldness is often felt at the stomach; and sometimes a weight, as if a lump of lead were contained in it. More than once, have I been told by a sufferer, that he felt as if a number of wires passed up from the stomach to the brain, and there ramifying into innumerable small branches, communicated a sort of jarring, or vibrating sensation, to each particular nerve. Pains between the shoulders, and in the small of the back are common. Cramps of the extremities, stitches in the side, pains in the joints, and a general soreness, and weariness of the whole frame are often experienced. In short, every part and spot of the body seems

to be liable to pains, aches, and anomalous, indescribable feelings of some kind or other, in the progress of the disease; and we might almost fancy Shakspeare to have had a Dyspeptic in his mind's eye, when he makes Prospero, threatening Caliban, say:

“For this be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side stitches that shall pen thy breath up:
 Thou shalt be pinch'd
As thick as honey combs, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made them.”

And again:

“I'll rack thee with old cramps;
Fill all thy bones with aches; make thee roar
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.”

For Remedy. see next page.

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