

A case of hyperchlorhydria, indigestion, constipation, etc. : as treated by one gastrologist, three general physicians, one 'mechano-neuralist', one hospital, one professor of medicine, and one refractionist / by George M. Gould.

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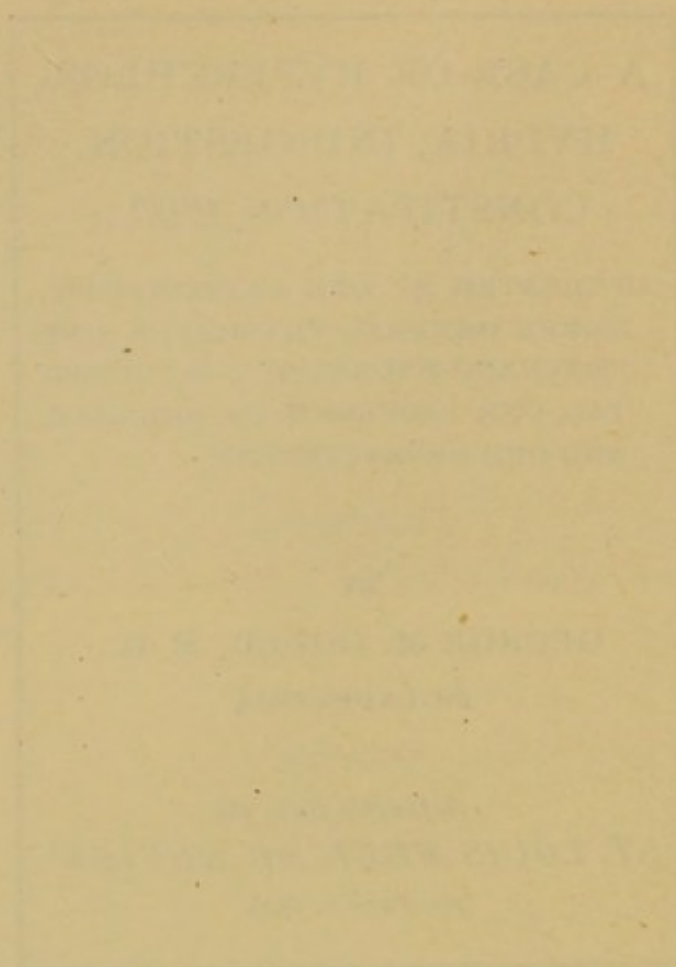
A CASE OF HYPERCHLOR-
HYDRIA, INDIGESTION,
CONSTIPATION, ETC.,

AS TREATED BY ONE GASTROLOGIST,
THREE GENERAL PHYSICIANS, ONE
"MECHANO-NEURALIST", ONE HOSPI-
TAL, ONE PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE,
AND ONE REFRACTIONIST.

BY

GEORGE M. GOULD, M. D.,
PHILADELPHIA.

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A CASE OF HYPERCHLORHYDRIA, IN-
DIGESTION, CONSTIPATION, ETC.,
AS TREATED BY ONE GASTROLO-
GIST, THREE GENERAL PHYSI-
CIANS, ONE "MECHANO-NEU-
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ONE PROFESSOR OF
MEDICINE, AND ONE
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By GEORGE M. GOULD, M. D.,
PHILADELPHIA.

The symptoms of which Mr. H. S. com-
plained when he consulted me had persisted,
with the exceptions to be noted, since 1897.
They were pain in the abdomen, constipation,
"sour stomach", eructations, some occipital
headache, and pains in the muscles of the
back. "The acid would rise up to my mouth
so that I felt relieved when I forced it out by
vomiting." "I was depressed and despondent
to such a degree that I could hardly give a
civil answer to any one." "I would have
sleepless nights for a week or two at a time,
and felt as if I was not worth the salt I ate."
His sufferings became so great in 1897 that
after following, without relief, the treatment
of an eminent general physician, the patient
secured a three months' vacation and took a
trip to Europe. During his vacation he was
entirely well, but upon his return to his work
his troubles at once began as before.

A specialist in diseases of the stomach was now consulted. The stomach pump was used for three months without relieving any of the symptoms. Hyperchlorhydria was found, and sodium bicarbonate was ordered. "In one-half an hour after the dose had been taken, the pain and other symptoms all returned." Under the gastrologist the symptoms became worse, and the "mechano-neural" expert was tried for two or three years. As described by the patient, this "treatment consisted in pressing the nerves near the spine and stomach." This manipulation gave great relief at first; there was a gain in weight, pain disappeared, and the patient thought himself cured until he went back to work again—then the old symptoms returned. During the first winter following this treatment, the man's sufferings became worse than ever, and again the "mechano-neural" specialist gave a period of relief. Again the symptoms recurred, and so the see-saw continued. Whenever the treatment was carried out, however, it should not be forgotten, there was a cessation of the eye-work caused by his occupation. It was another method of taking a vacation, and whenever there was a vacation, long or short, even for a day or two, there was a cessation of the symptoms of disordered digestion. It would be interesting to know how many times this patient figures in the histories of mechano-neural "cures." For hundreds of years, multitudes of patients have been "cured" by almost as many different treatments, *plus the cessa-*

tion of eye-work. It is a fallacy which underlies the entire practice of medicine of to-day, quite as well as that of the past. There are at last signs that within the next fifty years many practitioners will become conscious of this simple and easily recognized fallacy, and that clinical medicine will thereby be revolutionized in one important respect.

Another general physician, a regular, was now put in charge, but the abdominal pain continued, and seemed to get worse. "By this time I could feel the nerves in my stomach beat like a drum, whenever I had the least worry or excitement in business. I got irritable and excited over the smallest thing."

There was now another return to mechano-neuralism, and in a few weeks there was again relief, which lasted two months. "Then I got so bad that I had to stay away from my work for days at a time."

The family physician, a successful and excellent practitioner, was next consulted. His medicine gave temporary relief; only "drugs were given acting on the liver. The liver became swollen and sore." After a vacation spent at Atlantic City, upon a recurrence of the complaint with work the patient returned to the second general physician formerly consulted. But there was no benefit derived from this source.

"I felt discouraged, and often thought of my wife and three little children with anxious forebodings."

In this despondent condition, the patient went to one of our famous hospitals "for a thorough examination." "You can think how my heart beat when I heard the result:" "A very bad stomach, enlarged liver, and a touch of appendicitis." "I took the medicine ordered, and as usual got no good results from it."

The patient now consulted the professor of the practice of medicine in one of the largest of our medical colleges, who "ordered piperazin water, and bicarbonate of soda." He "felt better for a while and then the trouble began again." His weight now ran down from 180 to 163 pounds.

"In the spring of last year I had to give up working, on the advice of my family physician, and I felt as if I could never work again." "I went to the shore for three months and improved very much, but in the Fall when I returned to my work, I found that my old trouble was all coming back, only much worse than before. When the pains came on in my stomach I felt like fainting, and I was afraid of eating anything. I lived on bread and milk for months, but the pain came just the same."

During all these years the patient has had "chronic constipation," for which, by the advice of physicians or on his own initiative, he has "constantly" taken vast quantities of "Hunjadi Water, cascara, patent medicines, Beecham's pills, etc."

The patient also writes :

"When the pains in my stomach have been severe, and I was about played out, so that I could not work any longer, I would stay at home for a day or two, and my trouble would all be gone in a few hours after I left my work. During my vacations I felt as well as could be, and could eat anything—until I returned to work, when after a few days, it would all come back."

As usual in such cases the patient has had frequent "colds" and "coughs."

Insomnia, also common in such cases, has increased in later years. Once last fall he hardly slept at all for two weeks, and at such times he suffers from "nervousness" and "worries about his work."

At the height of his sufferings in the winter of 1905-1906, while he was eating only milk, some one told the patient that sometimes such diseases as his had been found to be due to eyestrain. This was the first time such an idea had even been suggested to him. So ridiculous did this seem to the patient that he writes, "I felt like laughing, but in my desperate condition, I was ready to grasp at any straw within reach." Less than a year prior to this time Professor Musser, of Philadelphia, had stated before the American Medical Association that it was a fact "familiar to all" that such diseases as this patient suffered from, might be due to eyestrain. "Who has not seen correction of errors of refraction," he

says, "relieve so-called bilious attacks, periodical vomiting, anorexia, indigestion, and other gastric symptoms?" The gastrologist, indeed, had told me two years ago that he was always most careful to have the eyes examined in his cases where there was any possibility of eyestrain affecting the digestive system.

The patient, too, was presbyopic, being forty-four years of age when I prescribed glasses. This fact had, of course, not been noticed by any of his medical advisers. The lenses which I ordered were as follows:

R. +cyl. 0.37 ax. 30°	} Distance
L. +sph. 0.37 + cyl. 0.50 ax. 165°	
Add 0.87 sph. for reading; in bifocals.	

Immediately the patient was a changed man. It was noticed that whereas before this he had long been lethargic, slow, or morbidly "nervous", cynical, harsh, etc., he now was talkative, genial, happy, and active. Several months after this he writes:

"Since I have worn the glasses I have not had the slightest trouble. If this keeps up I shall certainly remember you as my greatest benefactor, both to me and my family, to my dying day. I can eat whatever I please; I take no more cathartics, and have a natural movement every day. I am as well as any man. I have been steadily gaining in weight every day since I have had the glasses. The result ought to be written in letters a foot long: *Not a particle of trouble from the fourth day after wearing glasses.*"