

THE STOMACH AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

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The Stomach and its Difficulties by Sir James Eyre

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SIR JAMES EYRE

**THE STOMACH AND
ITS DIFFICULTIES**

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AND

ITS DIFFICULTIES.

In affectionate Remembrance
OF
JOHN ABERNETHY,
THE PROFOUND PHILOSOPHER,
THE HIGHLY-GIFTED INSTRUCTOR,
THE BELOVED OF HIS PUPILS IN LIFE,
THE REVERED IN DEATH,
THE FOLLOWING CURSORY REMARKS,
ON HIS FAVOURITE SUBJECT,
FOUNDED ON HIS ENLIGHTENED PRINCIPLES,
AND CONFIRMED
BY THE RESULTS OF EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE,
Are dutifully Inscribed
BY A MEMBER OF HIS CLASS OF
1812—13.



PREFACE.

It is long since I promised to give to the public the result of my observations on the Digestive Organs; the study of which has been always, to me, replete with deep interest; and having at length nearly renounced all nocturnal professional avocations, I am thereby enabled, with undisturbed study, and calm reflection, to watch the ever-varying phases presented by that important organ, the Stomach;—which, when it duly furnishes its pure functional secretions, is, like Fire, invaluable,—as a Slave, but otherwise it becomes a dangerous, because too powerful Despot! It is either, like the “vernal airs” that usher in the “gentle Spring,” mildly, but munificently, refreshing and revivifying the earth; or else it resembles the rude violence of elemental strife, devastating by its impetuous fury all that impedes its disastrous course. Be it then still my daily study to minister to “The Difficulties of the Stomach”—that Pandora’s

Box—the *fons et origo*—the source of so many of our corporeal and some of our mental susceptibilities! Let me not, however, be understood as meaning to herald these Practical Remarks, in deprecation of severe criticism, by unfelt declaration of humility and unfitness for the task I have undertaken. On the contrary, I have come forward to offer in all truthfulness some of the results of a diligent observation and inquiry during a long life, for the consideration of the profession to which I have the honour to belong, totally free from any anxious misgivings as to its reception; for I anticipate a *second* kind and cordial welcome from my brethren,—founding my expectation on the full assurance that they love Truth for its own sake; and will be pleased to see, in this performance, not a mere exhibition of the lucubrations of others, dapperly arranged and paraded for display, but of those which have been, in fact, gathered and carefully garnered for *use*—being the fruits of my own gleanings at the bed-side or in the consulting-room—following therein, though *haud passibus æquis*, the example of my first surgical Instructor, Sir Benjamin Brodie; who, when I expressed my opinion that his Lectures were greatly prized by my fellow-pupils even forty years ago, replied,

“I have *myself* wondered that, with so little experience as I then had, my Lectures *should have been popular* with the students. I believe the explanation is, that, although I had not much information to give, what I did give was drawn chiefly from my own written notes of cases, so that I communicated my *own* knowledge, and not that copied from books.” It may be said that the *style* of my work is not sufficiently *grave*; and that the introduction of a lively anecdote is hardly defensible, when treating on the serious subject of human disease, and also that the *rules* which are here laid down for the preservation of health are so stringent, that it will be impossible to carry them *into practice*. To the first objection I would reply, that that man’s nature must be changed, before he who is daily and hourly “thankful for being (physically) not as some other men are,” can not only think, but speak and write from the impulse of his contented, nay, cheerful mind. And be it remembered that happily, in medicine, the age of wigs and canes (gold-headed) has long since passed away! And, well I wot, if there be not capacity, beyond the ordinary calibre, in the Physician, he will soon be distanced in this stirring go-ahead era; and although tricks and

traps for the unwary were never more rife, and quackery and shameless pretension more successful than in the present generation, such can, we may hope, only prevail for a season; while honesty, plain dealing, truth, and consistency, will stand forth triumphant to the last. To those persons who talk of *impossibilities*, I would only say, that the sooner the word is expunged from the Medical vocabulary, the better for the weal of mankind. And I hesitate not to affirm, that all which I enjoin may, though not without effort, be attained, more or less, by every one,—and is entirely and unmistakeably within the power of *many*. ONE great fact, at least, I have ascertained (which of itself might constitute the reward of a life of labour),—namely, that Stomach Complaints are, for the most part, curable; that permanent deliverance from misery may be promised, and the engagement punctiliously fulfilled. I must also be allowed to say that the present work has *really* originated in the desire to again agitate that *vexata questio*, the marvellous qualities of the oxide of silver—a medicine which *I myself* have introduced to the profession; for I shall ever, with undiminished confidence, declare that a more safe and efficient remedy for certain diseases *does not exist*, and which opinion, in this my