

ON PROTUBERANT ABDOMEN

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ADOLPH HAHNEMANN ALLSHORN

**ON PROTUBERANT
ABDOMEN**

ON
PROTUBERANT ABDOMEN,

AN OUTLINE OF ITS CAUSES AND
TREATMENT.

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INTRODUCTION.

PROTUBERANT Abdomen is a local condition of superfluity, and comes under consideration as the most troublesome and disfiguring accompaniment of corpulence or fatness, and as one of the symptoms of many grave forms of disease. This local enlargement is of such frequent occurrence, both in the male and female, that it merits more attention than has been given to the question in the many works, mostly of a quasi-scientific tone, that have been brought forward upon this subject. In all of these works, however, the treatment of the complaint, for a complaint it decidedly is, is attempted by, we may almost say, one method, namely, dietetics, the fact being ignored that this physical condition may arise from various causes, and that one method of treatment cannot be applicable to all cases.

To this unscientific manner of treating a subject of so much importance, may be traced the bitter

disappointment of some and the illness of others in attempting to reduce their redundancy.

I have accordingly endeavoured in the following treatise to give an outline differentiation of the various causes of Protuberant Abdomen, with the treatment applicable to each; and if the reader should be disappointed at the meagreness in the details of medicinal treatment, let him reflect that this work cannot, within its narrow scope, contain anything like a hundredth part of such treatment, to arrive at which we must go back to first principles, and trace each individual case to its primary constitutional and primary disease tendency—its actual condition and its therapeutic indications.

It is not pretended that this treatise is exhaustive, but merely as its title imports, an outline.

White House,
Dalston, N.

ON PROTUBERANT ABDOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

CORPULENCE FROM INDIGESTION.

THE general idea entertained of a dyspeptic is that he is of meagre proportions, of unhealthy cast of face, and that he is constantly oppressed by something vaguely described as "weight at the stomach."

The face of the dyspeptic is characteristic, as commonly conceived, but there are "dyspeptics and dyspeptics," and the character and description given by Shakespeare of Falstaff presents itself to the mind as that of one much suffering this way. Witness his inordinate thirst and lack of appetite. "A half-penny worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack," and then his "unbuttoning after supper," &c., &c. He suffered from what is called Dyspepsia from fluids, a very common complaint and a prolific cause of pot-belly. This form of Dyspepsia, or difficult digestion, arises from imperfect chymification of the food, the gastric juice being rendered by dilution unfit to perform its

office, the food gets only partially disintegrated, putrefaction and evolution of gas is the result, the patient feels "blown out," and is forced to unbutton to give room for the expanded stomach and intestines. The ingesta or partly digested food is now presented to the glands of the intestines, but in an abnormally moist condition. It fails to stimulate them to efficient action, and imperfect secretion of their juices is the result. Now we know that every secretion is also an excretion from the blood, and that upon the proper performance of these functions depends the health of that fluid. It is obvious that in the case of Indigestion under consideration the entire mass of the circulating fluid becomes contaminated, and with poisoned or contaminated blood the entire economy is impaired.

It is one of the most beautiful evidences of divine design in the construction of the body, that when one organ gets out of order and is unable to perform its function or functions, one or more differently functionated organs take on the action of that which is impaired, and although of course being differently constructed these are not able to perform the work in exactly the same manner, they do so with a close attempt at producing the same result. In other words, when one organ of the body is incapable of performing its function, another attempts to effect the same purpose in a different way. To

this phenomenon the name of vicarious action is applied, and by it the harmony of the system is maintained.

In the case described, where the intestinal glands fail to perform their function, the kidneys officiate for them, and we have deposits in the urine.

The characteristics of Indigestion from liquids are these :—

1. Sense of fulness after eating.
2. Foul tongue, worse in the morning.
3. Continued thirst.
4. Deposits in the urine of red or salmon-coloured matter (Uric acid and urates).
5. Loss of appetite.
6. Irregular and scanty alvine evacuations.

And although these symptoms may be present individually in other states of the digestive organs, we never have them all except in Indigestion.

Treatment.—I believe there is no better cure for this condition than the periodical use of the bitter water of Friedrichshall, given every morning about half an hour before breakfast; the needful quantity is not more than a wine-glassful, and it should be taken diluted with a tumblerful of cold, boiled water—the enormous, sickening, and relaxing doses given by many practitioners being unnecessary, and often hurtful. I have rarely found it necessary to give it in a larger quantity than the above, because its action as a purgative is not