

**ON THE PATHOLOGY OF
THE PNEUMOGASTRIC
NERVE**

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On the Pathology of the Pneumogastric Nerve by S. O. Habershon

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S. O. HABERSHON

**ON THE PATHOLOGY OF
THE PNEUMOGASTRIC
NERVE**

LUMLEIAN LECTURES

OF

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

1876

ON THE
PATHOLOGY
OF THE
PNEUMOGASTRIC NERVE

BEING THE LUMLEIAN LECTURES
DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
OF LONDON, 1876

BY
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PREFACE.

HAVING received many expressions of interest in the Lectures which I had the honour of delivering before the President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, I have ventured to present them to the profession in a collected form. I regret that I have not been able to expand the Lectures as I had desired. The subject is a complex one, and it is important, inasmuch as the pneumogastric nerve has relation to every vital function of the body; but although it is necessarily treated in an abbreviated form—for I have only traced some of its leading features—I trust the thoughts may prove suggestive and of practical value.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

	PAGE
On the anatomical arrangement of the pneumogastric nerve— Its physiology, in respiration, in deglutition, in the action of the heart, in digestion—Effect of division of the nerves; its association with the fifth and with other nerves— Cervical branches—Laryngeal symptoms, spasmodic and paralytic	9-41

LECTURE II.

Thoracic branches— <i>Œsophagus</i> —Spasmodic stricture—Para- lysis— <i>Lungs</i> —Spasmodic irritation, paralysis— <i>Heart</i> — Spasmodic irritation, angina—Paralysis	42-64
--	-------

LECTURE III.

Abdominal branches— <i>Stomach</i> —Spasmodic irritation—Vomit- ing—Pain— <i>Paralysis</i> , anorexia, distension	65-93
--	-------

PATHOLOGY OF THE PNEUMOGASTRIC NERVE



LECTURE I.

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY—PATHOLOGY OF CERVICAL BRANCHES.

ONE of the most deeply interesting questions in physiological science is, in what manner the harmony of the different animal functions is maintained. The most delicately-adjusted machinery is at work; actions of an entirely different character are performed without interfering the one with the other, and the result is recognised and expressed by the term *health*. The body is a microcosm; and, as in the external world there is harmony in the working of natural forces, so in man's organism there is an adjustment of forces, an even balancing of the living power in its functional integrity, so that, with diversity of operation in the

several parts, there is unity in the complex whole. The light of the sun exerts its silent but irresistible power on the vegetable life of the globe; and the plant, and flower, and tree, grow and thrive as if Nature were alone for them. The chemical force in the plant is in operation, and the physical forces are ever in exercise; but the same light has equal power on animal organism; the heat and life go hand in hand, and move on undisturbed, and chemical and physical and living forces are found in correlative action: but not less powerful is the same influence of the sun upon the physical world, upon the waters of the ocean, in producing evaporation, in determining the currents of the sea, and in regulating the winds. But there is wonderful harmony in the adjustment of these different spheres of operation, the vegetable kingdom with the animal, and these with the physical conditions by which the one and the other can exist and flourish.

The functions of animal life are equally diverse. Respiration is a function separate in itself, to ensure the admission and expulsion of air, for the purification and oxidation of the blood: it has its system of muscles and nerves, and adjustment of force. So also is that of the circulation of the blood, the central organ of which is the heart, a living, active, propulsive engine, by which the vital fluid is propelled both into the lungs and into the whole system. Equally distinct are those of deglutition and digestion, by which food is prepared and dissolved, and then absorbed into the circulatory system. Each of these functions—that of the respira-