

had never possessed a firm tissue. This was the one constant, as it is doubtless the most important, of all the causes of prolapse of the abdominal organs. The want of tone leads to relaxation of the ligamentous supports of the various viscera, resulting in some prolapse. This causes some impediment to the circulation, which in turn disturbs the function of the organs, and increases the want of tone in the ligamentous supports. Thus the one reacts on the other until the prolapse becomes pronounced. That relaxation of the abdominal walls plays at most but a subordinate part, is shown by the fact that in many cases of the most pronounced ptosis the belly is firm and retracted.

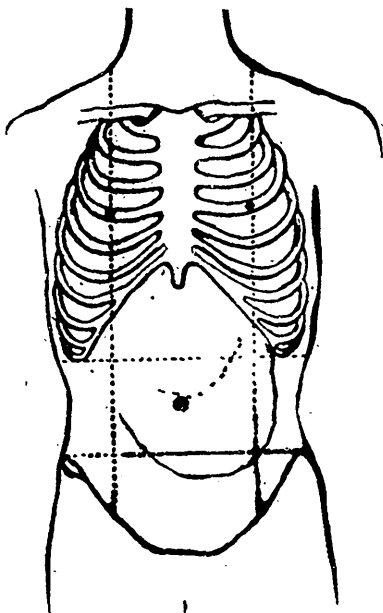


FIG. 7.—By intragastric electric lamp, lesser curvature not definitely located.

The diagnosis is not usually difficult. By inflating the stomach with air or CO_2 , its outline, if not plainly visible, can usually be determined by percussion, especially by auscultatory percussion. To inflate the stomach, I prefer to use the stomach tube, if well borne, and a single large bulb. It is not necessary to pass the tube all the way into the stomach, as the air passes easily through the esophagus. If the abdominal walls are fairly thin and relaxed, each injection of the bulb full of air communicates a wave to all of the abdominal wall that is in contact with the stomach, at once showing its size and position, unless its lower part is overlaid by a distended colon. Inflation may also be done by generating