

times explains the action of medicines which to superficial observers appear curious, nay almost mysterious.

ABSORPTION OF MEDICINES.

Although some medicines such as irritant emetics, cathartics &c., act merely locally, it is necessary that the great majority obtain entrance into the blood or internal fluids, before their action can be manifested; and, moreover, to enable them to be absorbed it is necessary that they be either soluble in water, or in the gastric or intestinal juices.—That medicines are absorbed, is proved in various ways. The great majority of medicines have been found in the blood, chyle, solids, and in the various excretions, and when with this is coupled the fact, that they disappear from surfaces to which they have been applied, it forms a strong argument; but over and above it is found that a medicine introduced into the system elsewhere, acts in the same way as when it has been swallowed; moreover the prevention of the remote effects is brought about by the prevention of the circulation of medicines, and the prevention and retardation of the remote effects of any medicine are influenced by any circumstance which promotes or retards the circulation—but on the other hand, although the stoppage or retardation of the circulation thus influences the remote effects of medicines, the same thing does not hold good in regard to the nerves, for the division even of the spinal cord as long as the circulation is carried on, does not prevent the remote effects of medicines from taking place. Lastly, the circulation of the blood is sufficiently quick to account for the operation of even the most rapid poisons. It is thus very apparent that medicines find their way into the blood, and that the majority, if not the whole, of their remote actions are owing to their doing so. These given in a state of solution, may immediately pass by endosmose, absorption, capillary attraction (or whatever name the process may get), through the mucous membrane, into the small net work of capillaries, hence into the mesenteric veins, and portal system; but if not given in solution solvents of varied character are provided by the system; the gastric juice and saliva dissolve

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