

CHAPTER VII.
DIGESTIVE ORGANS.

THE whole digestive track from the mouth to the anus, which is situated just below the tail, is sometimes called the alimentary canal. The chief parts are the mouth, pharynx, or gullet, œsophagus, or the tube which leads from the gullet to the stomach and the intestines, or bowels. The mouth is an oval cavity at the commencement of the alimentary or digestive canal. In front of the mouth are the lips, one above and one below ; at the sides are the cheeks ; it is lined by what is known as the mucous membrane, which has several small openings in it from the glands, which are situated around the mouth, through which the saliva is poured. On the upper part of the mouth the mucous membrane is thrown into ridges, or folds, and are from eighteen to twenty in number. This is a point of importance in connection with bleeding a horse with lamprers. Always remember it is not safe to bleed back of the third bar because there is a large artery which runs down through the roof of the mouth and enters up through a hole in the bone just before it reaches this bar. The tongue, which has the chief nerves of the sense of taste, is situated in the mouth ; this organ also has a very important part to perform in masticating the food and mixing it with saliva. The teeth, which also take a very active part in the masticating of food, are mentioned later on in the book under the heading of "Teeth."

Salivary Glands.—These are the glands which secrete the saliva that is poured into the mouth while the animal is eating. There are only three pairs of much importance. One large pair, one on each side of the throat below the ears, filling up the space between the jaw bone and the neck ; this pair has tubes passing around and under the lower jaw and up into the cheek muscles, entering the mouth opposite the fourth molar tooth ; these tubes are about as large as straws and convey the saliva from the gland into the mouth. The next pair are situated under the pair first mentioned ; their tubes enter into the bottom part of the mouth. The third pair are situated under the tongue, one on each side ; they pour their secretion into the mouth by several small openings near the front under the tongue, which can be seen by examining closely. This is a very important fluid in connection with the digesting of the food.