

stomach fat often exerts an impeding action on the digestion of other substances in that viscus—owing to its liquifying in consequence of the high temperature to which it is subjected, then spreading over the individual parts of food, encasing them and precluding the action of the digestive juice. Sometimes again it sickens by causing a large regurgitation of bile, more than it can counteract, so that the remainder acts injuriously: while, at other times again, it disagrees by becoming decomposed during long retention and forming volatile acids which exert a very deleterious agency upon digestion being very acrid and irritating. Accordingly those fats, from which can be made most volatile acids, are more liable than others to disagree, and hence the use of mutton fat, butter and fish oils are especially objectionable to an invalid, with whom their employment is liable to create cardialgia, eructations, nausea and vomiting. You can now understand how large quantities of adipose food are prejudicial to gastric digestion, though strictly speaking there is no digestion of fat in the stomach. As fat is not, as I have just said, digested in the stomach, we can form no idea of the *time required for its digestion* by an examination of the contents of that organ; nor can we decide by an examination of the intestinal matters as the period of its descent into the duodenum is not constant. After it has entered the duodenum it is probably absorbed or disposed of rapidly, for says Lehmann “in the course of from half an hour or an hour after fatty food or oil has been taken we find in the upper part of the jejunum in dogs, cats and rabbits, not merely the epithelium, filled with fat globules, but also the lacteals with glistening white chyle;” and therefore he says we must regard fat as very easy of digestion. When not mixed with too large a quantity of food it essentially promotes the digestion both of albuminous and amylaceous substances; it is easy to ascertain by means of artificial openings in the stomach that flesh for instance deprived of fat remains longer in the stomach, and therefore requires a longer period for its metamorphosis than the same substance when mixed or impregnated with a little fat. The digestibility of adipose food is greatly lessened by its exposure to air as it becomes rancid and in the condition of acidity before described. Heat has a somewhat similar influence, so that culinary operations in which oil or fat is subjected to a high temperature are objectionable for the preparation of these foods for persons with weak stomachs. On this account dyspeptics should be interdicted from employing dishes prepared by frying, as in this operation the heat is usually applied by the intermedium of boiling oil or fat. In nine-tenths of the dishes which are innocuous to dyspeptics, one or other will be found an active constituent; hence both should be carefully prohibited to persons of this class unless