

The Gullet is a cavity situated just behind the mouth. It is chiefly made up of muscles which perform the act of swallowing the food. It is lined with the continuation of the mucous membrane of the mouth.

The Oesophagus, or the continuation of the gullet, which is a tube extending from the gullet to the stomach, is used to carry the food to that organ. It is made up of two coats, the muscular and the mucous. The former contains fibres which, when once the food enters the tube, contracts behind it, forcing it along to the stomach. Its lining is a continuation of the mucous membrane of the mouth and gullet. In tracing the tube down the neck from the gullet, it passes down the left side of the neck, entering the thoracic, or chest cavity, between the lungs over the heart through the large muscular curtain known as the diaphragm, entering the stomach an inch or two after passing the diaphragm.

The Stomach.—This organ is very small in the horse in comparison with the ox; it only holds about four gallons, and is situated just behind the curtain which separates it from the lungs; it is mostly to the left side. The walls of the stomach are composed of three coats, one on the outside called the serous membrane—this is a name applied to membranes which line closed cavities, such as the abdominal, or belly cavity. The inside lining is a continuation of the mucous membrane lining the organs before mentioned. When the stomach is empty this membrane is thrown into loose folds, and there are also found several small openings through which the gastric juice and pepsine from the glands, situated in the walls of the stomach, enters. These are very important fluids as they assist greatly in digesting the food. The third coat is known as the muscular coat, being made of muscular fibres, and is situated between the two coats already mentioned. Its action is to give the stomach a churning motion, rolling the food around and mixing it with the juices. The stomach is guarded by a valve where the food enters which prevents it from passing back through the gullet. There is also a valve at the opening of the bowels, preventing any coarse, undigested food from entering them. The stomach is held in its place by five large ligaments, and is well supplied by blood vessels and nerves. Digestion of food takes place very quickly in the horse in comparison to other animals, and if, through a change of food or working too soon after eating, the digestion is interfered with it sets up what is known as indigestion, which is a very