

acid and the rennet ferment, Hammarsten's lab-ferment. The latter is much the most important of the three, as it is the precipitating agent, causing coagulation of the proteids.

The functions of the stomach then are mainly twofold. First, it is a reservoir, and second, it coagulates the proteids and sends them on for intestinal digestion. To these two duties of course must be added the partial digestion of proteids (usually only very partial), and the absorption of fluids, peptone and crystalloid material, *e.g.*, sugar.

The stomach of the nursing baby under one month is usually empty one hour or a little more after feeding. This period slowly lengthens until at eight months or so it takes two or three hours to empty its contents into the duodenum. This is very interesting when considered in connection with the normal physiological interval for feeding, the child up to two or three months usually insisting upon being fed every two hours, and the interval gradually lengthening to three or three and a half hours. So that the infant if left to itself will, by the promptings of animal instinct, give the stomach quite the same proportion of physiological rest as the adult does, indeed probably much more punctiliously than most adults do. The duration of stomach digestion is much prolonged if cow's milk is the food, or if disease exist.

Third, as to the intestine. This is much the most important portion of the alimentary canal. It is less closely tethered up by the mesentery than in the adult—the duodenum is much smoother and freer from folding and pouching than in the adult, a circumstance connected, as Rotch points out, with the fact that there is less need for delay of its contents in the infant than in the adult.

It is interesting, too, to note that while in the adult a ratio in length between the large and small intestine is, respectively, about as five to one or one and a half, in the infant it is as nine to one and a half, a fact suggestive of the great importance of the small intestine in the child, and portentous as to the ill-results in the infant of derangement of its functions as in cholera infantum.

The most active secretion in the small intestine, as in the adult, is the pancreatic juice which is active in the digestion of fats from the very first, and which digests the larger proportion of the casein from the stomach. The large size of the liver at birth bespeaks the importance of the bile as a peristaltic stimulant, and as an assistant in the digestion and absorption of the fat which the nursing infant gets in such large proportions. The bile doubtless assists in preventing in the infant the constipation which would prevail in the adult upon a similar diet.