

CHAPTER NINTH.

OF THE SECRETIONS.

261. WHILE, by the process of digestion, a homogeneous fluid is prepared from the food, and supplies new material to the blood, another process is also going on, by which the blood is analyzed, as it were; some of its constituents being selected and so combined as to form products for useful purposes, while other portions of it which have become useless or injurious to the system are taken up by different organs, and expelled in different forms. This process is termed SECRETION.

262. The organs by which these operations are performed are much varied, consisting either of flat surfaces or membranes, of minute simple sacs, or of delicate elongated tubes, all lined with minute cells, called *epithelium cells*, which latter are the real agents in the process. Every surface of the body is covered by them, and they either discharge their products directly upon the surface, as on the mucous membrane, or they unite in clusters and empty into a common duct, and discharge by a single orifice, as is the case with some of the intestinal glands, and of those from which the perspiration issues upon the skin, (Fig. 94.)