

in concentrated form with too little waste to be gotten rid of, change from an active to a sedentary life are among common causes. Painful affections of rectum and anus, such as fissure and hemorrhoids, although commonly caused by constipation, greatly aggravate the trouble, as they deter from yielding to the desire for defecation.

The use of cathartics and aperients has always been and is now one of the most important factors in developing the constipated habit. The idea that a daily movement is a necessity, and that an occasional purgative is useful in relieving the system of morbid material which would otherwise induce disease, is the chief source of this hurtful custom. The term biliousness implied the resort to cathartics for its relief. We cannot but heartily accord with Dr. Johnson, in "Pepper's System of Medicine," that it was time that we as physicians discarded the term of biliousness, as more ignorant and erroneous treatment has hung upon that theory than upon any other doctrine of medicine of recent date. The amount of pills, cathartic nostrums, mineral waters, etc., consumed by the general public in self-medication is something enormous. At first the evil effects are not apparent, but in time the reflex function is not brought into activity except by the aid of either aperients, cathartics, or enemas.

Sometimes cumulative constipation is masked by a regularity of small stools or by diarrhoea, and great care is necessary in making a diagnosis, so that the patient should not be put on an astringent treatment. From whatever cause our constipation may come, we will have various degrees of atony right up to paralysis of the peripheral nerve-endings in intestines, and of centres in the cord. Atony may not only be in the unstriped muscles, but may affect the voluntary muscles as well.

Much of the importance attached to constipation depends upon the effects it produces. Undoubtedly a great many diseases are occasioned by the absorption of poisonous material from retained faecal matter. The co-existence of constipation with mental irritability and melancholy is often remarked. Neighboring viscera suffer from overloaded bowels, and many of the uterine difficulties may be traced to this as a cause.

Although not agreeing with Wilfrid Hall, of New York, that all diseases are caused or aggravated by the absorption into the circulation of effete and poisonous material from retained faeces, and that, in order to maintain perfect health, we must at least every third day make the toilet of our colon and rectum by an internal application of at least three quarts of hot water, we do think this absorption a fruitful source of disease. Many anæmias, fevers, headaches, sore throats, neuralgias, chest, stomach and intestinal difficulties, hemorrhoids, fissures of the anus, etc., are often caused by this affection.

The physician can render great service by giving the patients advice which will prevent constipation in children. He should insist upon the importance of regularity in defecation; this is, if possible, even of greater moment in girls. The failure to teach and insist upon good habits in children in this respect is the cause of much of the trouble of after life. To persons leading sedentary lives, the importance of exercise should be pointed out. Comfortable water-closets should be provided. In the country this is one of our great difficulties, as the privies there are very of en unsheltered, cold, exposed, and full of draughts, and a fertile source of constipation to delicate females. In fact, it is a rare thing to meet a lady patient in the winter season in the country who is not constipated. This is to be attributed in very many cases to the cold and uncomfortable privies. In the city, with your admirable system of waterworks, it is very different. We should be very glad if some ingenious mind could devise something as comfortable and cleanly for the country. After a stool occurs a few moments should be allowed to see if a further amount of faecal matter finds its way into the rectum, as it should never be allowed to remain there to further blunt the sensibility of the mucous membrane, and so delay cure. Daily exercise, frequent sponging, and friction of surface of body, especially over abdomen, will be of much service. Active business men, especially young men, need emphatic teaching, as they are liable to disregard the simplest rules of health. Indigestion, as a precursor to constipation, should be carefully looked after and treated. Acute constipation in a previously healthy person does not call for very active treatment, and usually does best