

PERFORATION OF THE GALL-BLADDER IN TYPHOID FEVER.*

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The subject of perforation in typhoid fever is always one of great interest, not only to the general practitioner, who dreads and fears it as the one great and fatal calamity which may befall his enteric patient, but also to the surgeon who is called upon from time to time to repair the ravages of a perforating ulcer and to restore the continuity of a damaged ileum or colon. Fortunately, this very fatal complication is rare. Osler reports but 34 cases perforating in some six hundred and eighty-five, a percentage of 4.96. And in over 4,500 cases tabulated by Fitz, the mortality was but 6.58 per cent. Holscher found perforation in six per cent. of 2,000 cases; Murchison in 1,721 cases found its frequency was 11.38, so that on an average 6.58 per cent. is fairly representative of its frequency.

Perforation of the gall bladder in typhoid fever is, however, a still rarer occurrence. The literature on the subject is not abounding with records of cases, though in our search we were somewhat surprised in hunting about to find as many as there are so far reported.

The gall bladder is not the usual or common situation for a typhoid ulceration. The usual situations for perforations are found in the ileum, twelve to eighteen inches from the ileocaecal valve, in 80 per cent. of cases in the caecum, appendix, or some portion of the ascending colon or jejunum.

The gall bladder is rarely perforated or ulcerated. There is abundant evidence to go to show, however, that the typhoid bacillus is to be found in the gall bladders of typhoid patients, and that acute cholecystitis in typhoid fever has resulted in quite a few cases is quite beyond dispute. The case I am about to report seems to be unique, in that it would appear to be almost a primary focus of the disease, as it was quite unassociated with ulcerated patches in the bowel by acute cholecystitis or gall stones.

Case N. L., female, aet. 18 years; family and personal history unimportant. I was called to see her on the afternoon of Christmas day, 1905. Condition then showed temperature