

curling up or rolling up like a scroll and producing polypoid projections, while the process of cicatrization goes on beneath. The surface of the ulcer is sometimes highly vascular, bleeding when touched, or it presents a greyish base.

Ulceration of the rectum is stated to be a result of obstinate constipation. This is not always so, as some persons, throughout life are habitually costive, without any ulceration following as a necessary consequence of that condition. The presence of foreign bodies, fish bones, and other extraneous matter, would be very likely to occasion abrasion of the epithelium and lead to ulceration of the mucous surface. Persons of a strumous habit are as liable to ulceration of this part as they are to the formation of abscess in other organs. Ulceration of the rectum is sometimes found in phthisical patients, and very many die from exhaustion with a very small amount of lung disease, not sufficient to account for the fatal issue.

A very common cause of ulceration of the rectum is constitutional syphilis. Syphilitic ulceration of the rectum has been observed to be more common in women than men, and is stated by some writers to be apparently due to extension of the disease from actual local infection. This may possibly be the case, but it is more likely to proceed from the softening of gummata in the submucous areolar tissue. Syphilis as a cause of ulceration and stricture of the rectum is questioned by some writers, notably, Dr. Erskine Mason,\* of New York, who observes in the course of a valuable paper published by him in 1873: That so-called syphilitic strictures of the rectum are in no wise due to syphilis, and he suggests that they are occasioned by the cicatrization of chancroidal or non-infecting sores. We are not prepared to admit this as an absolute rule, nor do we believe that chancroid is a common cause of ulceration of the rectum. If such were the case, the termination of the disease would in all likelihood be speedily fatal. Our experience of chancroid in parts that are ever in use, is anything but encouraging, and in all likelihood death would result by perforation from rapid extension of the ulcerative

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\* American Journal of the Medical Sciences, January, 1873.