

for a considerable time without relaxation being obtained, the contractility of the part becomes weakened and impaired, or even paralysed. This is the way in which loss of muscular power is produced in the intestines in cases of ileus. And the more rapidly the bowel is distended, the greater is the effect produced, and the sooner the muscular power is destroyed.

II. But ileus may be produced in a different manner, and proceed to a fatal termination, which is distinctly recognized in the horse on post mortem examination. A portion of intestine is found greatly contracted, —reduced to a very small calibre,—frequently not exceeding five or six inches in extent, but sometimes more, and often occurring in several parts of the bowels, completely obstructing the descent of faecal matters along the tube, and the gas that has been generated. That this contracted portion is the original source of the disease, appears from the fact that its diameter is much smaller than is ever met with in the natural state of the bowels —sometimes resembling a cord, and totally impervious to air or water being forced along it.

The disease is liable to be produced in horses by drinking large quantities of cold water when they are heated, or by eating some acrid herbs in the pasture, which irritates the mucous membrane of the bowels, and produces strong reflex or spasmodic action of the part. The attack commences suddenly, and the excited but irregular peristaltic action that ensues, and proceeds along the tube, making repeated efforts to overcome the obstruction, causes the most intense suffering to the animal, and sometimes terminates in intus-susceptio, the contracted part passing into the portion of the bowel situated above or below it. The case may proceed rapidly to a fatal termination before inflammation has commenced, or proceeded far; showing that it was the irregular and obstructed action of the bowels, that produced death. In these forms of ileus, the other parts of the intestines are not so much inflated as in flatulent colic, but the distention is produced in the same manner, the confined gas exerting a pressure against the muscular fibre of the bowels, and enlarging the area and diameter of the gut.

In other cases, in addition to these appearances, we find distinct evidence of inflammation having attacked the muscular tissue of the bowels, as manifested by a blush of redness—dark and livid marks—or by the parts passing into gangrene. The bowel is easily torn, and gives way on being handled. We have seen the parts so softened by disease, that on reflecting the walls of the abdomen, the bowels ruptured, allowing the gas and liquid faeces to escape with great force from the intestines, and in these cases, the disease had not been of long standing, the attack being severe, and proceeding rapidly to a fatal termination.