

The malady, intestinal stasis, can scarcely be called a new disease. The great majority of cases now called intestinal stasis were formerly placed under the heading of habitual constipation; only a small proportion being thought to be due to organic obstruction. Neither is the conception that intestinal stasis is a common cause of disease in other organs of the body new; for from time immemorial the beneficial effect of purgatives in the treatment of diseases of almost every organ of the body has been recognized. The extent of the use of patent medicines, the therapeutic value of which is generally due to a purgative constituent, also suggests the same inference.

Under organic obstruction of the ileum, in addition to intestinal stasis caused by adhesions and kinks, is included obstruction due to nodular tuberculosis, cancer, volvulus, and intussusception of the viscus. These latter morbid conditions, however, form clinical entities by themselves, and are not usually included as causative agents of ileo-stasis.

In this paper the subject of stagnation of food in the ileum (ileo-stasis), due to organic obstruction as a cause of gastric disturbance is considered; but, in order that presentation of the subject is made more explicit, I shall, before discussing the subject of organic obstruction, refer briefly to other causes of ileo-stasis and their relations to gastric symptoms. In my opinion the causes of ileo-stasis which should be especially recognized are:

- (1) Atony of the ileum.
- (2) Regurgitation of the ileo-cæcal valve.
- (3) Spasm of the ileo-cæcal valve.
- (4) Cæcal stasis.
- (5) Organic obstruction of the ileum.

*Atony of the Ileum as a Cause of Ileo-stasis.*—In the passage of food along the alimentary tract a very remarkable feature is the rapidity with which it passes through the small gut. If one gives a small meal, such as that used in radio-logical work, the food leaves the stomach in about three or four hours, and about three hours later passes into the colon.

The further progress of the intestinal contents is relatively slow. It probably takes longer for the intestinal contents to travel three feet of the colon than it does for twenty-two feet of the small gut. The inference which we should draw from this is that nature's intention is that the small intestine, like the stomach, is a digestive tube and not a receptacle for food residues, and that it is essential for health it should be free from food-stuffs at least