

PENNINGTON. (J. R.)

Hygiene of the Anus and Con- tiguous Parts.

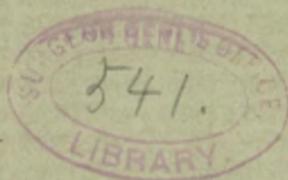
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HYGIENE OF THE ANUS AND CONTIGUOUS PARTS.

My object in writing this paper is to call attention to some of the most important points of practical every-day hygiene, as applied to the anal region; which, if we observed more carefully, would materially reduce the number of cases of ano-rectal diseases.

Failing to heed nature's call to evacuate the bowels, or, when heeded to attempt, as soon as seated, to force or hurry defecation by bringing to bear all the power of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles and force the fecal mass, which frequently contains seeds and other substances, with sharp edges, against and through the sphincter without giving it sufficient time to become thoroughly dilated, is a very common and frequent source of these troubles.

Dr. Eastman says: "This inordinate *vis a tergo* as often retards as expedites the matter, for human muscle, like human character, resists force, and in the case of the muscle under consideration, if overwhelmed by violence many times yields, at last, at the expense of its elasticity, the destruction of the hemorrhoidal veins and the laceration of the mucous membrane."

Now, recalling the fact that, in addition to this violence, the mucous membrane is everted during the act of defecation and that printed paper, hard and

rough substances are frequently used as detergents, is it any wonder, with such favorable conditions offered for infection, contraction and development, that these diseases are so prevalent?

The use of printed paper, which is so universally and promiscuously employed, should be condemned, and the pernicious effects which are liable to follow its continuous employment, thoroughly impressed upon the laity.

Many of these papers and inks are poisonous. Quite a number of the inks contain nigrosin, arsenic, Paris blue (ferrocyanic acid), and other irritants, and some of them, being charged so highly with these elements, are labeled "poison."

Who is not familiar with the fact, that fabrics dyed with anilin dyes frequently produce violent irritation when brought in contact with the unbroken cuticle, and in some instances are sufficiently virulent to induce constitutional effects? This being true, is there not more danger in bringing these dyes in direct contact with the delicate and oftentimes lacerated mucous membrane of the rectum and anus?

The use of the above articles for detergent purposes, the former by mechanical injury and the latter by depositing irritants upon the mucous membrane, or cutaneous surface near the verge of the anus, induces an inflammatory condition terminating in abrasions, fissures, ulcerations, or, as Mathews says, "may produce such a condition of the mucous membrane as will ultimately end in hemorrhoids, etc."

These pathologic conditions, plus the temporary constipation they produce, place extra duty upon the external sphincter, which causes it to become devel-

oped out of proportion to the muscles involved in expulsion, wherein we have a very common cause of chronic constipation, and this frequently induces ulceration of the rectum, or sigmoid flexure, or both; and, because of the peculiar nerve supply to these parts, this condition may exist for months or even years, without either physician or patient suspecting it, and the individual is constantly treating for mental and nervous troubles, dyspepsia, uterine, kidney, heart and many other affections, which are purely reflex and can be relieved only by detecting and curing the rectal or sigmoid affection.

To illustrate the effect of minor anal irritation, I will briefly append one case:

Mrs. D., age 28, was referred to me in May, last, by my friend, Dr. Pynchon, to be treated for piles. I elicited that her bowels moved every fourth or fifth day only, and then after having taken from three to five compound cathartic pills, which it was necessary to follow with a large dose of salts or an enema. Examination revealed a spasmodic sphincter, hemorrhoidal tendency and a few small abrasions around the anus. I prescribed an aperient, a local application and advised frequent bathing of the anus. In a few days her bowels became regular, moving daily, and have continued so without further medication. Suffice it to say, that her general health materially improved.

The writer wishes not to be understood as saying that all vague or reflex troubles are due to rectal disorders; at the same time, however, he insists that emphasis must be placed on the undeniable fact, *that in the rectum exists the pathologic condition for more diseases than credit is given.*

Paper to be used as a detergent should be of a firm, smooth, soft and pliable quality and free from

ink and other poisonous ingredients. There is nothing better in this line than pure tissue. Competition and demand, however, have caused the manufacturers to place upon the market many cheap, hard, stiff and inferior papers which are not only more expensive, but are not fit for use and should not be employed.

Another point, which I consider of very great importance, and one that is almost totally ignored, is regular anal ablutions.

Mr. Allingham in referring to this subject, says: "Many people seem to forget that the anus requires quite as much washing as any other part of the body."

Mathews, in referring to patients with a predisposition to hemorrhoids, says: "These patients should be instructed that any irritant to the parts, such as printed paper, as a detergent, should be avoided, and above all that a cold ablution of the parts should be made after every act of defecation."

Kelsey, in such cases, advises the free use of cold water to the parts at least once a day, and further says: "This is the best tonic, astringent and anodyne of which I have any knowledge, and its habitual use would prevent a very considerable portion of all hemorrhoidal difficulties."

The same general advice is also given by Cooper and Edwards. Hence, the consensus of opinion of eminent authorities is, that the anus should receive frequent and regular ablutions, and the Bidet, Fig. 1, to which I shall presently refer, is superior to all other devices for this purpose. Yet, notwithstanding the preponderance of evidence, very few of our water-closets are provided with any appliance for this important part of the toilet!

The Bidet, above referred to, made by J. L. Mott & Co., is readily attached to any water-closet, and is so constructed that the anus and contiguous parts may be thoroughly drenched with hot, cold or tepid water after each evacuation of the bowels; and by attaching a vaginal pipe, since the force of the jet and temperature of the water are easily controlled, it becomes a useful apparatus for vaginal injections.



PLATE 1098-G
Copyright, 1904, by THE J. L. MOTT IRON WORKS.

A simpler arrangement, however, and one that would answer most all purposes quite as well, is a miniature wash bowl fastened to the wall or otherwise, at the rear and on either side of the closet basin, near the seat. This basin is supplied with hot and cold water and has a waste connected with the closet bowl, that can be raised or lowered at will. From the tap, lint, fabric or tissue paper may be dampened for use, after defecation, or the waste closed and the bowl filled with water which may be medicated before

using, if desired. No well appointed private water-closet is complete without some provision being made for this part of the toilet.

I find, upon inquiry, that many ingenious ways are devised for cleansing and bathing this portion of the human anatomy. Some soak a few pieces of toilet paper in the wash bowl of the bath-room; others flush the closet basin, then dampen some paper, for cleansing the part, in the water with which it refills. In both instances it is very inconvenient, and in the latter there is much danger of infection, and I should be inclined to look upon it as a rather unsavory procedure at best.

Heeding nature's call to evacuate the bowels, using paper of the quality above advised and keeping the anus and contiguous parts clean, by daily ablution, guards against chafing, filth, eczema, pruritus, fistula, piles, constipation and a host of other troubles, which are a frequent cause of many chronic constitutional diseases. It also prevents soiling of the linen, which to the sensitive and delicate-minded person is a source of great annoyance.

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