

14, to become like a woman of 18, granted that for a fortnight she had indulged in excessive sexual intercourse with a strong young man. When he received what was, from his point of view, an unsatisfactory reply to this question, he applied himself for a few minutes to the study of a well-known manual of medical jurisprudence, and then, with as mile of triumph, asked whether I had examined the girl's bones. He had been reading the passages relating to the determination of the age of—a skeleton!

PERFORATION OF THE STOMACH AND DUODENUM FROM DISEASE. A CAUSE OF SUSPICIOUS DEATH.

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AMONGST the number of causes of sudden illness and death, occurring in apparently fairly healthy individuals—which in India is tantamount to a suspicious death—perforating ulceration of the stomach and duodenum would not appear to have received the amount of attention which its frequency would seem to warrant.

The following case recently came under my observation in this district:—

An under-trial prisoner, Hindu male, *et.* 50 years, admitted to Jail in indifferent health in November 1901, went one morning to court. Prior to his departure he ate his breakfast and made no complaint. Whilst waiting at court, he was said to have been given some sweetmeats. One party alleged that he received them from the police, the other that they were given to him by his friends. He was afterwards taken suddenly ill with colic, etc., and was brought back to jail in the evening, in a cart, in a state of collapse, and died about quarter of an hour after his re-admission. In view of the sudden death and allegation made, a judicial enquiry was held next day. On *post-mortem* examination death was found to have resulted from perforation of an old ulcer, situated on the anterior surface of the lower curvature of the stomach at its pyloric extremity. The abdominal cavity contained fluid and partially digested rice, the peritoneum was only slightly inflamed, there were no adhesions. The other organs were healthy. No suspicion attached to the sweetmeat which had been obtained from the local vendor at the court. The occurrence of this case led me to look up the recent *post-mortem* records of the jail, General Hospital, and also the notes of the medico-legal cases. From these I extract the following:—

A Hindu male, *et.* 40 years, living in a mofussil village, after complaining of colic, died suddenly. The death being suspicious, the body was sent in by the police for *post-mortem* examination.

At the time of the necropsy the body was decomposed. A perforation of an ulcer at the pyloric end of the stomach—size and surface not stated was found, with indication of general peritonitis. The other organs were healthy.

The following appears in the jail notes:—A Hindu male prisoner, *et.* about 50 years, died somewhat suddenly in July 1901. On *post-mortem* examination general peritonitis was discovered. In the duodenum were two ulcers each equal to a rupee in size, one of which had perforated. There were numerous adhesions.

The *post-mortem* records of the General Hospital having been carefully noted by Asst.-Surgeon S. C. De, Lecturer on Pathology, are very interesting. They show amongst death due to other causes, that ulcers of the stomach are by no means infrequent. The following extracted from the records for 1901 is a case of death due to perforating ulcer of the stomach.

A Hindu male, *et.* 27 years, admitted to hospital for chronic dysentery and dilatation of the stomach, died somewhat unexpectedly of general peritonitis. *Post-mortem* examination showed two ulcers at the pyloric end of the stomach, one of which had perforated with the resulting formation of a large localized abscess. This had subsequently given way leading to death from general septic peritonitis. The colon was healthy.

Remarks.—The symptoms which follow perforation of the stomach or duodenum, with escape of contents into the general cavity of the peritoneum, resemble those due to irritant poisoning, for which these cases may be mistaken as in the first two cases noted. I have not been able to consult that storehouse of information Chevers' "Indian Medical Jurisprudence," but in the same author's "Diseases of India" the following passage occurs when speaking of simple perforating ulcer of the stomach. "This disease must be rare in India. I saw it but once, and I know of only three other recorded cases." A statement which would appear to require considerable modification in view of these notes.

MEDICO-LEGAL NOTES FROM ALIPORE.

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THE subjoined medico-legal notes on 1,333 cases brought to the Alipore morgue during the years 1891-1900 from the suburbs of Calcutta, and the sadr sub-division of the District of the 24-Parganas, with a population of 1,029,778 (males 5,51,568, females 4,78,212) will, it is hoped, be of interest.

(a) Of the 1,333 cases dealt with, the Hindu population contributed 913, the Mahomedan 301, and other castes 119, or 1.29 of population.