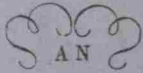


John C. K. M.



AN

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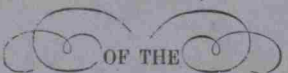
ON

Hypertrophy of the Liver



SUBMITTED TO THE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY



OF THE

University of Nashville,



FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

William Drayton Prior

OF

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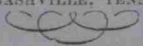


1855

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~~The Liver to the~~ I am about to enter upon the consid-
eration of a subject, the nature of which claims for
it more than an ordinary share of importance, in
the climate that I come from. I allude to that
form of disease termed Hypertrophy of the Liver.
I have selected this disease as the foundation of
my theme because I think it a disease worthy of
more notice than is generally given it. In the
first place I will make a few remarks upon
the Anatomical construction of the organ. It is
a conglomerate gland of large size; it is
situated in the right Hypochondriac region, and
partly in the left, it is held in its place by
five ligaments, one longitudinal, two lateral, one
coronary, and also one round ligament; the round
ligament during foetal life is the umbilical vein,
which may be traced from the umbilicus, along
the longitudinal fissure in the under surface of

the liver, to the inferior Vena Cava, to which it is united, but it is obliterated after birth. It has also five fissures, the longitudinal fissure, fissure of the Gall bladder, fissure of the Ductus Venosus, transverse fissure, and a fissure for the Vena Cava. These five fissures resemble somewhat an inverted A, the base corresponding to the free margin of the liver, and the apex to the posterior portion, or border of that organ. Its relation to part of the other viscera, is about as follows, superiorly and posteriorly with the Diaphragm, and inferiorly with a portion of the Duodenum and the Stomach, Transverse colon, supra-renal capsules, and right kidney. Its office is to separate all impurities from the blood, and to excrete a fluid called bile. It is an organ liable to several forms of disease, which may be arranged about as follows, it may become indurated, or softened,

it may be liable to fatty degenerations, such as scirrhus, Melanotic tumours, besides several other forms of disease that I might mention, but the form of disease of which I have mentioned in the beginning of my subject, one of its predisposing causes is thought to be brought on by intemperance, or it may be brought on by mechanical obstructions in the heart or lungs, and it may be brought on by a sympathetic irritation of a Duodenitis, or the result of an original disease in its own structure. The diagnosis of such a disease is so diversified in its aspects, it is not easy to delineate it in any general description, when it is Hypertrophied or enlarged which is the meaning of the term, its place and enlargement, may be recognized by palpation and percussion, and sometimes the enlarged

gland may be seen extending low down in
the Hypochondrium, and even into the abdo-
men. The pain is not so severe as it is in
acute Hepatitis, but occasionally it is exasperated
into the most intense agony; where pain is
present it is generally located in the right side,
with a sympathetic pain about the shoulder
or region of the clavicle. The pain may be
owing to the traction of the Diaphragm,
or it may or may not be increased upon
pressure; the pain is not felt so much when
the patient lays on the affected side, as
much as if he was to lie on the side that
is not affected. There is a sound as it has
been said by some to be heard through the
Stethoscope, between a crepitus and a pleating.
With these topical affections we have a
collection of Phenomena indicative of general

or constitutional disturbance; such as a dry
skin, of an Icteric hue, a depraved condition
of the stomach, attended frequently by a
febrile, colic state of the bowels, and the
stools clay or slate coloured, produced from
a stoppage of the secretion of bile, with
scanty and turbid urine, the whole accom-
-panied by more or less fever, the pulse being
quiet, firm, and sometimes, it is intermittent
or irregular from a loss in balance of
circulation, by the blood being impeded
in its transit through the enlarged
gland. Emaciation is frequently found to
take place followed by Oedema of the
lower extremities, tending to a general
dropsy, is one form in which the disease
frequently terminates. It is a disease very
slow in its progress, and it has been said

to have never proved fatal to life of itself, but that it may readily induce some other disease, which may terminate the existence of the patient. The liver in this condition is found on post mortem examinations, to be of a gray or ashy hue, altered in shape and dimensions, and prodigiously enlarged, pale and sanguinous. There is a cough which occasionally accompanies this form of disease of a dry or hacking nature; as the case progresses, the bowels become harassed with tormina, and flatulence; or a diarrhoea of a colligative nature ensues, the discharge being of a dark, or light coloured, stringy and watery, with a very foetid odour. Mania has been oftentimes the result, however the mind is gloomy, petulant,

and despondent. The symptoms which I have detailed will for the most part form a pretty correct diagnosis of enlarged liver, and all doubt may be frequently removed by examination, which may be done by causing the patient to lay on his back, his knees flexed upon his abdomen, so as to put the abdominal muscles in a state of relaxation, with his head low, and then directing him to take a long breath to cause the liver to protrude, and even here there may be some caution, in coming to an absolute conclusion, as the liver in early life of a patient is of such magnitude as to descend beneath the ribs, and to be very hard and prominent, and in this state it is frequently treated as Hypertrophy of the organ, and it generally becomes reduced in size before

puberty, so as to be entirely absorbed beneath the ribs, it is occasionally the reverse, and retains its original relative dimensions, and now as I have got through with the most essential points in the formation of my diagnosis, and as the treatment of Hypertrophy of the liver is nearly analogous to the treatment of acute Hepatitis, I will make a few remarks upon the treatment best calculated to afford relief. Among the first that I shall recommend is the abstraction of blood either topically or by venesection, to be followed by a few blisters after the system has been put in the right condition by bloodletting, they should be placed over the right Hypochondriac region, aided by occasional purgatives, but not so often as to set up any irritation in the mucous membranes of the bowels, an impression of this kind might

do a great deal in assisting the liver to perform its proper functions. Calomel as it is called the sheet anchor in disease of this organ may be given freely every two or three nights to be moved of in the morning by a dose of oil, or salts, or magnesia either alone or combined, all relaxation from business, with a part in the amusements that are going on are frequently calculated to remove the feeling which makes the patient so unhappy.

Moderate exercise in the open air either on horseback or on foot, should be kept up when the patient feels able. The warm bath with the Nitro Muriatic acid added to it from which a good deal of benefit may be hoped.

There is benefit often derived from the use of some of the preparations of Iodine and Potassium, in the form of Iodide of Potassium.

and Iodine in the form of tincture or made into an ointment, with basilicon ointment, which may be applied every morning and night, upon the Hypochondriac region. Paracelum is a remedy that is frequently administered with benefit, but then there are some who seem to doubt as to whether it effects any benefit, and if it does it is merely by acting as a tonic. The German Physicians, seem to be very partial to Muriate of Ammonia in small doses frequently repeated, they attribute to it some specific agency upon the function of the liver. Opium to procure rest, and low diet is very essential in the treatment of this form of disease. Whatever excites the Stomach or bowels, whether in the form of nutriment or medicine, should be used very sparingly; the diet should be regulated very

carefully. The strict observance of the Hygienic rules should be considered as all important, in the management of this disease, the diet should be uniritating but moderately nutritive, and as there are generally a desire for acidulous drinks, and fruits, or acid substances, the taste under due precautions may be indulged. Lemonade forms an agreeable and proper beverage.

Fumigations of Chlorine, has a similar agency to the effect produced from the Nitro Muriatic acid, they have been regarded as being better than the ablutions and bath of the Nitro Muriatic acid. When Chlorine is used it occasions a prickling sensation in the skin, and increase of transpiration a great afflux of fluids to the surface of the body; and at times a pustular eruption

with an increased secretion of saliva, urine, and also bile, with a slight inflammation of the mouth and fauces. It is evident that the use of Chlorine may be serviceable in a great many other diseases besides the one under consideration, as its excellent powers seem so active. It has been considered peculiarly adapted for the treatment of the disease where mercury has been given for a long time, and been given irregularly, without any benefit to the patient, or where the patient is of a broken down constitution, and the practitioner is anxious to dispense with the use of mercury. Mineral waters has also been advised, or in other words the sulphurous, or saline claps. The excellent effect of change of air, scenery, and society, is unquestionably calculated to be advantageous, in long protracted cases of

this disease, but care should be taken that the change be to a location, in which the patient can follow the regulations, which has been pointed out as being adapted to his case, otherwise there might be an evil which might more than counterbalance the good that he has received. The tincture of the Iodide of Iron may be given as a tonic, in doses from fifteen to twenty drops two or three times a day. Squill in combination with Mercury when there seems a tendency to general dropsy.

In the treatment of disease it should be done methodically and effectively, we should know the nature of the living tissues both in their healthy, and diseased state. The effects of the articles of the Materia Medica should be observed, in both of these conditions, and

not till then can the Practitioner prescribe with any prospect of success, numerous errors would be committed, if we were to acknowledge and to carry out that acknowledgement, if we were guided by experience alone, unless that experience had been well founded by a consideration of the Physiological, Pathological, and Therapeutical bearings of the subject. The objects of medicine are two fold, first to endeavor to cure the disease, no matter where it is situated, how it was produced, and secondly to relieve bodily suffering, where the disease is impossible to be cured, its great end is to alleviate our bodily ills which result from the infirmities of our nature and circumstances.