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Original Articles

REMARKS ON DISEASES OF THE BILIARY PAS- SAGES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SURGICAL TREATMENT.*

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In the present communication I wish to consider, first, gall-stones; secondly, cholecystitis; and thirdly, those affections of the pancreas dependent upon gall-stones.

The diseases of the biliary passages which are directly or indirectly dependent upon gall-stones, and which are amenable to medical treatment, are few; but the diversity of their manifestation is great. The condition is a mechanical one. In the very beginning gall-stones probably owe their existence to the presence of a mechanical irritant, usually in the gall-bladder, though possibly elsewhere—generally in the form of micro-organisms. In some of my cases the bacillus typhosus has been found in the very centre of a gall-stone, after an existence of many years. In others the infection of the gall-bladder has been owing to the colon bacillus; in others, to the pneumococcus; in still others, to other forms of micro-organisms. Gall-stones, by their presence in the gall-bladder, make that viscus peculiarly susceptible to infection, either through erosions of the mucous membrane by pressure, or in some other indirect and little understood way.

* Read at meeting of Maritime Medical Association, St. John, N.B., July 23rd, 1903.