

Cantani was of opinion that in pregnancy the enlarged uterus pressed the liver backwards, thus forcibly elongating the ligaments, especially the suspensory. This has been disproved by Meissner. The effect of a pregnant uterus is to push the liver up to the diaphragm.

In order to more correctly appreciate the strength of the ligaments and the causes of displacement, Faure made a number of experiments, nineteen in all, upon the dead subject.

He found that it required from seventy to seventy-five pounds weight to produce rupture of the ligaments—twenty-five times the weight of the liver itself.

The conclusion that he arrived at was that there existed in some cases a morbid predisposition, a depraved state of the general nutrition, and that other agencies acted in a more direct way.

He also thinks that in some cases the ligaments may be morbidly lax, and that especially the inferior vena cava may be elongated.

It will be found by reference to the accompanying statistics that tight-lacing is put down as a probable cause in six out of fifty-five cases. Tight-lacing, as a general rule, when it affects the liver, produces a change in form rather than in position. It is easy to suppose, however, that in cases where there is a predisposition to displacement, tight-lacing might have a direct effect in pressing the viscus downwards.

In all displacements the importance of the integrity of the inferior vena cava must be considered. It is so fixed in the diaphragm that it is impossible to change its position suddenly.

One might suppose that in some cases, especially those of dilatation of the right ventricle, there is an unusual laxity of the inferior vena cava, and that the increased weight of the liver might produce some elongation.

This has, however, not been demonstrated on post-mortem examinations.

Among the active causes of displacement may be mentioned coughing, sneezing, vomiting, etc. One case is recorded in which the sneezing of hay asthma was supposed to be the cause. A sudden contraction of the diaphragm would tend to elongation of the ligaments, if the abdominal wall were lax.

Landau gives as a cause a rapid emaciation and disappearance of fat from the abdomen, and it is quite probable that the support thus given, when removed, might tend to falling of the liver. A lax, pendulous abdomen is mentioned in nineteen out of fifty-five females given in the appended list.

Glenard is of opinion that a slight displacement of the liver is present in the majority of women who have borne children. He found the lower margin as low down as the anterior superior spine of the ilium in three