

*MYOCARDIAL DISEASE FROM THE CLINICAL STANDPOINT

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In response to your invitation to read a paper before your Society, I have selected a subject which has impressed me as being of great importance to us as practitioners—viz., “Myocardial Disease from the Clinical Standpoint.”

Hippocrates thought that the heart muscle could not be the seat of disease, though both Celsus (30 B.C. to 50 A.D.) and Galen (131 to 210 A.D.) recognized the possibility, the latter describing suppurative myocarditis, which he considered to be the disease of gladiators; Morgagni (1682 to 1771) and his contemporary, Senac, both described myocardial lesions. At the end of the eighteenth and in the early part of the nineteenth centuries, disease of the heart muscle received the attention of many of the famous physicians of the time, among whom were Corvisart, physician to the great Napoleon; Laennec, the father of auscultation; Louis, the great French physician of the time; Stokes, Heberden, Jenner, and others, whose names are familiar to every student of the history of medicine. These great clinicians not only described the post-mortem appearances presented in certain cases of myocardial disease, but attempted to correlate them with the signs and symptoms observed during life.

After this time, for a period, it is to the pathologists that we are chiefly indebted for the advancement of our knowledge of the subject. Rokitansky studied both acute and chronic inflammations of the myocardium, recognized their relationship to cardiac dilatation and rupture, and did much to advance our

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