

age of fifty by many years, but that the symptoms did not appear until sterile changes commenced to occur in the urinary tract as well as the rest of the body.

In a careful history of all prostatics, some evidence of previous disease is almost invariably obtainable, and the most prevalent of all is inflammation. Inflammatory changes may be due to several causes, but the most common is gonorrhœa. A venereal history is readily obtainable in at least a majority of cases coming to operation, and in many of the others it is not positively denied. Inflammatory changes other than venereal, however, play an important part in the etiology of prostatic enlargement. Repeated attacks of congestion in the prostate itself—or even in the prostatic urethra—in conjunction with catarrhal exudation so prevalent in this region, may be sufficient cause in many cases.

In many cases of prostatic enlargement a stricture is present, and by some authors is thought to be a predisposing cause. In any case, inflammatory changes, be they due to whatever cause they may, are considered as of primary importance in its etiology.

Symptoms and Diagnosis—The majority of patients with hypertrophy of the prostate gland present no symptoms whatever of their malady. These men may even live to advanced old age without ever suffering the slightest inconvenience or presenting the faintest symptom which would call their attention to the fact that all was not right with the urinary tract. In these cases there is no pain because of the extremely slow stretching in malignant disease, or even inflammatory hypertrophy. In these cases the obstruction is not so great, but it may be overcome by compensation in the bladder. In fact, the growth may be so situated as to cause no obstruction at all. On account of the absence of straining there is no congestion of the mucous membrane around the neck of the bladder, and consequently no irritability of the bladder itself. Deaver is authority for the statement that only about one person in every seven who has an enlarged prostate suffers from it to an appreciable extent, and even among this number there are many who are unaware of their condition—so insidiously do the symptoms develop—until acute retention of urine reveals the fact that the cause lies in an enlargement of the prostate. In some of these cases, too, the attention of the patient may be first arrested by dribbling of urine, wetting the clothes by day and the bed-clothes by night; when examination will reveal the fact that this is not incontinence, but rather an overflow, and the cause an hypertrophied prostate gland. In others, the symptoms, while mild, and causing but the slightest inconvenience, may yet be present from the first; and thus the patient may, from the very commencement of the disease, be aware that all is not right, and