

CLINICAL LECTURE.

Clinical Lecture on Fever-Hepatic Complications. By Dr. GORDON,
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All writers on hepatitis seem agreed in enumerating it as among the consequences of fever, intermittent or continued.

Perhaps the most frequent affection of the liver met with, as a concomitant or consequence of fever, is general congestion of the organ. Its immediate cause most usually is, some grievous error of diet, and frequently both of quantity and quality. The regulation of a patient's diet, when recovering from fever, is a matter of the greatest importance: the cravings for food are often most inordinate, and people otherwise most rational are often unable to control them. As a general rule, some form of farinaceous food may be given early in the morning, and repeated every four hours through the day. When meat is allowed, it ought to be given not later than one or two o'clock, and the interval between it and the next meal should be somewhat longer than usual. Whatever exercise the patient is allowed to take, should not be taken soon after this meal; he should rather be encouraged to absolute rest or repose. Undue exercise after a hearty meal, as well as over-distention or stimulation of the stomach, induces a congested state of the liver, which is recognized by the following symptoms:—great weight and fullness in the right hypochondriac and epigastric region, with some tenderness on pressure; alternations of nausea and desire for food; thirst, yet a feeling of oppression or fulness produced even by a drink of water, but much more by wine or malt liquors, particularly if in a state of effervescence; another symptom almost invariably present is, enlargement and distention of the hæmorrhoidal veins. Of course we seldom have an opportunity of witnessing the actual condition of the liver in this affection, but we have no reason to suppose it to be different from what we observe in the ordinary forms of congestion of the liver, from disease of the heart, or other cause, preventing or delaying the return of its venous blood.

Great relief is usually obtained from the recumbent posture, and the application of a few leeches to the enlarged hæmorrhoidal veins, which may be repeated as often as is necessary. The bowels are usually constipated, and are best relieved by a few grains of blue pill and dried soda at night, followed by small doses of sulphate of magnesia in the morning, dissolved in a large quantity of boiling water. A wine glass full of bitter infusion, as quassia or columba, with orange-peel, about half an hour before dinner, will generally be found of great advantage. Hepatic congestion, if neglected, is very likely to terminate in chronic hepatitis.

Organic lesions of the liver are a very rare complication of the fever in this country. We have seen abscesses of the liver in this hospital sufficiently often to require its enumeration among these complications or sequelæ. They occur under three different circumstances:—

First.—As an immediate consequence of phlebotic inflammation