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LEVULOSURIA, AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF HEPATIC CONDITIONS.

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The functions of the liver are numerous and the testing of them, clinically, is most complicated and difficult. Many special workers have "sought in vain," one might say, to discover satisfactory methods by which the cell activity of this organ might be determined. The correlation of the chemical findings with organic change is a task not less difficult and towards this most desirable result many investigators are energetically striving.

When one reflects seriously upon the results obtained by the routine methods applied, one must conclude that the ordinary clinical examination of the liver affords but little that is conclusive concerning that organ. The patient is jaundiced and the stools are acholic. These signs may well arise from several causes outside the liver; or again, the liver margins are felt or not felt, in many instances on account of surrounding conditions, or on account of displacement. There may be ascites. Hepatic causes may have no part in this; and so one might multiply instances illustrating the uncertainty of results in the ordinary examination made upon this organ.

More and more with the advances made in scientific medicine, it has not only become essential that the functions of the various organs be understood and determined, but it is becoming possible to do so. Among many function tests applied to the liver, those for the carbohydrate metabolism seem to be most satisfactory, and of these the levulose test stands out with most promise. It has the advantage of being easily applied, and while no test by itself is conclusive, yet, judged by the accumulating evidence regarding it, one may at least say that it is very helpful in answering the question concerning the functional activity of the liver cells.

The purpose of the observations made during the past two years in the wards of the Royal Victoria Hospital has been to work over a por-