

**A CLINICAL TREATISE ON
DISEASES OF THE LIVER, IN
THREE VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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A Clinical Treatise on Diseases of the Liver, in Three Volumes, Vol. I by Dr. Fried. Theod. Frerichs

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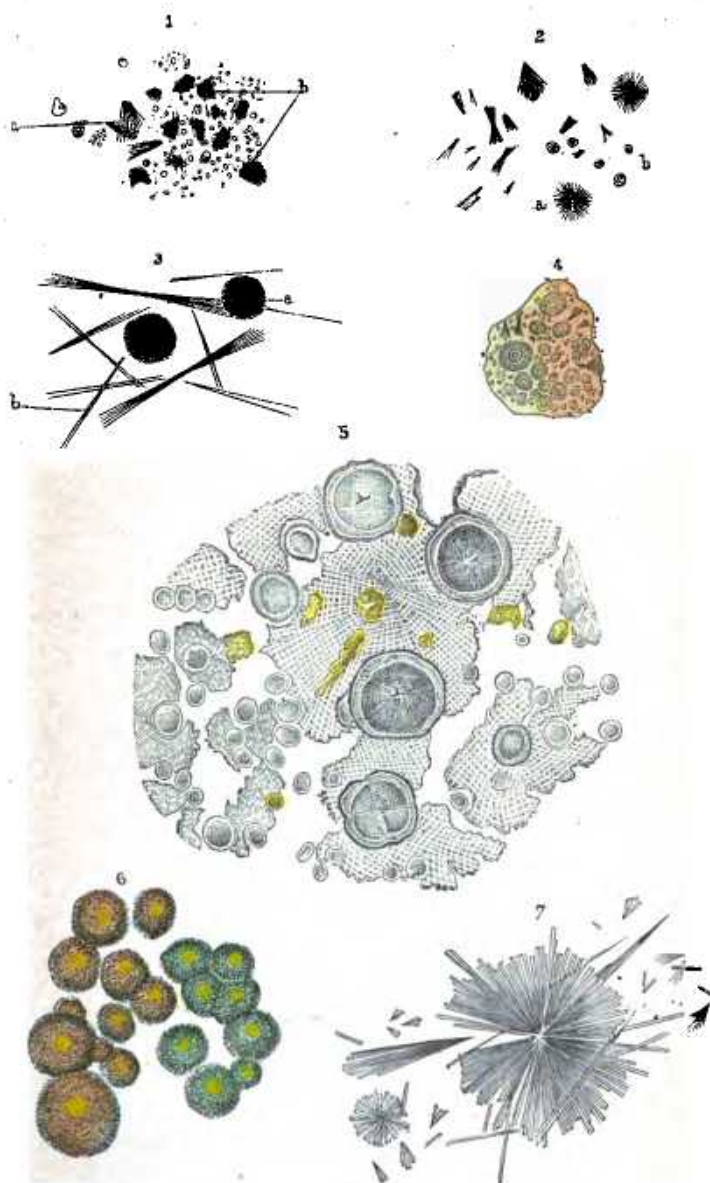
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DR. FRIED. THEOD. FRERICHS

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A
CLINICAL TREATISE
ON
DISEASES OF THE LIVER.

BY
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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TRANSLATED BY
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1879.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

WITH the present Clinical Treatise on Diseases of the Liver, it is intended to commence a series of Works which shall contain the results of my clinical experience and pathological observations. The manner in which I propose to treat the subject, will appear from the works themselves; and it therefore seems needless to discuss this any more in detail at present; it is only necessary for me to make a few brief explanatory remarks.

At the present day, it is agreed, that the science of life is undivided, and that no real defined limits exist between the varying phenomena of health and disease, but that both are governed by the same laws. We endeavor to investigate the conditions under which disease takes place in the same rigidly empirical manner, that we study the general vital processes of which disease is merely a fragmentary constituent. In addition to simple observation at the bedside of the patient, we have recourse to the assistance of physical, chemical, microscopical, and experimental modes of investigation, in order to collect materials for the construction of a scientific system of medicine.

There can be no doubt that a great advance has been made by this mode of research, which, although not novel, has at no time been adopted to the same extent, and with such ample means at our disposal, or attended by equally important results, as during the last ten years. Our general views of disease have been simplified since we have ceased to disconnect it from the phenomena of life, as something foreign and endowed with a peculiar and individual existence; while the several pathological processes have been rendered more intelligible, since they have been referred back to their physiological origin, and since their fundamental structural lesions have been carefully and thoroughly examined. The volume of the work now presented to the public furnishes ample stores of individual facts, difficult to understand and arrange, and still more difficult to turn to practical account. It is a characteristic of human nature to exhibit partialities, and to elaborate and make use of sometimes one, and sometimes another mode of investigation in preference to any other: "Suo quisque studio delectatus alterum contemnit;" but no permanent injury results from this.

Clinical and practical medicine have made a difficult stand in opposition to the results arrived at by modern means of scientific research. Their representatives, from the very tendency of their studies, have, out of their much-trodden field of observation, been unable to contribute so much as the auxiliary sciences towards the completion of the entire edifice of medicine; hence, literature is made up almost exclusively of these auxiliary sciences. The field of actual medical practice has become overgrown by foreign elements, which, owing to the constantly increasing gap between science and practice, have shot up luxuriantly. As at other times of remarkable scientific progress, and as was particularly the case at the commencement of the seventeenth century, so likewise at the present day, very different views are entertained as to the relations which ought to subsist between scientific and practical medicine.

A large proportion of medical men are upholders of the system of practice transmitted from the ancients. They have regard solely to the empirical method of treatment, and take little cognizance of medical science. They look upon this as something extraneous, from which they select what is practically useful, or what may serve for assisting diagnosis, or for the elucidation of individual symptoms, or some kindred purpose, but their general views are not at all influenced by it.

Others again maintain, that clinical studies should have reference solely to scientific medicine, or to some individual department of it, such as pathological anatomy; they throw treatment into the background, inasmuch as the traditional systems of treatment have appeared untenable when subjected to critical examination. Observations in pathological anatomy have been misconstrued by such persons, and this, on the one hand, has led to complete discouragement as to the effects of remedies, and to a system of doing nothing, whilst on the other hand, an excess of scientific acquirements has, notwithstanding all the warnings of history, misled some physicians into the adoption of the so-called rational system of therapeutics, as the only correct system of treatment.

In addition to these main directions taken by scientific medicine, of which there are many varieties, according as the anatomical, the chemical, or the physical side of the question has been most studied and followed out, numerous therapeutic sects have made their appearance, which, renouncing all traditional experience as well as science, have endeavored to construct systems of treatment of their own.

The point of view in which the subject of clinical research has been considered in the present work is different from any yet alluded to. Scientific medicine in its entire extent constitutes its groundwork; this paves the way for clinical observation without reference to any practical results. Just as Natural Philosophy and Chemistry did not yield any practical fruits, until these sciences were studied without any regard to immediate benefits to be derived from them, so it is with Medicine. Isolated phenomena of disease, or more or less artificial groups of these phe-

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moments, do not constitute objects of clinical observation, but the diseased individual himself, in all his aspects; every phase of the varying processes of life, is to be investigated by means of the auxiliaries which natural science has placed at our disposal. The object of clinical medicine is to concentrate into one focus the results which are obtained from these various modes of investigation, and to reconcile and perfect the one-sided views resulting from the division of labor.

Between the scientific department of clinical medicine, and that of real practice, there exists a chasm, which is bridged over in a doubtful manner, at a few places only. It is true, that our treatment at the bedside always becomes more firmly based, the more our insight into morbid processes is extended; but we are still far from being able to direct it solely by the indications of our pathological knowledge, and precipitation in this matter has always been attended by serious results. The main part of the science of disease is of a purely descriptive character; a scientific interpretation of facts and a clear insight into the intimate connection subsisting between different phenomena, which must precede all attempts at a rational method of cure, having been attained in a few instances only. Hence, treatment is still, as heretofore, handed over, for the most part, to empiricism, but not, however, to that traditional so-called experience, which has no clear knowledge of the subject, which is followed by no certain results, and which does not make any rigid discrimination between the heterogeneous elements which are jumbled together, or between one form of disease and another. Therapeutic researches must be regulated in the same manner as pathological. Scientific medicine, although it has not rendered a rational system of treatment possible, has already furnished us with important data in anticipation of such a system. The more careful tracing of the progress of morbid processes, and the insight into their modes of origin and retrogression, enable us to determine the principles of treatment with greater clearness than formerly; a more accurate diagnosis secures to us the homogeneous nature of the quantities that we have to deal with, while the study of pharmacy provides us with the first materials for an insight into the mode of action of drugs.

In treatment, we have not to do with such a novel subject as pathology, but we have first to prove the correctness, and ascertain the value, of the observations which have been transmitted to us. The materials which scientific medicine at first encountered, resembled in many points the labors of the alchemists in anticipation of modern chemistry. In both cases there were observations which, from being collected with a limited object in view, were consequently defective, and frequently not to be depended on. In the one case there was the idea of the philosopher's stone, and in the other there was the supposition of a cure, which an unprejudiced and rational interpretation of facts would have entirely dispelled. Medicine ought not, any more than chemistry, to neglect the labors of our forefathers, but must continue to build upon

the foundation of history. The therapeutic observations of the ancients are in many respects more valuable than the pathological, because treatment has to do less with the details of local processes than with the examination of the general condition of the body, to which the ancients paid particular attention.

These are the principles which I have endeavored to carry out in the present Clinical Treatise on Diseases of the Liver, and which shall also be followed in the subsequent volumes of this series. I know that it is an easier matter to enunciate principles than it always is to remain true to them. Perhaps the will is better than the deed.

The difficulties which surround the pathology of the liver are well known. The minute structure and the physiological functions of this gland are only partially understood, and it is only in recent years that some light has been thrown upon its relations to the metamorphosis of matters within the body. A large proportion of the abnormal conditions of the liver give rise to no marked derangements of the bodily functions obvious to the eye, but they produce alterations in the animal economy, which do not declare themselves in a prominent manner until they have reached a certain height. Hence, in hepatic disease, we do not always expect to meet with accurately-defined symptoms, such as we are wont to observe in affections of the lungs, heart, brain, &c.

Where I have enunciated novel views, which as yet it has been impossible to establish with certainty, as in accounting for icterus in cases where there is no structural lesion of the liver, I solicit a careful examination. I have endeavored to distinguish between statements based upon facts and individual opinion. Experiments in support of my opinions will be appended to the close of the volume.

As regards the plan of the work, I have in the distribution of my materials, had anatomy and physiology less in view than medical practice. This explains why the subject of icterus is treated at such length; and why I have annexed to this the consideration of acholia and of acute atrophy of the liver, which last might with more propriety have been considered under the head of inflammation of the organ. At the end of the work, I shall classify the various morbid processes according to their mutual relations.

The present volume contains the historical account of diseases of the liver, the definition of the dimensions and weight of the organ, physical diagnosis, the chapters on icterus, acholia, acute and chronic atrophy, the fatty liver, the pigment-liver,¹ and the hyperæmias and hæmorrhages of the liver.

¹ Under the head of the pigment-liver, I have been compelled to expatiate and to describe derangements, which may be said to have no direct connection with hepatic disease. I trust that the rare opportunities which I have enjoyed of observing large accumulations of pigment in the blood, and the small number of cases which as yet have been accurately described, will be regarded as an excuse for this digression.

The more important diseases of the liver will find a place in the second volume :—Inflammation, with its consequences, cirrhosis, the colloid or lardaceous degeneration, morbid growths, the diseases of the bile-ducts and of the portal veins, &c. At the conclusion of the entire work, I purpose to collect the general results derived from the isolated data, and to point out their value in reference to the pathology and treatment of the organ.

Lastly, I would desire to thank those gentlemen who have aided me in the preparation of this work, and particularly my friends and colleagues, Herr Reichert, councillor of state, and Professor G. Staedeler of Zurich. I am indebted to the former gentlemen's extensive acquaintance with the entire subject of minute anatomy for repeated suggestions and assistance, while his skill in making preparations has essentially contributed to the success of the Atlas of Plates drawn by Herr Assmann. My friend Staedeler has assisted me on many occasions with chemical advice, and I have to thank him for the elementary analyses of the abnormal products of metamorphosis detected in the liver and in the urine.

Dr. Valentin has performed a large proportion of the chemical researches in my laboratory. Messrs. Professor Rühle, Graetzer, Dr. Hasse, Cohn, and other physicians of All Saints' Hospital have assisted me, by supplying numerous measurements and weights of the viscera, or by calling my attention to interesting cases of disease. To all of them I beg to express my warmest thanks.

THE AUTHOR.

BRESLAU, *Mars*, 1856.