

# Alexander Leslie Blackwood

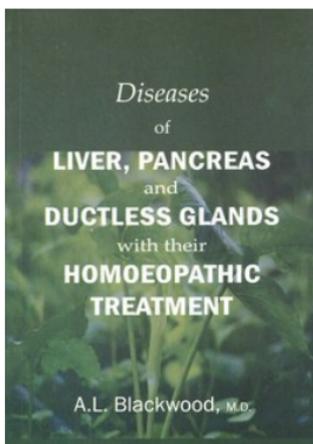
## Diseases of Liver, Pancreas, Ductless Glands

Reading excerpt

[Diseases of Liver, Pancreas, Ductless Glands](#)

of [Alexander Leslie Blackwood](#)

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Narayana Verlag GmbH, Blumenplatz 2, D-79400 Kandern, Germany

Tel. +49 7626 9749 700

Email [info@narayana-verlag.com](mailto:info@narayana-verlag.com)

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# DISEASES OF THE LIVER

## POSITION AND RELATION TO SURROUNDING ORGANS

The liver occupies a position in the lower portion of the thorax below the diaphragm. It is wedge-shaped. The major portion of the organ is to the right of the median line.

It has three surfaces, superior, inferior and posterior. Its superior surface is convex, smooth and fits evenly to the under surface of the diaphragm. The latter separates it from the right lung, the heart, and a small portion of the left lung. The right and left lobes are separated by suspensory ligament.

The inferior surface is irregular and unevenly concave. There are five lobes, namely, the right, left, quadrate, caudate, and spigelian.

The hepatic flexure of the colon, a portion of the duodenum and the upper portion of the right kidney are below the right lobe, while below the left lobe are the fundus of the stomach, the gastro-hepatic omentum and the smaller curvature of the stomach.

The posterior surface is broken by two vertical grooves; one of which contains the shrunken ductus venosus while the other contains the inferior vena cava.

In health its weight is about three pounds.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE LIVER

The liver not only has an important part in metabolism but produces a specific secretion known as the bile.

**Nitrogen Metabolism.**—In the disintegration of albumin within the system there are developed certain amido-acids which in the further course of their decomposition produce ammonia. These amido-acids are known as leucin, tyrosin,

# THE ADRENAL BODIES

These are also known as the suprarenal capsules. They are two triangular or semilunar, flattened, ductless glands, situated behind the peritoneum anteriorly to the upper portion of each kidney. They are enclosed in a thin fibrous capsule, which is adherent and sends partitions inwards. There is a cortical portion which contains groups of finely granular polyhedral cells. Between these cells and the fibrous portion are channels believed to be lymph-channels. There is also a medullary portion which is composed of connective tissue bundles. Between these are coarse granular and branched cells.

The histology and function of these bodies is not definitely determined. Their complete removal is followed by death in all animals in from a few hours to two or three days. Preceding death there is a diminution in the vascular tone, muscular weakness and pronounced prostration. Their internal secretion is believed to have a definite action upon the circulatory system, slowing the heart beat and causing a rise of blood pressure when the vagi are intact, but when the action of the vagus is interfered with either by section or atropine, then the heart rate is accelerated and the blood pressure is increased. It is also believed to possess the property of destroying or of neutralizing certain poisons, especially muscular poisons. The action of this secretion is decidedly transitory. The substance is present in perceptible quantities in the blood of the renal veins and its amount is increased by stimulation of the splanchnic nerves. The substance that produced the decided effects upon the heart rate and the blood pressure has been isolated and is widely used. It is described as an unstable basic body. The suprarenal extract

has been employed therapeutically in hemorrhages and for complaints occurring during the menopause.

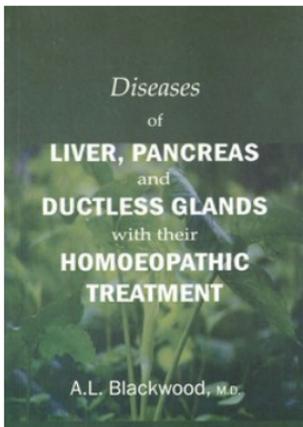
#### ADDISON'S DISEASE

Definition.—This is a constitutional disease, characterized by a gradual loss of strength without a corresponding loss of flesh, gastric distress with occasional vomiting, and enfeebled circulation, a bronzing of the skin, and a functional or organic derangement of the suprarenal bodies.

Etiology.—There is some doubt regarding the etiology of this disease. It has been observed in persons of all ages, but more frequently in males than females; and among the laboring classes and those who are subject to injuries of the back, and across the loins. In eighty per cent of the cases it is associated with tuberculosis of the suprarenal capsules. In other cases there is a chronic interstitial inflammation, tumors, atrophy or cysts of the capsules. In certain cases no lesion of the capsules can be demonstrated; in some of these there is a lesion of the abdominal sympathetic nervous system which supplies these bodies. Malaria has been considered as a possible cause.

Pathology.—When the changes are due to tuberculosis they are such as are found with tubercular lesions in other organs. In some cases the adrenals show atrophy, fatty or sclerotic changes. It is held by some that the symptoms are dependent upon a disturbance of the abdominal sympathetic nerves, while others claim it is dependent upon an insufficient secretion of the suprarenal bodies. It is probable that a destruction of the bodies, an interference with their function or that of the sympathetic nerves of the part are all that is necessary to produce the group of symptoms.

Symptoms.—These appear slowly; usually the first symptom complained of is a gradual failing of the strength, which may have been noticed appearing gradually for weeks or months. At about the same time or shortly after,



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with their homoeopathic treatment

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