

adjust its action, so as to carry on the function of circulation without manifest disturbance.* But on the occurrence of any general disturbance of the system, the signs and symptoms of a diseased heart are suddenly developed," Stokes, p. 153.

Walshe says, "Though these diseases be anatomically incurable, their worst functional effects may be long, in some cases indefinitely, averted by measures accordant with a common-sense view of their nature, and ratified by experience. Whatever be the valve implicated, the treatment is directed not towards its own disease, but towards the moderation or prevention of hypertrophy of the muscular substance of the heart, or dilatation of the cavities. Practically, the treatment of valvular diseases comes to be that of hypertrophy and dilatation."

In this disease, perhaps more than any other, the patient may be said to bear his life, or rather its prolongation in his own hands, provided necessity does not impose its iron shackles to prevent his using due precautions. Should he be reckless and improvident, vicious and debauched, stimulating the circulating system by physical and moral excitement, he will soon feel the effects of his own imprudence; while the contrary deportment; habits of temperance and sobriety, and a prudent recollection, of the necessities of his case may extend his life for many years.

I add, by way of appendix, two cases of the "*cas rares*" description, which are interesting from their symptoms.

CASE V.

Severe Ague?—Adherent Pericardium—Aneurism of Aorta—Floating Concretion within Aorta.

February 21, 1853.—Miss McG—, aged 18.—On 1st of October last was attacked with rheumatism (acute) which lasted six weeks; was attacked again about Christmas, and was said to have had considerable pain about the region of the heart, which was not attended to. When I saw her, she was hot, breathing very fast, with frequent full pulse, a very loud bellows murmur, especially at second right cartilage, where no second sound could be detected; at other points, it could.

* Corvisart observes:—When we reflect how small the aperture frequently is in these contractions, we cannot but wonder how life can go on for many years with such an organic derangement. If such an obstacle to the circulation were to form suddenly in a healthy person, speedy death would probably be the consequence; but as these affections are of slow growth, nature seems capable of accommodating herself, to a certain degree, to such a powerful impediment gradually forming to oppose the free exercise of her laws.—Hebb's Trans. p. 193.