

CONCERNING COMPENSATORY HYPERPLASIA OF THE INTIMA.¹

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Plate LXIX.

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In 1885 Thoma set forth his views concerning the fundamental principles underlying arteriosclerosis. From the first Thoma's attention was concentrated on the intimal thickening which occurred in various arteries, and more particularly upon those developing in the aorta. His studies of these lesions were chiefly concerned with the general characters of the disease, to some extent with the nature of the tissues involved, and occasionally with the degenerative processes which develop in these intimal thickenings. According to his observations the intimal thickenings had common characteristics in their development, but only two types of the disease were recognized. In one instance the intimal thickening was diffuse and uniform, sometimes encircling the entire artery; in other cases nodular thickenings were evident, which might or might not be associated with the openings of smaller arteries. In his opinion the intimal thickening of both types developed in a process of connective tissue hyperplasia which was associated with a widening of the vessel lumen.

Thoma had previously convinced himself that shortly after birth there was an increase in the connective tissue of the intima of the aorta, extending from the mouth of the ductus arteriosus to and into the hypogastric arteries. His explanation for this development of connective tissue was that the loss of the placental circulation at birth led to the disproportion of the blood content to the vessel wall; that is, he believed that after birth the amount of blood in the vessels forming the foetal circulation was less than was

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