

Selected Articles.

ARTERIOSCLEROSIS.

There is a wide difference in opinion as to the meaning of the term arteriosclerosis. Atheroma is used synonymously by some writers, but it would be wise if a distinction were made between the two conditions, and the term atheroma restricted to the end process of arteriosclerosis. The disease of the arteries begins by a deposit in the middle and internal coat, which ultimately leads to a fatty degeneration, to which the term atheroma should be applied. There is still much obscurity in the relation of these changes. Does sclerosis always precede the fatty degeneration? What relation do sclerosis and atheroma bear to miliary aneurism? These questions must be left to the future. One thing is certain: the amount of work that has been done on the arterial system is very much less than its importance justifies. It is one of the chief causes of death if we only include those cases of arterial rupture which are most obviously associated with the condition; if we add to the list the deaths that may fairly be attributed to vascular disease, such as contracted kidney, heart lesion, etc., it furnishes a mortality far in excess of all the acute diseases. The difficulty in many cases is in deciding whether the changes in the vessel wall are primary or secondary. In Bright's disease it is possible that the vascular sclerosis may result from the defective elimination due to the inflammation, or the kidney changes may be due to the increased vascular pressure. It is possible that the practical application of Gaertner's tonometer may do much to clear up the obscurity which now exists regarding vascular degeneration.

As a rule, arteriosclerosis comes on in advanced life, and the old saying that a man is as old as his arteries is quite as true as most maxims. Occasionally extensive sclerosis is noted in early youth, but instances are exceptional. In the fourth decade cases become more frequent, and in the fifth decennium the condition is common. The process in some degree is always present in the aged, though the examples that are given of men who are active mentally and physically after fourscore show that the process may be long delayed. Bismarck and Gladstone are often mentioned, but one of the most striking examples was Schaumberg, the celebrated general - of