

UPON
ARRESTED OR REPAIRED DISSECTING ANEURYSMS,
WITH THE REPORTS OF TWO CASES.¹

BY

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Among the diverse forms of aneurysms one of the rarest is that termed, first by Laennec, the "aneurysma dissecans," a form in which the inner walls of the aorta or one of the large arteries having ruptured, the outer coats remain intact, the blood dissecting a passage between the layers of the middle coat for, it may be, long distances. There are altogether about two hundred cases of this condition that I can find recorded, and in by far the larger number of these death evidently occurred either immediately or within a few hours, most frequently by the blood forcing its way into the ascending aorta and thence into the pericardial sac. Only in a small percentage of the cases is death not the direct and speedy result, compensation being established and the dissecting channel undergoing repair either by the development of secondary openings into the vessel, or by the organisation of the blood, which after escaping between the walls has become clotted. There are singularly few cases on record of this last mode of repair; it is more common to find that, where death is not the direct result of the condition, the dissecting channel gains an endothelium, a channel being formed, opening above and below into the aorta or one of the larger arteries, and resembling the primitive vessel so closely that it is not to be wondered at that some of the earlier cases of the condition were described as congenital abnormalities.

How rare is this condition may be inferred from the fact that it did not gain recognition until this century, that Peacock in 1863 was only able to collect eight cases, and Boström in 1885 only seventeen, although it ought to be added that the latter observer made a somewhat arbitrary classification and purposely omitted two or three cases, which from their course and characters I feel bound to include with the others in one group. Aneurysms which show evidence of progressing repair must, I think, be considered along with those in which repair is complete, or in other words, to employ Boström's

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