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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ART. XXXV.—*Cases of Heart Disease.* By A. F. HOLMES, M.D., Professor of Medicine, McGill College.

Among the remarkable deviations from normal structure which pathological anatomy continually brings to our view, there is none more singular than the obstructions to the circulation, which are frequently observed in the orifices of the heart. *A priori*, we should readily allow that life might be continued, notwithstanding a considerable coarctation of those outlets; but even then we might expect considerable disturbance of the system. Such we find to be the case in numerous instances, but observation has shown, that very great difficulties occur in endeavoring to predicate the amount of heart disease from symptoms, or from physical signs. One case will exhibit all the distressing effects of impeded circulation, when the amount of obstruction is by no means great; while in other cases, life may be continued, and even enjoyed, with a degree of constriction that subsequently creates wonder as to how life had been sustained. Nature has providently applied a remedy to the unforeseen impediments which arise in the arterial and venous systems. The universal interlaeng of the smaller branches of the larger trunks, and their numerous anastomoses amply explain the little inconvenience experienced from the obliteration not only of a principal vessel of a limb, but of the aorta itself. It is true, a certain time is required for the completion of this process; but the successful operations for aneurism of the extremities demonstrate the shortness of the time required in those parts to repair the injury which the circulation has sustained. Although Surgery has not shown the same thing in regard to the aorta, yet experiment and pathological anatomy have abundantly. The well-known experiment by Sir A. Cooper of tying the aorta of a dog (which was subsequently killed, when the animal had entirely recovered its health,) proved the possibility of the fact; and although the similar experiment by