

SOME POINTS RESPECTING THE LOCALIZATION OF  
SYPHILIS ON THE AORTA

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EVER since Vesalius first described internal aneurysm, referring particularly to aneurysms of the thorax, numerous observations have been made upon the manner of origin and the seat of aneurysm upon the aorta. For many years statistics have been collected indicating the frequency with which aneurysms are found upon different arteries, in a hope that the anatomical distribution of these lesions would give some clue for their occurrence. Although Pare observed that internal aneurysm was not uncommonly associated with the pox, irrefutable evidence of the importance of this disease for the development of aneurysm was not established until 1875 when Francis Welch, in his study of syphilis occurring in the army, described a specific type of reaction in the aorta resulting from lues. For a time following the observations of Welch little support was given to his statement but during the last few decades the truth of his findings has been confirmed by many authors by different methods of analysis. The earlier studies dealt with the naked-eye appearance of the aorta which, when it was involved in syphilitic disease, showed characters quite distinctive and different from those seen in arteriosclerosis. Then, too, the microscope assisted in defining a type of lesion peculiar to syphilis and distinguishable from other diseases of the arteries. True gummata were also occasionally found, leaving no doubt as to the nature of the process acting upon the arterial wall and eventually bringing about such weakening as to permit of aneurysm. The final demon-