

# CANADA

# MEDICAL & SURGICAL JOURNAL

APRIL, 1888.

Original Communications.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL REVERSION.

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Writers on evolution, and especially Darwin, have endeavored to explain many curious facts in the forms, colors, and general appearance of animals by reversion to a condition existing in ancestors more or less remote. As this explanation has seemed to be the only one that met the cases, it has been largely accepted. But, so far as I know, physiological and pathological reversion in the sense in which the terms are used in this paper, has not been employed to any appreciable degree by writers of any class to explain phenomena which seem to me to gather fresh interest around them, and appear in a new light when thus viewed.\* By physiological reversion I mean a return to a condition functionally similar to, if not identical with, that existing in some lower form; and by pathological reversion, an analogous result dependent on a disordered condition (disease).

It is now almost superfluous to point out that the embryo of the highest mammals passes through stages of development closely allied to the permanent forms of groups of animals lower in the

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\* It was not till long after this paper had been written, and a considerable time after it had been read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal, that I became aware that the principle involved in the discussion had been previously announced by Dr. Milner Fothergill of London in a communication printed in the *Medical Press and Circular* for August, 1886. I am glad, however, to be able to make this acknowledgment on behalf of so bold and original a writer as Dr. Fothergill.