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ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ART. XVI.—*On disease of the supra-renal capsules, with a case.* By D. C. MACCALLUM, M.D., M.R.C.S.L., Professor of Clinical Surgery, McGill College. Physician to the Montreal General Hospital, &c.

The thymus gland was, with great honesty, very properly termed by Joseph Franck, the *corpus incomprehensibile*. Nor is it the only organ in the body to which the term is applicable. The functions of these other bodies allied to the thymus, including with Eckert the *pituitary gland*, which are known as the vascular or ductless glands, are apparently as little understood by authorities in physiology now as ever they were. And this, notwithstanding the repeated investigations of careful and talented observers. As regards the supra-renal or atrabiliary capsules, so diverse are the statements made by different anatomists and physiologists concerning their structure and functions, they would appear to be peculiarly entitled to the appellation of incomprehensible bodies. These capsules or glands are small, flattened, triangular bodies, which vary considerably in size in different individuals. They ordinarily measure, however, about one inch and a half in height; an inch in width, and from one to two lines in thickness. The weight of each is from one to two drachms. According to Rokitauský they are occasionally deficient, especially when there is a deficiency in other organs also; they are generally present when one kidney is absent; and the fusion which so often occurs in the kidneys, is not found to take place in them. "Accessory supra-renal capsules, indicating an apparent excess of development, are of frequent occurrence. Several flattened accessory supra-renal capsules are then found in the renal and solar plexuses, and on the ganglia of the latter, varying in size from a millet or hemp-seed to that of a pea." Meckel has also found supernumerary