REVIEWS OF
BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE.

Cancer of the Uterus, its Pathology, Symptomatology, Diagnosis, and Treatment. By Thomas Stephen Cullen, M.B. New York: D. Appleton & Co.

Through the whole of the century which has just closed, the subject of cancer has occupied the minds and pens of the most able workers. It is perhaps since Waldeyer in 1878 conclusively showed that all carcinomata owed their development to a proliferation of epithelium, that the literature of carcinoma of the uterus has reached such colossal proportions. If we consider its great and unquestionably growing prevalence (perhaps every general practitioner sees two or three cases every year), the suffering it involves, its inevitable issue, and the unsatisfactory nature of our methods of dealing with it, it is no wonder that the labourers have been many and able, and the output excessive. To Howard Kelly and his colleagues in Johns Hopkins Hospital, gynaecology owes a profound debt of gratitude, and from the same hospital comes this splendid work of Cullen's on cancer of the uterus, which maintains the reputation of the institution with which he is connected, and enhances his own. An excellent and necessary chapter on the normal anatomy of the uterus, in which the histological appearances of the uterine mucosa (so intimately associated with cancer) are very clearly dealt with, brings the reader to indispensable instructions as to the removal and examination of uterine tissue. I am sure I have seen unfortunate consequences arise, both in hospital and private homes, from careless manipulation of specimens, and therefore Dr. Cullen's advice is important, "If one is not sure about specimens, it is always better to throw them away at once, though it be necessary to curette again." To mix up a specimen of early cancer with hypertrophy of the mucosa has obviously only too serious results, and this mistake I have known to occur twice.

Dr. Cullen has adopted a simple but at the same time a comprehensive classification of uterine cancer:—(1) Squamous-cell carcinoma of the cervix; (2) adeno-carcinoma of the cervix; (3) adeno-carcinoma of the body; (4) squamous-cell carcinoma of the body (rare).

A very full and exhaustive account is given of squamous-cell carcinoma of the cervix, which is, of course, the most common variety of uterine cancer. The macroscopical appearances of the condition, in its three degrees, with numerous illustrative cases, are described with great exactitude. The microscopic structure is described in great detail, and equally well illustrated. The clinical aspects of the condition are described, but, as the author himself admits, the space allotted to symptomatology is very small. In explanation of this, he makes the following suggestive remark—"We find that diagnostic symptoms at best are meagre, and in the early stages give little or no clue to the real nature of the disease. Hence the value of curettage, when there is the slightest uterine haemorrhage that cannot be satisfactorily explained,"
The author gives a very elaborate and extensive description of the differential diagnosis in squamous-cell carcinoma of the cervix, and this chapter is well worth careful perusal.

Abdominal hysterectomy, after the plan of Werder, is advocated by the author in all cases where the patient is not too stout. This operation has not, however, been much practised here, and although it is a praiseworthy and very interesting method of saving infection, it remains to stand the test of time.

It is not to be wondered at that, issuing from the Johns Hopkins Hospital, where this is a speciality, very careful instructions should be given with regard to the ureters. Catheterisation of the ureters is, alas, not so easy a matter. The description of vaginal hysterectomy, as practised by Howard Kelly, is as nearly perfect as can be, and the honest and careful way in which the risks and accidents attending the operation are described and illustrated, with cases, are to an operator interesting and most instructive.

The remote results of the operation, whether abdominal or by the vaginal route, are not so remarkable. They are most honestly and fairly recorded, and as such they are worthy of great consideration and are of much value. Nothing does more for the furtherance of surgery than a straightforward record, such as Dr. Cullen produces. Vaginal hysterectomy, whether by the method here advocated, or by Doyen’s method, is a comparatively safe and easy operation immediately, but the remote result is quite another question, and Dr. Cullen’s report of his cases is most important and to operators must be carefully considered. I believe the results attained by the operators at Johns Hopkins are the best attainable, and these must be examined by each individual operator. It is too large a question to be discussed here. Early operation will always be the great desideratum, but in uterine cancers, unlike the mamma, this will always be unattainable, for the early diagnosis, as Dr. Cullen admits, is always uncertain, but even in advanced cases Dr. Cullen’s results have been fairly successful. It is very satisfactory to find that Dr. Cullen warns against the pernicious idea of operating where the removal cannot be complete. It is bad enough to have the disease returning in the peritoneum after a so-called complete case, but it is inexcusable after an incomplete operation.

One of the many admirable features of this book is, that the whole of the facts deduced are entirely from the author’s own material. The work is founded upon an examination of 182 cases—128 were of so-called squamous-celled carcinoma of cervix; nineteen, adenoma carcinoma of cervix; thirty-five, adenoma carcinoma of body of uterus.

There is no compilation; the whole work is produced from cases diagnosed, operated on, and microscopically examined by himself. There can be no doubt about the fact that the exhaustive descriptions of each case clinically, and the minute and carefully described post-mortem appearances, add vastly to the worth of the volume. Few books are better or more profusely illustrated. The lithographic plates, and the copious coloured and black illustrations and letterpress which accompany them, are beyond all praise. How disappointing, as a rule, are black and white illustrations of operations—indefinite, indistinct, confusing. This is not so in this work; for instance, the illustration of
the operation for hysterectomy, or the removal of the lymph glands in the radical operation for cancer of the uterus—nothing could be more clear and life-like; every step can be followed with minute accuracy.

With regard to etiology, he contends, and rightly, that heredity plays a very minor rôle in the production of cancer. Traumatism cannot be eliminated as a potent factor, though this may not, and probably does not, apply to carcinoma of the body of the uterus; yet when one finds that nearly all the victims of squamous-cell carcinoma of the cervix have borne children, the injuries of labour can hardly be excluded as a powerful influence. From a careful examination of his own cases, he arrives at the conclusion that there is no evidence of the embryonic origin of cancer. He discusses and dismisses Ribbert's theory as well as the parasitic origin of cancer, and arrives at the disappointing though foregone conclusion that etiology is still an unknown and unsettled question. We know that it is primarily a disease of the epithelium, but we are as ignorant as ever of the cause of this cell alteration. In cases where cancer complicates pregnancy, and which are inoperable, the author recommends Cesarean section, followed by Porro.

Dr. Cullen discusses very fully that interesting condition first described by Sanger as deciduoma malignum, illustrating it by a case from Johns Hopkins Hospital Reports; he arrives at the conclusion, "It is impossible to decide whether the growth be a carcinoma or a sarcoma, or a combination of the two processes. The clinical features alone are sufficient to class it as a morbid process distinct from ordinary carcinoma or sarcoma." He adheres to the name deciduoma malignum.

The volume appeals alike to the gynaecologist and practitioner.

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A Text-Book of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, or the Action of Drugs in Health and Disease. By ARTHUR R. CUSHNY, M.A., M.D. (Aberdeen), Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in the University of Michigan. Second Edition. London: Rebman, Limited.

Dr. CUSHNY's book may be most strongly recommended to any one who wishes to have a complete account of present-day pharmacology within a reasonable compass. The author is known as an able and indefatigable worker in this field, well qualified by his researches, by his experience in teaching, and by the extent of his reading, to compile an authoritative text-book for his own students, as well as for the much wider circle of his professional brethren. Having done so, the result, so far as the description of the actions of drugs is concerned, may unhesitatingly be pronounced an unqualified success, each article being clear, easily followed, and tersely put. The best literature has been freely drawn upon, and the author has throughout wisely refrained from elaborate discussions or detailed balancing of evidence regarding any special points still in dispute. Dr. CUSHNY has avowedly taken as his model the Grundsitt der Arzneimittellehre of Professor Schmiedeberg, whose arrangement and methods are closely followed, and whose somewhat stand-off attitude towards therapeutics is maintained throughout. Both authors regard the practical use of drugs in disease from the standpoint of the laboratory rather than of the bedside, and hence the sections which treat of the therapeutical applications of remedies are