

On account of our present very imperfect knowledge of the details of early embryonal growth, we can only deal in suppositions such as these. The main point is that the essential cause of the growth of tumors is an error or irregularity in the embryonic construction. Positive proof of this is, in the nature of things, not forthcoming, but a whole series of facts may be brought forward in its favor. Thus, for example, the hereditary nature of many growths—carcinoma, osteoma, lipoma, &c., which have appeared in several generations in the same family, and more frequently inherited from the mother than the father. Cases are on record of the tumor being confined to one organ—as the breast—through several generations, or not to a definite locality, but to a histological system, so that in several successive generations one member of the family has had an enchondroma of the pelvis, another of the humerus, a third of the femur, &c. This view is further supported by the congenital appearance of tumors. The teratoma are very frequently congenital, and other forms are by no means rare, such as fatty and fibroid tumors, and enchondromas, carcinomas and adenomas have also been met with. It is not, however, in the majority of cases the tumor which is congenital, but the predisposition thereto—*i. e.*, there exists a superfluous mass of cells out of which a new growth can develop. We do not know what it is which gives the impulse to these germs, causing them to increase and multiply; nor do we know why their development is checked or restrained. Perhaps it is the resistance of the normal tissues, and this may afford an explanation of those cases in which a growth has followed an injury, which may be supposed to have weakened the physiological resistance of the surrounding tissues.

It is a well known fact that certain epithelial tumors, canceroids and carcinomas, have a special preference for the orifices of the body, the lips and tongue, alæ of nose, eyelids, prepuce, glans and rectum; also, very frequently the external os uteri, and in the œsophagus the spot corresponding to the fork of the bronchi. The existence of these predilection spots has been urged strongly in favor of the part played by mechanical insult in the etiology of tumors, but if this were the case,