

CANCER OF THE UTERUS.

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In the short paper which I have the honor to present to the Pathological Society to-night, I shall speak of some of the early and important changes in the mucous membrane in adenocarcinoma of the uterus, my remarks being based chiefly upon Thomas Cullen's book on Uterine Carcinoma. To illustrate many points, I have with me prepared sections of uterine scrapings, also sections of the uterus after removal, from a patient who came first under my father's care, later under that of Dr. Ross, having been sent to him for operation.

Cullen had the opportunity of examining and studying many cases of carcinoma of the uterus, and found that in both the squamous and adenomatous varieties there are changes in the mucous membrane early in the disease which are characteristic of carcinoma in this situation, and upon which in many cases a positive diagnosis may be safely made. From the surface of the mucous membrane, in a large proportion of both forms of carcinoma, spring finger-like or branching processes, which are the first to come away in the scraping, and which are very characteristic of cancer. Under the examining finger these processes break down readily and bleed freely. Together they form a cauliflower-like mass which cannot usually be seen unless the growth has commenced upon or extended to the vaginal portion of the cervix.

The microscope shows these finger-like or branching processes to consist of a small amount of stroma supporting comparatively large thin-walled vessels, and a covering of epithelium. In the case of squamous carcinoma the latter consists of an atypical squamous epithelium; in that of adeno-carcinoma there are several layers of epithelial cells, which are as a rule clearly not squamous in character. In the deeper layers columnar cells can usually be seen. The nuclei vary in size and shape and stain deeply. Here and there cells containing unusually large, deeply staining nuclei can frequently be found, and that cell proliferation is active is evidenced by the large number of karyokinetic figures.

In the glands of the normal uterus and on the surface of the mucous membrane above the external os, there is but one layer of epithelium. In adeno-carcinoma an epithelial covering several layers deep is quite a feature. This is not peculiar to carcinoma, however, but may be present in other conditions, for example, chronic endometritis.

Here and there throughout the stroma, small round cells and polymorpho-nuclear leucocytes are usually present.