

CARCINOMA.*

IN this short paper, opening the discussion on Carcinoma, I cannot enter fully into the various questions which naturally arise in considering such a subject. I will, then, confine myself to a short consideration of the nature and theories of origin of cancer, with a few remarks on the relative malignancy of its several varieties. Carcinoma is our common malignant tumor and is classed as an epithelial neoplasm. It is true that the active and essential elements in Carcinoma are the epithelial cells, but we should not forget that in cancer we have also proliferative activity of the connective tissue cells, by which we have formed much of the interalveolar stroma. In other words not only have we a vast atypical increase of epithelium, but we have also a newly formed (in most instances) connective tissue stroma; the amount and character of this stroma is of great importance in defining the rapidity of growth and the malignancy of the tumor.

What is the essential nature of Carcinoma? I think we can answer the question by saying that we have in it a functionless cell proliferation essentially of the epithelial cells, tending to reproduce atypically the epithelial structure of the part; such proliferation not being dependent upon physiological stimulus from other cells of the body, and ceasing only with the failure of nutrition.

What is the cause of this functionless cell proliferation? To its exact causation we cannot yet point. There are, however certain factors bearing directly upon its etiology, and further, there are numerous theories of origin which have more or less of fact for basis. I will consider a few of the most important of these, beginning with the theory first put forward by Virchow. This theory is that irritation (Virchow) or causes producing proliferative (chronic) inflammation cause the epithelial cells to multiply, to break their bounds and invade the tissues via the lymph spaces and tracts. (This theory would include the para-

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