

powerful action, extends from about the seventh rib above to this bony insertion below. The external abdominal ring,* which arches over the spermatic cord at its exit from the inguinal canal, is bounded externally by Poupart's ligament, known also as the outer pillar, or crus, and internally by that part of the aponeurosis attached to the pubic crest which is the internal pillar, or crus; it is thus intimately related to the two most important bony attachments, and must be regarded itself as part of the insertion of the external oblique. The ring is generally described as "somewhat triangular in shape," and as the base of the triangle is formed by the spine and the crest of the pubis, it is seen that it has firm and definite boundaries below, and to the inner and the outer side. It seems to me, however, that sufficient attention has not been directed to the upper boundary or apex of the ring. It is easy to satisfy oneself that the upper limit of the ring is not an angle formed by the meeting of the two pillars. All that is necessary is to examine a patient with a hernia, or, indeed, a normal individual, lying down on a couch, by invaginating the scrotum and sweeping the finger round the margin of the ring. Such an examination will show that above there is a definite rounded margin, and if the examination be repeated with the patient in the erect position it will be found that this margin is subject to very considerable tension. The ring is not an open gap, but is closed by the intercolumnar fascia which stretches between the two pillars and gives a sheath to the spermatic cord where that structure becomes superficial. Above the ring scattered transverse bundles of fibres continue to connect the two pillars, and may sometimes be traced as high as the level of the anterior superior spine. If the upper margin of the ring be examined, as can easily be done at operations for hernia, it will be found that there is always a more or less complicated arrangement of fibres to strengthen this important spot. Figs. 1 and 2, drawn diagrammatically from actual rings, show a typical arrangement. It will be seen that, in addition to the intercolumnar fibres, there are also strong decussating bands passing from the inner pillar to the lower end

* Philip Turner, "The External Abdominal Ring and its Importance in the Radical Cure of Inguinal Hernia," *Guy's Hospital Reports*, Vol. LI.