

But now comes the archives of the Middlesex Hospital (1904), in which Prof. Karl Pearson, by biometric methods and the construction of "skew curves," arrives at quite a different conclusion. Out of 2,368 female cancer patients, 359 had a history of cancer—15.1 per cent., as against 13.5 per cent. among the ordinary rate, the non-cancerous patients. From these statistics, as valuable as any that have been compiled, we may feel safe in advising our patients with cancerous relatives, that they have no reason to feel alarmed about their own susceptibility to the disease. Inheritance is probably of little importance.

Prof. Pearson also brought out another interesting fact:—That the onset of the disease is later in males than in females by nearly six years. In women the average age was 43.8; in men, 53.3 years.

F. A. C.

Bather's Earache.

McAuliffe says (*Wis. Med. Rec.*) this painful trouble comes from water forced up into the eustachian tube by swallowing or by clearing the nose after coming out of the water. It is not caused by water entering the external canal, for there the drum is protected by epithelium, which is tolerant to fluids. Hence the habit of plugging the meatus with cotton is fatuous.

F. A. C.

Disinfection of Thermometer.

The dangers of carrying infection by this necessary instrument are patent to every practising physician. Denny (*Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*) found by careful bacteriological examination that a few drops of formalin on a piece of cotton placed at the bottom of case would keep the thermometer sterile, and would destroy all the common mouth-bacteria most effectually.

F. A. C.

OPHTHALMOLOGY AND OTOTOLOGY.

IN CHARGE OF J. T. DUNCAN, M.B., M.D., C.M.

"Absorption" Treatment of Cataract.

The editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* thus answers an enquirer concerning the efficacy of the so-called absorption or disintegration cure of cataract by means of local applications and manipulation of the eyeball.

The ordinary forms of cataract are due to structural changes in the lens, whose fibres, previously as transparent as clear glass, are converted into an opaque substance comparable to ground glass. In rare instances, such as in the early stages of