BOOK REVIEWS

THE BREAST, ITS ANOMALIES, ITS DISEASES AND THEIR TREATMENT.

By JOHN B. DEEVER and JOSEPH MCFARLAND assisted by J. LEON HERMAN. Large octavo, pages 724. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son and Company, 1917.

This is an encyclopædic work which by reason of the collaboration of masters in clinical surgery, pathology and anatomy has been made to embody knowledge and teaching which ranges from the domain of embryology to the latest suggestions of technic in the removal of neoplasms. A full bibliography is given of each topic discussed. One of the most interesting chapters is that devoted to the anomalies of the breast. The reader will find gathered together in this chapter an amount of singular information as to such anomalies which cannot be found elsewhere, and which is full of curious interest. Special mention should also be made of the pages devoted to the subject of tuberculosis of the breast which contain tables giving details of all cases which have been discovered in literature up to the present time, being forty-eight primary cases and twenty-nine secondary cases, with a very full bibliography of the subject.

The subject of cysts of the breast receives very full discussion. No question has been more mooted among surgeons during recent years than the relations of cystic degeneration (abnormal involution) of the breast and the development of carcinoma. The following quotation may be accepted as a very fair statement of present knowledge on the subject, "It is sometimes urged that both the conditions, carcinoma and abnormal involution, are most frequent at the same period of life, and that therefore they are probably connected with one another. We cannot see the necessity for supposing that two conditions that happen to coexist must be connected with one another in the relation of cause and effect. At a certain age the breast is subject to involution which sometimes becomes abnormal and peculiar. At the same age cancer develops in the breast irrespective of any cause or condition known, but the involutional changes are apt to be numerous and diffused, the cancer quite as apt to be localized. Of course both may be reversed; the involutional disturbance may be localized and the cancer diffused. In the present state of knowledge the questions cannot be answered. We cannot be certain of the relation of the one morbid process to the other. The case is not proven, but the matter is of the utmost importance in its surgical application, for it is upon the theory that abnormal involution is the precancerous stage of cancer that many surgeons are now advising and treating their patients."

The practical conclusions of the authors are expressed in the fol-

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lowing, among other opinions with which the chapter devoted to this subject is concluded:

"Carcinoma may accompany or follow abnormal involution in about one case out of ten. No one has seen the transmutation of abnormal involution into cancer. Exaggerated fear of the occurrence of carcinoma after abnormal involution has led to unnecessary mutilation of patients by the removal of many breasts that show no important disease. Instead of amputation without examination, the breast should be investigated by plastic resection. If normal it should be let alone; if slightly and locally diseased, the diseased areas should be excised. In cases of badly diseased breasts, simple amputation is indicated. In cases of carcinoma, radical amputation should be performed."

The chapter devoted to the subject of carcinoma contains fully illustrated details of the various methods of technic which have been devised to carry out present accepted ideas of the diffusion of the disease, and the requirements for its radical extirpation. Dr. Deaver, in devising the details of his own method, has been influenced by the teachings of Handley with reference to the extension of the disease along the deep fascial planes.

The book as a whole is a most important addition to the literature of diseases of the breast, and will always remain of value as a full presentation of present knowledge and practice in such diseases.

LEWIS S. PILCHER.

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