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THOUGHTS ON CANCER.*

BY THE HON. SIR WM. HINGSTON, F.R.C.S., MONTREAL.

WHATEVER may be the state of our knowledge in other departments of the healing art, we must admit we know but little of the etiology of tumor formation generally, and especially of those forms we are accustomed to call "malignant." These are still, as Kelchnack observes, "shrouded in darkness and mystery." Yet at no time in the history of surgery has cancer occupied a greater share of thought than at the present. France and Germany have long been pursuing diligent investigations to unravel its hiddenness. In Great Britain a Cancer Research Fund has been recently established, and the function of General Superintendent of Cancer Investigation has been created: to supervise workers; to collect statistical, dietetic, topographical, and other information; to organize a system of correspondence with Home, Colonial, Indian, and foreign laboratories; to invite the Colonial Offices to assist in obtaining information as to the relative prevalence of cancer in the various colonies of the British Empire; and to trace, if possible, any connection with the mode of life, food, habits, environment, and so forth, of the inhabitants. How much will be accomplished by organized investigation of this character and how much by the unobtrusive, individual worker in the quiet of the hospital and the laboratory, time alone will determine.

A few months ago the Cancer Research Fund of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons made its first report. It consisted of three papers, the first, "The Zoological Distribution of Cancer,"

* Read at meeting of the Ontario Medical Association, Toronto, June, 1904.