

HOW CANCER BEGINS.

Cancer begins in one spot, as a small growth, which in the early stages can easily be removed. If neglected, however, it spreads and gets beyond control. An attack of cancer may be likened to a fire in a house, which is discovered soon after it starts, a bucketful of water may extinguish. If cancer is discovered at the very beginning, the slight operation which is necessary to remove it may be no more serious or painful than the extraction of a tooth or "having one's tonsils out." If the matter is delayed, it may take all the skill of our best surgical experts and all the help of our most expensive scientific apparatus to root out the danger. In case the matter is delayed too long the unfortunate individual who is afflicted with it must abandon all hope. An early recognition of the disease is at present the all-important factor in its control, and until physicians know more about the real causes of cancer our chief hope of overcoming this enemy of the human race must lie in the fact that people everywhere will learn to recognize the danger signals of the early stages, and seek advice and treatment while there is yet time.

HOW CANCER DEVELOPS.

It is not easy accurately to define a cancer, but it is quite possible to describe some of its characteristics. It is well known that the tissues of the body, the muscles, the glands, the bones, etc., are each composed of a large number of very tiny cells. These cells have been well compared to the bricks in a building, and they are held together by a material which may be likened to mortar. These cells, however, are not composed of dead material, like bricks. They are alive, and growing, and dying off, according to certain laws which we do not yet completely understand.

Sometimes certain of these cells begin to grow and develop along lines which are not in harmony with the usual order. A little group of the cells seems to form a kind of lawless colony which constitutes an unhealthy and growing spot in the body. This spot may occur on the skin, in the breast, in the stomach, in the throat, or in any other part of the body. Frequently the cells form a little hard nodule or lump, which can easily be detected by the sense of touch, and which can very easily be cut out with the surgeon's knife, leaving little or no disfigurement.

If, however, the abnormal growth, which is thus started, is allowed to continue, it invades the surrounding tissues, and eventually parts of the original growth may break off and be carried in the blood to other parts of the body, where they start secondary growths.

It is just as though, in a case of fire, the wind might carry sparks and flaming shingles to other parts of the building starting secondary fires there. It is important to remember, however, that cancer is not a