

and the laity. If we depend upon statistics or upon that equally unreliable source, public opinion, we cannot help arriving at the conclusion that cancer is increasing, and that very rapidly. Many authorities do not even question its increase but accept it as proven and base their observations and conclusions upon this ground. Thus, Dr. Roswell Park, of Buffalo, Director of the State Laboratory for the study of Cancer, tells us that cancer is the only disease that is increasing, and makes what he himself calls a startling prophecy: "If for the next ten years the relative death rates are maintained we shall find that ten years from now, viz. in 1909 there will be more deaths from cancer in New York State than from consumption, smallpox, and typhoid fever combined."

If we could place absolute reliance upon statistics, Dr. Park might be justified in making this prophecy. I will not take up your time showing the many fallacies that exist in statistics dealing with a subject like cancer, but will make these examples suffice. For the last few years the Registrars of Great Britain have adopted the plan of sending letters of inquiry to those Doctors whose returns are incomplete or unsatisfactory. In one year we find that these inquiries resulted in the transference of 597 deaths from vague headings such as "Tumors" or "Disease of Ovaries," "Liver," "Brain," "Uterus," etc., to "Cancer." Out of 111 cases returned as "Stricture of the Oesophagus," 74 were found, on inquiry, to be due to cancer. Such results as these make it clear that in former years when the death rate under "indefinite causes" was three times greater than at the present time, accurate certification would have greatly swelled the mortality returns from cancer. We must remember that the "Registrar General's figures represent certified causes of death and not always actual facts" and that while American and foreign writers are quoting British statistics as being reliable on account of the greater attention paid to Registration in the British Empire, and are basing their conclusions upon these statistics. British writers are at the same time showing us the unreliability of these same statistics. That the number of deaths reported as due to cancer has increased within the last few years is certain, but I think there is not sufficient evidence to show that the increase is due to any cause but improved certification. Some have gone even farther than saying that cancer is increas-