

The tissues of the body, the muscles, the glands, the bones, are each composed of a very large number of very tiny cells, which may be compared to the bricks in a building, and they are held together by a material which may be compared to the mortar. However, the body cells are alive, constantly growing and dying off, according to certain laws which we do not completely understand. Sometimes these cells begin to grow and develop along lines which are not in harmony with the usual order. A little group of the cells forms a lawless colony, which constitutes an unhealthy, growing spot in the body. This may occur on the skin, in the breast, stomach, throat, or in any part of the body. Frequently they form a little hard lump which can easily be detected by touching it and which can very easily be removed by the physician. If this mass is not removed at once it usually continues to grow and to branch off into the surrounding tissues. This penetration marks the difference, the fatal line between the benign or harmless growths like warts, and malignant growths or cancers. Finally a large mass is formed and minute portions become detached and are carried to other parts of the body. When ordinary cells become detached and get out of place they usually die. Cancer cells, on the other hand, have such a power of survival they continue to grow wherever they are deposited and new cancers are the result.

Cancer often arises after continued, long irritation of various kinds and in and about benign growths, or ulcerations. Cancer of the lip and mouth has been known to come from burns, from pipe stems, from constant irritation from bad teeth and among East Indian races from chewing the betel nut. Cancer of the external abdomen in the natives of Kashmir, never observed among other races, arises from burns from kangri baskets of live coals which these mountaineers wear as a kind of warming pan. Cancer of the oesophagus is observed in the Chinamen who eat their rice too hot, while it is absent in the women who eat their rice cold at a "second table."

Women, unfortunately, are most susceptible to cancer. Between the ages of 35 and 43 three times as many women as men die of cancer, and between 45 and 50 twice as many die. They should, therefore, be especially educated to recognize the first signs of a benign growth and consult a physician at once. Persistent ulcerations, cracks and sores, warts, moles, or birthmarks which change in appearance, or grow larger, should be removed. All forms of chronic irritation should be prevented.

While no one in particular can be said to be susceptible to cancer it can truthfully be said that so far as is known no one is immune to it and statistics leave no room to doubt it is on the increase. The time has come when the general public should be educated as thoroughly as in the nation-wide campaign for the control of tuberculosis.