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SHALL WE TELL WOMEN WITH UTERINE CANCER THE NATURE OF THEIR DISEASE ?

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No more unpleasant task perhaps ever falls to the lot of the tender-hearted physician, and I think the majority of physicians are tender-hearted, than to have to tell a patient that she is suffering from malignant disease. Some deliberately shirk this unpleasant duty on principle, believing that we are not called upon to tell her the truth in these circumstances ; while others avoid it from expediency because they dislike to cause pain, or because they think that it pays better to say something pleasant which will cheer up the disconsolate one for the time and leave a temporary agreeable impression on her mind. In the course of a newspaper interview with a great London surgeon, whose name is known all over the world, while speaking of tact as an element of success, he says that the successful physician will not tell a woman that she is suffering from cancer ; and one of our greatest Canadian physicians evidently holds the same views, as in consultation over their cases he invariably tells the patient that they will be better soon. As some of these patients were dead two or three weeks later his prognosis was correct in a sense, but not in the one in which the patient would be supposed to take it. The view taken by these two great men, and by many others in the profession, is equally held by a great many of the laity, as seems certain by the number of people who have asked me to tell them