

gathering vital statistics and to better diagnosis, but it is generally believed that these factors do not alone account for the increase.

Cancer, if discovered early and treated immediately by a competent physician and surgeon, is now regarded as a curable disease. Unfortunately the early discovery is difficult. Unlike almost any other disease its first attack is usually painless, and often, therefore, before the disease is discovered it has reached the stage where a major operation is necessary and the chances of cure have been greatly reduced, if not entirely lost. Another unfortunate circumstance is that in many cases when a person realizes he has cancer he fails to seek the best medical treatment. Advertising quacks and patent medicines, claiming phenomenal cures, loom up like a last ray of hope to the afflicted. As a matter of fact their treatment invariably aggravates instead of helping and when competent physicians are finally consulted the case is really beyond the hope of recovery, or arrest.

The belief that cancer is contagious has caused untold suffering and occasionally cruel neglect of the unfortunate sufferers. So far as it has been possible for scientists to learn there is no germ capable of causing cancer in human being or animals. In communities where the cancer prevalence is higher than in others it has invariably been traced to the fact that most of the young people had left the community. Since cancer is a disease of middle age the higher rate was to be expected. There is no case on record in which either an operating surgeon, or nurse, has contracted cancer from coming into contact with it, even after years of work exclusively in this field.

Another popular myth that seems to be pretty well exploded is that cancer is hereditary. No argument could be more convincing than the way life insurance companies look at this aspect of the disease from a business point of view. In deciding whether a person is a "good risk" these companies disregard evidence that cancer occurred in one or both parents, or in other ancestors. Their carefully-kept statistics covering many years prove that the person to be insured will not necessarily contract the disease. Indeed the insurance companies say there is no cause for apprehension even if both parents died of cancer. The most that could be fairly argued is that people whose families seem particularly susceptible to cancer should well inform themselves with regard to early symptoms and be on the alert for the first danger signal.

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 with mortar. However, the body cells are alive, constantly growing and dying off, according to certain laws which we do