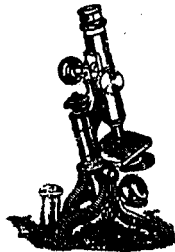


Medical Matters.

CANCER RESEARCH FUND'S GREAT WORK.



As a result of the laborious investigations conducted during the year under the direction of the Cancer Research Fund, discoveries have been made which have an important bearing upon several crucial problems. At the third annual meeting, over which the Prince of Wales presided, it was reported that upwards of 2,000 specimens of malignant growths in different animals have been microscopically examined, with a view of discovering to what extent cancer occurs in the various species. As a result, many new facts have been brought to light, and the knowledge of the nature of cancer has been greatly increased. The first authentic cases of cancer in wild animals have been described, including instances occurring in marine fish in a state of nature, and a spheroidal-celled carcinoma in a wild mouse. Cancer has been discovered to pervade all classes of the vertebrate kingdom, to present constant characteristic features in all animals, and to fall into the same groups. Throughout all races of men and animals it exhibits the same noteworthy predilection for certain age periods proportionate to the varying durations of the span of life. In all animals cancer *quâ* cancer is without any characteristic symptoms.

An important distinction has been established between the infectious diseases and cancer. When tuberculosis occurs in man in common with animals, there is a general similarity in the disease and in the symptoms produced by the same infective agent, although both show variations from species to species. Cancer, on the other hand, while showing the same essential features from mankind to fish, and throughout an entire absence of symptoms, is not transmissible from one species to another. The transmissibility of cancer is of a limited and peculiar nature, and implies merely that the cancer cell, if transferred to a new host of the same species, may continue to grow. The new host, however, does not become infected with cancer, but merely provides a soil. These peculiarities prove that the cancer cell is endowed with powers of growth which are unique. Observations have detected peculiarities in the stainable substance

of some of the proliferating cancer cells. These may be related to certain other phenomena which appear to show how the cancer cell can re-acquire the power of self-propagation. If future work confirm the last observation, the problem of the continued growth of cancer cells will have been solved. The hypothesis that cancer is an infectious disease may be said to have been put out of court, and a parasitic causation is excluded. The theoretical conclusion seems justified that the cause of cancer must be sought in those properties of the cells which are the only characteristics common to all the animals in which the disease occurs. The careful investigation into the data upon which the mortality statistics are based indicates that there is no real increase of cancer.

The Prince of Wales, in acknowledging a vote of thanks for presiding, congratulated the Committee on the satisfactory results of their labours during the year. They now realised that the disease existed in all parts of the globe, and amongst tribes far removed from civilisation. Recognising how world-wide the disease is, the research fund had wisely extended its inquiries to the furthest limits of the Empire. The endeavours had been seconded by the authorities in India, the colonies, and protectorates. His Highness also expressed his satisfaction at the hearty co-operation between the workers of the fund and friends in America and the principal European countries. Considering the far-reaching interest in the subject, he was glad to state the King had approved of the fund being known for the future as the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

"CORSET CANCER."

Mr. Lucas recently called attention in the *Lancet* to a mode of onset of cancer of the breast which he calls "corset cancer." The site where this carcinoma attacks the skin and cellular tissue is over an upper and outer radiant from the nipple corresponding exactly to the point where the upper edge of a corset crosses the pectoralis muscle. It occurred on the right side in the three cases seen by the author, probably due to an undue use of the right arm, the friction of the corset at this spot being the cause of the cancerous process. Of course, it is generally acknowledged that some definite irritant is the active cause of most if not all cases of malignant disease; but the corset can scarcely be a cause of cancer, or what woman would escape the disease.

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