

MEDICINE

Vitamin Hinders Cancer

► **CANCER** growth can be slowed by a synthetic vitamin K called Synkavit, Dr. C. M. Pomerat of the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, has found.

When the synthetic vitamin was given with X-ray treatment, an 80% slowdown of growth of the cancer was achieved. The treatment was tried on "several patients."

The cancer's growth, however, is not completely stopped and the treatment is not a cure, Dr. Pomerat emphasizes.

Doses of the drug that would be big enough to cure the cancer would be strong enough to kill the patient.

The dose actually used was smaller. Its safety had been determined by prior tests on normal tissue taken from the bodies of

patients with advanced cancer. These tests showed the normal tissue was not damaged by that dosage of the synthetic vitamin. British scientists had previously reported that at a safe dosage the synthetic vitamin slowed down tumor cell division 30%.

Dr. Pomerat's techniques for keeping cells alive outside the body are being used for studies of the temperature and radiation effects of atom bomb explosions.

Large sheets of skin kept alive and in storage for grafting on victims of fires and other disasters is a possible future development from these techniques.

Dr. Pomerat's work is supported by the American Cancer Society which announced the results to date.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

ASTRONOMY

Vegetable Life on Mars?

► "SOME form of vegetable life exists on Mars—that is quite probable," Dr. E. C. Slipher of Lowell Observatory stated.

"Vegetable life is the only suggestion yet made that accounts for the changes that are observed on the planet. I think the evidence supporting this theory is growing stronger and stronger," Dr. Slipher stated.

To find more evidence for some primitive form of life on Mars, astronomers are now training their telescopes on the ruddy planet.

Mars recently made its closest approach to the earth since 1943. On March 27 it swung to within 60,360,000 miles of the earth. Not until 1952 will it again be so close.

Early in the evening Mars can be seen

low in the east in the constellation Virgo, the virgin. Its brightness, brighter than that of any star, and its red color make it easy to locate.

The closest equal on Mars to the kind of life we know here would be the mosses and lichens such as cling to towering, frigid mountain peaks. Astronomers definitely rule out the possibility of animal, human or even a weird monster-type life on the planet.

Since the axis of the earth and the axis of Mars are tipped to about the same degree, seasons on the planet are similar to those we know here, except that the temperatures are much lower. Mars is having a normal spring, Dr. Slipher stated.

Dr. Slipher is making his observations

at the Lowell Observatory through the 24-inch refracting telescope.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

● RADIO

Saturday, April 15, 3:15 p.m. EST

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Mildred C. Rehstock, chemist at Parke, Davis and Company, will talk on "Woman-Made Mold Chemical To Fight Disease".

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Question Box

AGRICULTURE

Why is the Department of Agriculture looking for twin calves? p. 211.

ASTRONOMY

What is the role of the asteroid which was so near the earth in March? p. 219.

CONSERVATION

How did soil conservation lose ground during the war? p. 214.

Photographs: p. 211, Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture; p. 213, Buffalo Museum of Science; p. 214, Archäologisches Institut, Dr. H. Vetter; p. 215, Lederle Laboratories; p. 219, Arthur D. Little, Inc.; p. 224, Harry W. Smith, Inc.

GENERAL SCIENCE

What are the steps that should be taken toward feeding all the world? p. 215.

MEDICINE

Which vitamin has been found to slow the growth of cancer? p. 212.

In the treatment of what disease has aureomycin most recently given striking results? p. 211.

WILDLIFE

Where are the wild geese going? p. 213.