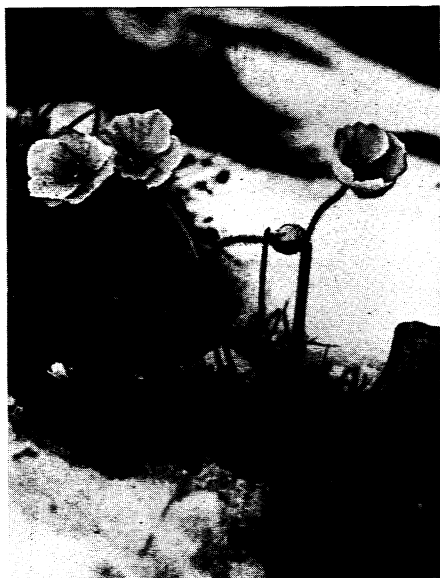


MEDICINE

Great Advance Noted in Struggle Against Cancer

Death Rate Among Older People Is Increasing But Disease Is Not Killing More of Those Under 70



GROWING IN SNOW

An Arctic poppy, one of those gathered by Pere Dutilly when he goes botanizing in the icy north.

whom he and his 60 fellow Oblates work. They live on even terms with them: even his superior, Bishop Pierre Fallaize, emulates his Galilean namesake and catches fish for his own eating. Sometimes fish is all the Bishop of the Arctic has for dinner.

Eskimo health, Pere Dutilly reports, is being badly undermined by the kerosene stoves which the traders have introduced. The stoves overheat the snow igloos in winter, changing the walls to ice which lets the heat escape. The traders cannot be induced to stop selling stoves and kerosene because they make money that way, so the missionaries are showing the Eskimos how to set up their summer tents of skin inside the igloos and thus prevent at least part of the damage to the snow walls.

Pere Dutilly applies in Eskimoland the old adage, "Love me, love my dog." Fond as he is of the Eskimo, just so fond is he of the "husky." The big sledge-pulling dog he calls "horse of the North." Along the middle shores of Hudson Bay, where it is far enough south to do a little gardening, he has seen dog teams pulling a plow in summer, and in winter dragging logs out of the timber.

Science News Letter, July 17, 1937

Limes are more acid than lemons.

Crosses between radishes and cabbages have been made in scientific experiments.

A "GREAT advance in the struggle against cancer" was reported by Dr. W. Cramer, of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, London, to *The American Journal of Cancer*.

This is the fact that the increase in cancer during the last 20 years, in England at least, is almost all in the age groups over 65 years. This is true for cancer of the organs most frequently attacked by cancer, such as the tongue, esophagus, stomach, intestines, liver and pancreas in men, and the uterus in women. The only exception is in the case of breast cancer in women. Here there is a significant increase even in the earlier age groups.

"To the average person and his relatives," Dr. Cramer points out in reporting this encouraging advance in the fight against cancer, "the question of importance is not whether he dies from cancer or some other disease, but at what age he dies from any disease whatever."

The increase in cancer mortality is not so frightening when it is realized that cancer is not killing any more people before they have approached the Biblical span of life than it did 20 years ago.

Dr. Cramer also pointed out that a new chapter in cancer research has opened with the discovery that breast cancer can be produced in mice by injecting female sex hormones under the animals' skin.

This means that cancer can be caused by a substance normally present and active in every person's own body. (A certain amount of female sex hormone is present in a man's body as well as a woman's, recent research has shown.) Common sense, of course, will prevent any alarm over the fact that a person is carrying a powerful cancer-causing substance in his own body, because while everyone has some of this hormone, not everyone develops cancer.

The discovery that female hormones can play a part in cancer causation does not give the solution of the cancer problem but it may start scientists on the right road to that solution by enlarging their outlook on the problem.

Scientists heretofore have believed that cancer resulted from a combination of internal and external factors. The internal factor is a special susceptibility, probably inherited. The external factor is something outside the body that irritates until cancer develops. This could be radium, which causes skin cancer on prolonged exposure; parasites (germs in common parlance) which get into intestines or liver and set up cancer-producing irritation; or chemicals such as coal tar, cause of "chimney sweeps' cancer."

Now, Dr. Cramer says, scientists have evidence for the existence of a cancer-causing environment which is entirely within the body. This not only gives them a new direction for research but explains among other things why cancer can develop in organs not exposed to influences coming from without the body.

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