

“when the best of our young men will go into simpler and more satisfying institutions—notably general practice”.

Your reviewer found the book had the gripping quality of a well-written novel, and most strongly recommends it.

The Liver and Cancer. KASPER BLOND, M.D., F.I.C.S. Second Edition. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1960. Pp. viiii + 401. Price 35s.

The theme of this book is that “cancer is a mutation of somatic tissues caused by chronic damage to the liver. The structural changes of the somatic tissues are the result, not the cause, of metabolic disorders.”

The author poses the idea that civilized man eats an unbalanced diet of largely adulterated foods which produce a toxic effect on the liver. This obstructs the portal venous flow and unpurified blood is thus forced via porto-caval shunts into the systemic circulation. The circulating toxins are unassimilated foreign proteins or globulins “which must be considered as the sole carcinogenic agents”. External carcinogens in his opinion merely serve to cause hyperaemia by irritation, which produces an increased amount of toxins in the irritated regions, which thus fix the site at which cancer will occur.

Having accepted his own theory, he goes further. “In my opinion there is a single concept of health and a single concept of disease”. His concept of disease is disease of the liver from which all the chronic disorders stem. Toxic goitre, coronary disease, peptic ulcer, varicose ulcer are all pre-cancerous conditions due to the failure of the liver to detoxicate proteins.

The great epidemics of a century or two ago were acute intoxications from contaminated food and drink, which damaged the liver to a degree incompatible with life. The problem was solved by reliable water supplies and sanitation. Similarly the cancer problem will be solved by healthy nutrition, and not by the study of cell morphology.

The book ends with a chapter on the biochemical treatment of cancer. This, in the main, is treatment by a diet at sight of which most men would pale. He quotes cases reported by doctors who have treated patients with “inoperable” cancer by a diet of vegetable juices and yogurt, proceeding to raw vegetables and fruit. Many of these have become stabilized; the cancers have ceased to

grow and may shrink. If the liver is so damaged that recovery of its detoxicating function is impossible, the patients dies, not of cancer, but of liver failure.

The author decries surgery and x-ray therapy. These merely remove or destroy one of the results of cancer and add nothing to the expectation of life.

Reading the book gives the impression that most of the chapters were written as separate essays. The author jumps from the first to third person and repetition of the main theme is almost *ad nauseam*. But in spite of all criticism, one wonders if he really has "got something". It seems a tenable supposition that liver dysfunction is the basic factor in many chronic disorders and that cancer is one of these. In other words, cancer is not a local, but a general disease. Unfortunately the supporting evidence is meagre.

A Clinical Prospect of the Cancer Problem. D. W. SMITHERS, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.F.R. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone, Ltd. 1960. Pp. v. + 232. Price 37s. 6d.

This is the introductory volume in a series of monographs on neoplastic disease at various sites under the general editorship of Professor Smithers. The four volumes so far published in addition to this are on lung, bladder, rectum and oesophagus, and volumes in preparation include prostate, brain and spinal cord, and larynx and pharynx.

This is a delightful volume of what are really essays, from the clinician's point of view, on various aspects of the cancer problem. Anybody who has listened at postgraduate courses to Professor Smithers' lucid expositions will immediately realize that here are a rare collection of speculative, philosophic, and provocative expressions of opinion, backed by a lifetime of experience.

Every family doctor interested in the cancer problem will find contained in this book exactly what he has always felt himself, but has never been able to express with comparable clarity. It has been the feeling of the reviewer that comparatively small effort is devoted to clinical research on the cancers, and too much high-powered research is carried out completely divorced from the patient. Professor Smithers says that he wrote the first draft of this book in 1945 on a wave of dissatisfaction for entirely the same reasons.

The book is full of so many quotable passages that it is possible