

this figure the already existing hospitals and the other scientific and medical establishments. These attainments have already been accomplished. It would be significant to examine the amount of the figures spent in new researches and to compare them with those spent on armament.

It is said that up to the fifth month children produce their own vitamins but that after the fourteenth month this quality is lost. Then a particular prophylaxis is required. Why then not think about this, even within those limits which are easily within the range of thinking of each man? Indeed one should not be intimidated by the infectiousness of diseases. Of course it is now recognized that cancer is infectious as well as pulmonary diseases. It would be just as senseless to fill the consciousness with fearfulness and in that very way give access to any and all infections. Original thought about prophylaxis must not be a sign of fear. This should be simply economy of life in order that it may be fulfilled in excellent and harmonious tension of energy. Where it is possible to foresee a diminution of sufferings, they must be foreseen, and it is needful to achieve this with all humane measures.

It is impossible to charge physicians with the entire task. All people must be co-workers in the matter of the broadly conceived Red Cross. Thus it is often the custom of those assembling for the famous cup of tea to bestir themselves with spoon and tongue, and then separate without any results. It is indispensable that each discourse bring in something effective. From these seeds, though they be small, is put together that which is greatest and most indeferrable.

The scourge does not rise up itself, the hand upraises it. It is needful that the hand should not raise up the scourge. It is needful that the course and successful progress of peoples be in no need of scourges, when so much that is beautiful has been ordained.

Plagues

(DIARY LEAVES)

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH



IN the past year, in the United States of America alone, one hundred thousand persons perished from cancer. Add to this shocking figure all the other victims carried away by cancer in Europe and other countries and the total sum resulting is the loss of an entire war. The misery of cancerous illnesses differs externally from other epidemics. People are terrified by cancer. They build still another hospital. They announce in the newspaper about means of completely curing cancer, yet the number of victims not only does not diminish, but, I dare say, grows more menacing.

Cancer is not so tempestuous as black death or cholera, but it will continue to advance so long as actual prophylaxis are not taken and attentive and lengthy investigations not begun. By this we do not wish to affront those self-sacrificing physicians, who are striving unceasingly to put an end to the deadly grip of cancer. There are well known examples of really amazing self-abnegation of medical men.

The matter lies not in physicians alone, but in people themselves, who for the sake of conventional habits do not destroy certain harmful features of their way of life. Already it has been repeatedly made known, that statistics everywhere have fixed upon meat-eating as one of the causes of cancerous illnesses. Precisely the general shock to the nervous system amid the unhealthy conditions in contemporary cities is likewise manifested as a contributing factor to this frightful disease.

Meanwhile, there are certain localities where cancer is generally unknown or appears only in imported cases. It is also known that higher altitudes are as it were manifested as a principle guarding against cancer. This would appear to mean that it is needful first of all to begin investigations in localities where cancer is generally absent and to



ascertain precisely what local conditions are distinctive. It is also known that Tibetan Lamas have cured certain cases of cancer. In this treatment the cure, of which we have been witnesses, is produced by vegetable substances under conditions used in definite mountain localities. This circumstance at once calls up the necessity of different researches into the remedies themselves and the special conditions of the prescribed locality. It may be the quality of mineral waters or of soil, or the nearness of glaciers abounding in meteoric dust—who knows what conditions may be influential besides the purified mountain air and sun.

It would seem that these indicated circumstances must impel those, who are either ill themselves or filled with philanthropic purposes, to assist these investigations. But the outcome of the matter is not altogether so simple. People are interested, but beyond inquiries and aimless wishes, the matter does not progress. Let us even admit that such researches would require considerable time. Let us admit that among them would occur partial disappointments. Nevertheless, statistical data and the already observed possibility of cure of cancer, though only in certain forms, must be manifested as reason enough for the awakening of hearts to investigations of this kind.

The very shocking numbers of victims must compel people to reflect about increasing the means of research. The city laboratory method alone is not always successful in grasping the tortuous trail of the viper. If there be manifested even a hypothetical possibility of enriching methods of investigation, then surely this should be employed without losing a day or an hour. In such a manner, by finding prophylactic conditions of rendering the very way of life healthful, it is possible on the other hand to point out those already existing natural conditions which are manifested as a preservative against the frightful disease.

Why lose any time, where a bold progressive work could be going on? Why be abstractly terrified at the numbers of victims, while something somewhere could be done upon paths of salvation?

Such investigations are required immediately and not for cancer alone. There is impending still another new scourge bearing the name of Spanish influenza. Many physicians consider this form exceedingly close to a pulmonary plague. According to certain symptoms this is actually something entirely analogous. Each year there can be seen a wave of such attacks flowing into different countries. In any case, there is in this some new form of disease. If that which we call a cold has formerly existed in deadly forms, then too, on the contrary, that which has long been known as grippe has grown to the dangerous forms of Spanish influenza.

Just now we read about the fact that at present many people are gravely ill with a strange form of inflammation of the lungs, attributed to recent dust storms of unprecedented strength. Even animals breathe with similar symptoms. In China there has been passing a grave form of some similar illnesses. It is thought that from the valley of the Yangtse, whirl-winds are bearing some infectious dust with definite bacteria.

In one way or another we are again encountering an enhanced form of lung and throat disease. If then we take into consideration all the increasing cases of heart disease, of a strange increase in blood-pressure, of meningitis and the other nerve-heart forms, then again can be seen the plague rising up against humanity, which is not noticeable in the cinema and dancing parties, at horse-races and prize-fights.

“Orgies during the plague” in the words of the gifted poet always calls to mind those follies which so easily lead to irreparable consequences.

Since the great war, among all the peace conferences, the nations have expended sixty billions of dollars on armament. Right now mobilizations are rumbling again. The possibility of war impends in various parts of the world. It would be instructive to know how much in the same period has been spent in the conflict with the monstrous plagues of humanity, such as cancer, heart diseases, forms of influenza and the other menaces. Let us not count in