

up of suspicious ulcers in the mouth, and again where the dentist was ignored, in spite of advice, the oral trouble had developed into cancer.

Bearing in mind that oral is so appallingly common in India, one asks "why is cancer not commoner than it is."

SOME MARVELS IN THE START OF A NEW LIFE.

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On May 30, during the recent Eleventh Annual Postgraduate Week for Midwives at the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, S.E., Dr. J. S. Fairbairn, lecturing on "Some Marvels in the Start of a New Life," said that the subject on which he had chosen to talk to them that afternoon had nothing to do with midwifery. It was concerned with a much earlier period of a new life and was one which should interest midwives exceedingly.

Dr. Fairbairn first spoke of the cells of the body, their structure and the work they were called upon to do. Differentiating between them, he showed how one type of cell, the trophoblastic—a cell without a distinct cell wall—provided nourishment material for the embryonic life, and how a little later in development, having handed its duties on to the placenta—like itself a temporary organ—the need for the trophoblast ceased. Nature, the lecturer pointed out, ever careful of the reproduction of the species, though unmindful of the individual, early differentiated the cells needed for reproduction (the germ-cells or germ-plasm) from the other cells of the body.

THE MALE AND THE FEMALE GERM.

The special characteristics of the female and the male germ-cells were very marked. While those of the female were constructive, building up food material and shadowing forth the housekeeping instinct, those of the male cell were destructive, not only neglecting to collect material, but starting the female cell into rapid growth and expenditure.

Cells are the bricks with which our bodies are built, and by means of diagrams drawn on the blackboard Dr. Fairbairn showed how the protoplasm inside a cell enveloped the nucleus, the essential part and controlling centre of its activity. The nucleus, the lecturer emphasised, was of paramount importance because all cell division took place by the division of the nucleus. The nucleus was full of threads of granules—nearly all double—which, when a cell divided, split in two. During the ripening of the male and female germ-cell, half of these threads of granule (chromosomes) were got rid of from the nucleus, so that when the conjugation of the two nuclei took place, the full number was restored. It did not call for too much imagination to believe that a new life derived half its granules from the male parent and the other half from the female. The continuity of the germ-plasm was Nature's chief care in reproduction, and this would explain the special characteristics each one of us possess—the colour of hair and eyes, and many idiosyncrasies handed down to us from our ancestors. The female germ-cell had but little power of movement, whereas the male was exceedingly active.