

A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

What is happening to health?

Well, they're telling us that never before has everybody been so healthy. Never before have people lived so long. Never before has the conquest of disease been pushed so far. And never before, in *my* lifetime, have I seen so many people feeling sick and miserable.

I won't deny that we don't seem to have devastating Black Plagues and such any more. We've found more up-to-date ways of decimating the population—but I'll stick to the matter of health.

It just seems to me that too many people are walking around (or are on their backs) half sick and half well. Drugs, vitamins, tonics, pills and injections may be helping them to spend more time on their feet and if you want to call that health, go ahead.

I may just be catching up with what's been going on all the time—but every year I hear of more new allergies. Never have I seen so many people sneeze or scratch so frequently at so many sources of irritation. More folks seem to have all-year-round sniffles, too. And ulcers. And there are the more serious things, like cancer, polio, tuberculosis, heart disease — all of which seem to require more and more millions of dollars each year.

Emotions Rampant

And—God help us—what about ailments that are more obviously psychological? Must be an epidemic there, too, judging solely from the popularity of such books as *Release from Nervous Tension, You Must Relax, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, How Never to be Tired, Don't be Afraid*, etc., etc. And one sees frequent notice in the papers about new institutions, or grants, or foundations to be devoted to the study of mental illness.

This is more than an individual problem. The increase of physical and mental (or psychosomatic) malaise has reached the proportions of a social problem. The books and pills, the institutions and injections are not checking the trend.

Maybe it's time to look for social causes of this social phenomenon. Maybe we shouldn't expect individuals to go around with exuberance and happy adjustment to a world full of poverty, war, injustice, regimentation and red tape. Maybe we should start having a few best sellers and grants for research on the causes and cures of *these* problems.