

T.B. Deaths Lowest on Record—Less Waiting Time for Treatment.

DEATHS FROM T.B. IN ENGLAND AND WALES last year were the lowest ever recorded. This was announced in London recently by the Minister of Health, Mr. Iain Macleod, when he addressed the third Commonwealth Health and Tuberculosis Conference organised by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.

But the Minister warned that the progress now being recorded in the fight against this disease gave no ground for complacency or slackening of effort.

Mr. Macleod recalled that it was about the start of the century that organised action against this scourge first began to be seriously considered.

"From then onwards until today, with the resources of the National Health Service now arrayed against the disease, there has been almost unbroken progress," he added. "And what makes the last three years significant is the evidence they have shown that the rate of progress is becoming faster—a most promising sign.

"In the first decade of the century in England and Wales over 1,100 people per million of population died of respiratory tuberculosis every year. Last year the number was 275 per million. In the last 20 years the number of tuberculosis deaths has been brought down by 60 per cent., although the population has meanwhile increased by a tenth. The toll of the disease is still heavy, but the progress has plainly been great, and the pace of it is becoming quicker.

"Notifications of new cases are also now slightly falling. In the circumstances this suggests that along with the much decreased mortality we are also making headway against the attack rate of tuberculosis."

When the Conference was last held in 1949 the most serious post-war problem in the fight against T.B. in this country was at its worst. The list of patients awaiting admission to in-patient treatment, mainly due to the great shortage of nurses, was at its peak of about 11,000 in England and Wales. It had now been brought down to about 7,000. Even more important was the fact that the waiting period for a bed had for the majority of patients in almost every part of the country been much shortened—very often to a few weeks instead of several months and to only a few days where there was special urgency.

Since the National Health Service began over 6,000 more beds had been made available for T.B. treatment, nearly two-thirds of them in the last two years. There was, unfortunately, still a good deal of difficulty about patients recommended for thoracic surgery for which present resources were limited. The problem of establishing and staffing extra surgical units of this kind was not one which could be quickly solved.

Mass miniature radiography now had an established place in the armoury against respiratory T.B. At the end of 1948 there were 36 units at work in England and Wales and they had examined about 3,000,000 persons. By the end of last year 57 units were operating and the number of persons examined totalled about 8,000,000. Of these roughly 28,000—or between three and four in every thousand—were found to have an active tuberculous condition.

B.C.G. Vaccination.

Referring to B.C.G. vaccination, Mr. Macleod said: "It is not yet felt that the time has come to make the vaccine available for general or indiscriminate use among the population at large."

Frances Burney Born 200 Years Ago.

FRANCES BURNEY, the second daughter and third child of Dr. Burney, was born at Lynn Regis in Norfolk on June 13th, 1752. Her father, having accepted the office of organist there in the previous year, was obliged by ill health to leave

London. For many years Dr. Burney lived in St. Martins Street, Leicester Square, but in 1783, on being appointed organist to Chelsea College he moved to a suite of apartments in that building, where he lived for the last twenty-five years of his life.

The family into which Fanny Burney was born two hundred years ago gave her a background both satisfying and stimulating. The Burneys' home was the meeting place for most of the distinguished artists, writers and musicians of the day; they were a united and happy family. Dr. Burney and his talented daughters enjoyed the friendship of Dr. Johnson and David Garrick wrote to Dr. Burney saying, "My dear Dr., I had rather have your family in my box than all the Lords and Commons."

Mrs. Burney died in 1761, one year after the family removed to London.

Fanny never was placed in a school, yet, at the age of ten she had taught herself to read and write and took a keen delight in putting these two arts into practise. Her precociousness as an authoress was probably due to the fact that in her father's house she was continually meeting the most distinguished writers and musicians of that time.

On her sixteenth birthday Fanny was induced to burn all her scribblings to please her step-mother, who thought such a pastime to be unladylike.

Following this episode the journal began, which is to me the most fascinating and delightful we have in the English language.

Famous people throng its pages and the story it tells is of a life which, for romance and excitement, can eclipse many novels.

There are first hand records of all manner of interesting events: a band striking up "God Save the King" every time George III left his bathing machine at Weymouth; a mad chase through the green glades in Kew Gardens when a mad King outran his keepers in order to obtain a little "same" conversation with a terrified Fanny.

For some weeks she probably adhered to her resolution of composing no more works of fiction and began as a less objectionable employment the "Journal" which she continued over so many years.

But the perennial fountain could not be restrained, and almost unconsciously the whole story of "Evelina, or a Young Lady's Entrance into the World," was pent up in the inventor's memory before a word was committed to paper. Her chief characteristics, so we are told, were sense, sensibility and bashfulness. Her understanding was superior but in company with whom she was unacquainted her bashfulness was a great disadvantage, and therefore did not shine in conversation. No one suspected therefore that this very bashful young lady was daily searching the visitors' appearance, gestures and conversation in detail to be recorded later in this famous "Journal." Still less did anyone suspect that she was writing a novel. "Evelina" was proclaimed as no other novel had been for years. It was published in 1778. It was brought out in the utmost secrecy, but her father was very proud when she was admitted into the fellowship of the most distinguished literary people of the day.

Johnson, her great friend and admirer, declared some passages in "Evelina" would do honour to Richardson.

She received £20 for this novel, yet Burke, so the story goes, sat up all night to read it and Reynolds would not touch his food until he had reached the end.

For five years—1786–1791—Miss Burney earned £200 a year for attending to the wardrobe of Queen Charlotte, but she was glad to accept a pension of £100 a year instead.

She married a French officer in 1793 and lived very happily with him in France from 1802–1812. Their son was born in 1794. Her other stories were "Cecilia" 1782, and "Camilla" 1795. The Diary, which extended over 72 years, appeared posthumously between 1842 and 1846 under the title of "Journal and Letters."

A. R. B.

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