

new cases of the gravest form of the disease every year, and in the United Kingdom as a whole 130,000 such cases. The worst form of venereal disease is highly contagious and dire in its effects. It claims its victims not only from those who have themselves to blame for contracting it. It is one of those diseases that may be transmitted from parent to child, so that the offspring of a sufferer is born with the virus actually in its tissues, to cause, it may be, hideous deformity, or blindness, or deafness, or idiocy, ending often in premature though not untimely death. Innocent members of the public, wives, children, doctors, dentists, students and nurses are among those who during the routine of their ordinary life are often accidentally called upon to pay a tragic penalty for the wilful blindness that ignores its existence. There is a great volume of evidence that locomotor ataxy and general paralysis are its belated manifestations.

We are living to-day in a new era as regards diagnosis and treatment. The microbes responsible for these diseases have been discovered in recent years. Means of diagnosis far in advance of previous experience have been elaborated, and treatment has been enormously improved. The time is, therefore, appropriate for an organised effort on a comprehensive scale to reduce the incidence of these diseases. The experience of the Royal Army Medical Corps during the last few years has shown the enormous reduction in all forms of the disease that can be brought about as a result of systematic effort.

Organised effort among the civilian population is impracticable until the public conscience has been aroused, and can only be attempted after a full and authoritative investigation. We appeal, therefore, to the public through your columns to demand the appointment of a Royal Commission—its members to include a substantial majority of medical men—to investigate the facts and to recommend what steps, prophylactic and therapeutic, should be taken to cope with these diseases.—Yours, &c.

We heartily endorse the demand for a Royal Commission to investigate these terrible diseases.

The Representative Meeting of the British Medical Association at Brighton unanimously adopted a resolution in support of this appeal, and the *British Medical Journal*, commenting upon this, says, "the demand thus solemnly made by the whole of the medical profession for a public enquiry into this most important matter can hardly be resisted." In reference to the fact brought out by the Royal Society of Medicine last year that there are 40,000 new cases of syphilis in London every year, and 130,000 in the whole United Kingdom, our contemporary says: "Recent research has thrown new light on the etiology of the disease, and vastly improved means of treatment are now available. The time, therefore, is opportune for an organised effort on a comprehensive scale to reduce the incidence of these diseases."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DESCRIBE YOUR HAPPIEST HOLIDAY.

We have pleasure in awarding the prize this week to Miss Ména M. G. Bielby, Cranford, Middlesex.

PRIZE PAPER.

For some years The Mac-Tab and I had spent August on the Sussex Downs. But there came a summer when she was detained at a case until mid-October, and we decided to go to the South Devon coast to rest in the warmth and sunshine that linger there well into the winter. Landladies had always disapproved of our unconventional ways, so we secured for six weeks, at a very low rent, a three-roomed cottage at Shaldon on the banks of the Teign, and decided to do for ourselves.

I took down with me many home comforts, and had to pay seven-and-six on excess luggage, but it was well worth it. I picked up The Mac-Tab at Exeter, en route, and her luggage brought our packages up to the disgraceful number of sixteen. A score of cheap editions of much-desired novels was her patient's contribution to our holiday.

Reaching Teignmouth at five o'clock we dispatched our luggage by the waiting carrier, and were ourselves ferried across the blue Teign. After the noise and rush of London and railways, how welcome was the peace of that crossing, facing the glorious sunset and the wooded heights of Shaldon. The clean-eyed, clean-skinned fisherman at the oars was so good to look at after London faces, and memories of "girt" Jan Ridd, Will Blanchard and other sons of Devon filled one's mind with the sweet Devonshire atmosphere.

We found the luggage delivered, and the kindly charwoman had laid the tea in front of a cheerful fire. As I always did all running about I was allowed the bedroom on the first floor, and The Mac-Tab installed herself in the commodious garret.

Breakfast at 8.30, the necessary housework, and preparing the day's meals left us free to go out about 10.30 a.m., leaving the lunch cooking safely on my little Rippingille stove. In the mornings we sat on one of the seats by the river, up on the hill, or down on the rocks, in hot sunshine, knitting diligently at Christmas presents. In the afternoons we generally walked until five, visiting the charming villages and towns for miles round. One day at the end of November it was warm enough to sit under the Ness until four o'clock, while I sketched the brilliantly coloured coastline reaching to Dawlish.

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