

steady though slight increase over all recent years and being the highest crude rate recorded. The increase affected both sexes but was rather greater for females than for males.

The mortality of women from puerperal sepsis and accidents of pregnancy and childbirth was 4.33 per 1,000 live births compared with 4.42 in the previous year; the improvement was not in respect of puerperal sepsis, which increased slightly, i.e., from 1.79 to 1.80, but in "other accidents of pregnancy and childbirth," which improved from 2.63 to 2.53. Although lower than that in 1928, the combined rate is still above the experience of the seven years 1921-27.

The rate for suicide which had declined in 1928 showed in 1929 a rise to 126 per million, the highest figure on record, the rate for females (73) being the highest on record and for males (183) only one per million less than the male record in 1927.

Deaths returned by H.M. Coroners as resulting from accidental injury by mechanical vehicles on roads increased from 4,492 in 1927 to 5,251 in 1928 and 5,799 in 1929. Exclusive of collisions between two different types of vehicles the deaths caused by motor cars increased from 1,550 to 1,660 and those by motor cycles from 1,043 to 1,162, while in respect of motor vans, lorries, etc., the figures rose from 938 to 1,162.

ROUTING OUT RHEUMATISM.

The Red Cross Campaign.

The following report on the results of the first five months' work of the British Red Cross Clinic for the Treatment of Rheumatism has been issued by the Society.

Though the time it was open is too short for any final verdict to be given on its value, the British Red Cross Society is happy to be able to report that its Clinic at Regent's Park for the Treatment of Rheumatism, which H.M. The Queen opened last March, has more than fulfilled expectations. From the start the numbers attending for treatment, both men and women, were much bigger than was anticipated. So great, in fact, were the demands for treatment that it was found necessary to close down the Clinic during August so that adjustments could be carried out in the internal organisation to enable a bigger number of patients to be treated. Structural alterations have now been completed, and the Clinic will be able to treat double the number of patients it was able to handle when it closed down.

From the beginning of the year applications began to be received, and when the Clinic closed nearly 300 applicants were waiting for appointments, and over 200 women—the number of women patients, as is usual in rheumatic clinics, has all along exceeded the number of men patients—were waiting for treatment. In future, the Clinic will be open from 8.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. This, with the structural changes, the increase in the number of dressing- and waiting-rooms, the duplications of equipment and the appointment of additional staff, will enable patients to be passed through much more quickly than was formerly possible.

In the past, men and women have been treated on alternate days. Arrangements have now been made by which it will be possible for both sexes to be treated on the same day.

During the period it was open 24,986 treatments were given. A gratifying sign was the steady growth in numbers of patients attending. The May figures, for instance, were nearly four times those of April, and the July figures were a record. Equally gratifying was the steady increase in the number of patients sent by Friendly Societies, largely at whose instance the Red Cross Society decided to undertake its crusade against rheumatism.

Patients took readily to the bath treatment. For most of them it was an adventure as well as a new experience, and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Apart altogether from treatment, useful work was done at the Clinic in diagnosis, and in the weeding out of patients who were not in fact suffering from rheumatism at all. Careful records are being kept of the occupations of all patients attending, and it is hoped that a lot of useful information about the occupational causes of rheumatism will be obtained.

Considerable use was made of the Clinic by private patients. It is hoped that their numbers will increase, and so help to finance the treatment of patients who are unable to pay the normal fees. In July alone, over a thousand treatments were given on the private floor.

The system of booking appointments for all patients has worked excellently and will be continued. This is the first time it has been tried out in this country for out-patients.

Five honorary visiting physicians, with fifteen clinical assistants, start work at the Clinic when it reopens. The staff now consists of a medical registrar, the sister-in-charge, with sisters-in-charge on each floor to assist her, fifteen masseuses, ten masseurs, as well as a lady almoner and her assistants.

In addition, six new consultants—a dental surgeon, a radiologist, an orthopaedic surgeon, a throat specialist, a surgeon and a gynaecologist—have been appointed.

For Approved Society patients, the course of treatment, which involves nine attendances, costs 25/-, with subsequent courses if necessary at 20/-. For private patients, treatments cost half a guinea each in addition to a consultation fee to the Consulting Physician of £2 2s.

Great interest has been taken in the Clinic all over the world, and deputations from Austria, Germany, France, Holland, the United States, and other countries, most of which already have clinics of their own for the treatment of rheumatism, have come to inspect it.

THE LISTER ORATION.

Lord Moynihan of Leeds, President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, delivering the Lister Oration at the meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons of England at Winnipeg said:—

"The secret of Lister's success lay in himself:—

"The prevailing opinion is that Lister was able to do what he did because of his supreme intellectual gifts. You will not accuse me of under-estimating those gifts; I have tried to place them in a truer light than before. What is, nevertheless, so often overlooked is his possession of those qualities to which I have now been calling your attention; his great heart, his matchless humanity, his unquenchable faith, his flawless intellectual integrity in pursuit of knowledge. Without his moral sublimity, without the 'soul-making,' as Keats called it, Lister could never have changed the face of surgery. His idealism, his enthusiasm, his ardour, his earnestness, and his courage were as essential as his experimental genius. Lister himself recognised this. When receiving the Copley Medal of the Royal Society in 1902, he said he had often thought that if he did deserve credit, 'it was at the time when, perfectly convinced of the truth of the principle on which he acted, and persuaded alone of the enormous importance to mankind of being able to carry out that principle in practice, he worked for years with exceedingly little encouragement from his professional brethren.' That inward light, the 'light of Christ in the conscience,' which shone so steadily in Lister is a beacon which will continue to shine on through the ages, giving heart to great men who battle with prejudice, that emotional reaction of ignorance to truth, which is the real obstacle to every advance."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)