

THE TERRIBLE SCOURGE OF LEPROSY.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE LEPROSY RELIEF ASSOCIATION.

A letter from the King commending the work of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association in its efforts to combat the terrible scourge of leprosy, and commending its work to the generous support of the public, was read at the recent meeting of the general committee of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, which was held at the India Office, Whitehall. The text of the letter, written in December when King Edward was Prince of Wales, was as follows:—

"We are fortunate in this country in that the horrors of leprosy have never gained a hold over our own people, but in many parts of the Empire this immemorial scourge still claims a terrible number of victims. The British Empire Leprosy Relief Association, of which I am patron, is performing a very vital task in combating leprosy in India, Africa, the Levant, and the West Indies. I hope the public will recognize the importance of their work, and will respond generously to their appeal."

Lord Zetland, who presided, said that a great deal of fresh knowledge had owing to modern research been acquired as to the cause of the disease and its susceptibility to treatment. The problem before the Association was to make those discoveries known and to apply them.

Sir Edward Gait said that the estimate of 300,000 lepers in the British Empire in 1924 had been increased to a minimum of 2,000,000 to-day, and Sir Leonard Rogers emphasised the importance of finding out through home visiting many unsuspected early cases of leprosy in children, and emphasised his belief that if child infections could be prevented the disease would practically die out within two generations.

LEPROSY IN ETHIOPIA.

Writing from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to the *New Zealand Nursing Journal*, Miss E. K. Templeton, R.N., a New Zealand nurse, trained at Invercargill, gives some interesting particulars of the leper stations in that country.

"Ethiopia is reputed to have a higher incidence of leprosy than any other country in the world," states Miss Templeton. "There are two institutions set aside for lepers in the whole country. One is at Harar, and is run by the French Catholics. It takes, I think, about 60 patients. The American Presbyterian Mission also treats a few leper patients at their station in Gorei; and, with our work at Furi, this is all that is being done, with the exception of a few injections of chaulmugra oil being given by individual missionaries.

"The work here at Furi commenced a year ago last September. There was accommodation (which is a stone building) for about 30 patients, but huts have been built to take the overflow. Dr. Ralph Hooper, of Toronto, Canada, is the medical superintendent, and he tells an interesting story of the supply of the financial and other needs for the first few months. The American Mission to Lepers co-operates to some extent with the Sudan Interior Mission in the work. The lepers are mostly indigent, and are fed, clothed, and given medical treatment free of charge. It is really a faith work in regard to financial support. In January, the average number of in-patients per day was 68.19; in February, 81.4; and in March the lowest figure per day was 89, and the highest 100. In addition, we have a clinic for outdoor cases, and to these we give injections once weekly."

Miss Templeton then describes some of the early symptoms of leprosy, and the progressive changes which follow. Treatment is given with the hope of checking the

progress of the disease. From the earliest day of the disease, chaulmugra oil or hydnocarpus oil have been used. The latter is the more popular because it is cheaper. These oils may be given in a variety of ways, namely (1) orally, but not much used in this way, as it is upsetting to the stomach; (2) subcutaneously; and (3) intramuscularly; ethyl esters is usually given, as the oil must be given at 50 deg. centigrade; (4) interdermally; hydnocarpus oil is given into the lesion. Its action is not a specific one on the leprosy organism. It probably acts as a general tonic. Further details of treatment are also given by the writer.

LEPER WORK IN INDIA.

A description of leper work in some districts in India is also given by Miss Templeton. "It is just a year ago since I left New Zealand," she writes. "I came to Ethiopia by way of India; and it was my privilege to see leper work being carried out in Rurulia, Rankura, Chancuri, in Cobra Hospital (Calcutta), Chinglaput and also at Nandalla (Ceylon). The number of patients at each of these places ranged from 850 to 220, and the number of out-patients varied. I was kindly entertained by the medical and nursing staffs.

"Dr. E. Muir, a recognised authority on leprosy, is in charge of the School of Hygiene at the Tropical School of Medicine, Calcutta. He is medical superintendent at Cobra Hospital, and is carrying out leprosy research work. I am much indebted to him, for he found time to give me instruction, and he arranged my programme with Mr. A. Donald Miller, secretary in India for the Mission to Lepers.

"The work which impressed me most was an experimental village survey scheme in the Bankura district of Bengal, which I visited in company with Dr. E. Muir and Dr. K. R. Chatterji, the latter being one of the three doctors working under the direction of Dr. Muir in this scheme. Dr. Muir explained to me that leprosy is primarily a village disease, and it is in rural conditions that its epidemiology and its control can be most conveniently studied. The investigation party consisted of three doctors experienced in leprosy work and five trained assistants.

"It is impossible to house in institutions the thousands of lepers in India; and in the villages, where the scheme is possible, it is surely preferable to institutions. The patients are not taken from their natural environment and their friends are educated to take care of them; and the means of maintenance comes directly from the people themselves. The Government gave a small grant to commence the work. It deserves support, and if any persons feel led to assist the work I am sure that such help will be greatly appreciated. The address to which donations could be sent is 'Dr. E. Muir, Chittaranjam Avenue, Calcutta.' In Ceylon the non-infectious cases are treated in street and village clinics, while the infectious cases are admitted to the institutions. The medical superintendent at Handalla told me that leprosy is decreasing in Ceylon."

THE GRAVE.

What is the Grave?
'Tis a cool, shady arbour, where the Christian,
Way-worn and weary with life's rugged road,
Forgetting all earth's sorrows, joys and pains,
Lays his poor wasted body down to rest;
Sleeps on—and wakes in heaven.

WORD FOR THE MONTH.

"Secrete amicos admone, lauda palam."
SYRUS.

Warn your friends when only face to face—
But praise them ever in a public place.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)