

THE SILVER JUBILEE OF THE DISCOVERY OF INSULIN.

We are indebted to the Diabetic Association for sending us the following interesting information:—

Just twenty-five years ago, two medical research workers achieved one of the greatest successes in the history of medicine—the discovery of insulin. All the medical world knows how Dr. Banting, returning to Canada after the first world war, became interested in the study of diabetes and in particular in the experiments that had been made years before on pancreatic secretions. It was known that the secretions from that part of the pancreas called the Isles of Langerhans had an important part to play in sugar metabolism. Those people who could not in their own bodies produce sufficient of this substance which was called insulin became diabetic and in a great majority of cases died of starvation within a few years at most. Attempts had been made before Banting's time to separate insulin from the other secretions of the pancreas, but none had been successful. Banting believed that he could achieve the essential separation if he were given sufficient facilities for research. Luckily he found in Professor McLeod, of Toronto University, a whole-hearted sympathiser. Unfortunately, the help that McLeod was able to give was limited, but Banting was supplied with a laboratory, and with a supply of animals to work upon. McLeod also turned over to Banting a young postgraduate researcher named Charles Best. The work was beset with difficulties. Often when a solution appeared in sight, the final result was unsatisfactory. Funds ran low, and Banting and Best sold many of their personal possessions to keep their experiments going. Eventually success came, and in the summer of 1921 they discovered a method of extraction of insulin. The tests on animals were satisfactory, and then came the day when the extraction was first used with a human being. The patient was a young diabetic dying in one of Toronto's hospitals. That young man whose life expectation at the time was a matter of months regained his strength and continued to live a normal and healthy life.

For their work Banting and Best were awarded the Nobel prize and Banting himself was knighted.

Of the partnership only Best remains. Professor McLeod died in 1935, and Banting was killed in an aeroplane crash in 1941, while flying on a Government mission.

There can scarcely be a diabetic throughout the whole world that does not feel a debt of gratitude to these men. The discovery of insulin has quite literally meant the difference between life and death. In the pre-insulin era, adult diabetics could expect to live no longer than four or five years at most, and a miserable existence it was at that. Hedged by dietetic restrictions, afflicted with various skin troubles, slowly wasting away, they died eventually in coma. The onset of death for child diabetics was much swifter. In most cases only a few months of life were left to them from the onset of the disease. The contrast between the conditions of those days and now is one of the most dramatic in medicine. Once a diabetic has been diagnosed it is

now a simple matter for a physician to estimate the amount of insulin required to enable the patient to eat all that he needs for good health and vigour.

The diabetic of today need be under no more handicap than the person with short sight. Just as properly adjusted spectacles correct errors in vision, so insulin makes up for the deficiency of the pancreas. As long as the diabetic is properly balanced, he or she can live as healthy a life as anyone else. Diabetic children no longer mean a waste to society. They can grow up into happy and useful citizens.

Diabetics throughout the world are making this year an occasion to pay their tribute to the discoverers of insulin, and in particular to express their gratitude to the late Sir Frederick Banting. In London, the Jubilee Celebrations, under the auspices of the Diabetic Association, will be held on July 5th at the Royal Institution, Albemarle Street, W.1, where Professor Charles Best, Banting's collaborator, and Sir Henry Dale, President of the Royal Society; will deliver addresses. Though only 500 people can be present, most of the 200,000 diabetics in Great Britain will be there in spirit.

SUNSET IN SURREY

THERE IS, AS YET NO PEACE.

In these troublous times, when cares and responsibilities of Matrons weigh heavily, and when events point to little or no promise of relief in the future, it is consoling to be able to leave one's office, and set out for an evening stroll into the lovely lanes of mid-Surrey, and watch the sun slowly setting.

Come now, with Prince and me, and we will reveal to your town-tired eyes, the hidden beauties, which lie so close to our doors. Whilst Prince speeds away to hunt out his beloved rabbits, and gently to nose out of the long grass, sleeping and unwary pheasants, we will meander leisurely, and enjoy the sweet peace, which still eludes the nations of a war-weary world.

To-night is perfect for such a stroll. Soft wisps of white trail across the cold blue of the sky, sparsely studded with brilliant stars. Banks of dark clouds, heralding the approach of night, are slowly gathering in the distant west, and stealthily the sun creeps towards them.

The air is heavy with lingering, yet elusive perfume. Trees, laden with blossom flank the lanes. In the hedges, crowded with miniature wide-awake, wild flowers, we recognise the speedwells of delicate blue, and the tiny wild geraniums. Our Lady's lace, profusely growing, adds a festive air, whilst gathered in the dewy grasses are baby larks and thrushes, newly born blackbirds, and myriads of fearful and sheltering insects.

Now we enter a lonely coppice, through which babbles a tiny brook. Bluebells are massed on its banks. Here and there in rich contrast, are clumps of golden marsh marigolds. Alas, stately daffodils have vanished until another spring! A cuckoo calls, and from the distance comes an answering note—cuck-oo, cuck-oo.

And now, what of the night sky? The sun has spilled its golden glory over the rim of the menacing clouds. Dark, yet majestic peaks are traced in lines of finest gold. Limpid pools of molten amber shimmer on

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