

DEATH BY SLOW STARVATION.

Dr. Humphrey Foxell, of Birmingham, states the *Daily Telegraph*, who protested against a Ministry of Food refusal to give a special allowance of butter to a patient who later died, has written to Sir Ernest Graham-Little, Ind. M.P. for London University, giving details of another patient for whom a permanent priority allowance of 14 pints of milk a week has been refused.

The Ministry's medical advisers said the patient was entitled to one pint of milk a day for one of his ailments, and his pernicious anæmia was completely controllable by modern therapy.

Dr. Foxell wrote to Sir Ernest: "It is an appalling state of affairs when 'medical advisers' who have not seen a patient advise against the patient's own doctor's advice. In this case it is virtually a sentence to death by slow starvation."

When the Minister of Food was asked at his Press Conference for a comment on reports that people had died after they had been refused extra foods prescribed by doctors, he indicated that he would make a careful answer in the House of Commons to a question that had been put down.

We shall hope to hear more on this subject.

A SPECIAL BED FOR FRACTURE CASES.

A new contribution to modern hospital comfort has become possible through the inventive genius of the famous American pilot, Howard Hughes, who was critically injured in a recent air crash at Los Angeles.

Hughes was admitted to hospital with 11 broken ribs, a fractured collar-bone and burns severe enough to prohibit the use of a cast.

With no cast, splint or support of any kind, he suffered considerable pain whenever he was moved, and for some time afterwards the pain continued.

To counteract this, he designed a new type of hospital bed which enabled him to alter his position at will and to obtain maximum comfort.

Hughes laid out a scheme in which a "spinal" mattress is divided into six independent sections, each five inches square. The sections are mounted on screw-jacks, worked by cranks within easy reach of the patient. They lie directly under the patient's back, and by adjusting them, any chosen part of the mattress can be raised or lowered above or below the normal level of the bed.

Each segment of the patient's spinal column can, therefore, be moved, and the spine brought into any curvature desired.

A bed of this nature, specially constructed for Hughes, was used at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Los Angeles. A similar arrangement may be of some value to other multiple fracture cases, particularly if they should be accompanied by burns which prevent the use of a cast or support.

AGREEMENT WITH THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ON INCREASE IN CURRENT CAPITATION FEE.

An agreement has now been reached between the Minister of Health and the Insurance Acts Committee of the British Medical Association on the application of the Spens Report to the current capitation fee under the existing National Health Insurance Scheme. Mr. Bevan has proposed that the present capitation fee of 12s. 6d. should be increased to 15s. 6d., with effect from January 1st, 1946, and that there should, in addition, be an increase in the special payments made to rural practitioners.

In making this offer, the Minister has made it clear that remuneration under the new National Health Service will be a matter for negotiation with the medical profession. Some of the factors on which the 15s. 6d. is based will, in his view, have a bearing on the negotiations for the remuneration in the new service which, it is agreed, will be on a higher level than the remuneration now settled for health insurance.

The Insurance Acts Committee of the British Medical Association, in accepting the offer have stated that they have done so without prejudice to the assessment of remuneration in any future service.

CALL FOR 125,000 MORE BLOOD DONORS.

The Ministry of Health reports that over 12,000 new donors joined the Blood Transfusion Service during the three months ended October 1st. But nearly 150,000 more volunteers are wanted if donor panels throughout the country are to be able to meet ever-increasing demands on the Service.

It is estimated that in 1947 at least 400,000 blood donations will be needed.

As a result of medical research transfusions are now making a great contribution towards safer childbirth and in alleviating such conditions as anæmia. Experiments on blood products are also providing valuable new medical aids in plastic surgery and brain operations.

The following indicates the need for donors in various Regions: Sheffield, 30,000; North London, 20,000; South London, 25,000; Manchester, 19,000; Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 19,000; Leeds, 10,000; Liverpool, 10,000; Cambridge, 9,000; and Birmingham, 5,000.

WHAT TO READ.

MEMOIRS AND BIOGRAPHY.

- "Dr. Benes." Compton Mackenzie.
- "Adventurous Life." Admiral Lord Mountevans., K.C.B., D.S.O., LL.D. ("Evans of the *Broke*.")
- "Life Without Theory." Violet Stuart Wortley.

FICTION.

- "The Hollow." Agatha Christie.
- "The Sixth Heaven." L. P. Hartley.
- "Lucinda Brayford." Martin Boyd.
- "The Little Kingdom." Emrys Humphreys.
- "Dick Heriot's Wife." Susan Inglis.
- "Sir Rusty Sword." Philip Lindsay.
- "The Romance of Casanova." Richard Aldington.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- "The Glad Companion." Geoffrey Brooke.
- "And Far Away." Garry Hogg.
- "Postman's Horn." Arthur Bryant.
- "Delectable Mountains." Douglas Busk.

THE CHALLENGE.

Not so very long ago we fought to save our land—pausing not to count the cost, we worked with heart and hand—in the dark days of Dunkirk and through the bitter years—paying for our victory with blood and sweat and tears.

Now we face another challenge. . . . Are we to survive? Can we hold our rightful place? We can if all will strive—working for prosperity with energy and zest—giving all they have to give, their utmost and their best.

We were rich—and now we're poor . . . because we paid the price—Proud to bear the burden and to make the sacrifice. . . . Are we then to throw away the fruits of victory? Let us face it as we faced the Great Calamity.

PATIENCE STRONG.

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