

Mrs. Breckinridge opened the first birthday present she has ever allowed the staff to give her. It was Freeman's 'R. E. Lee' in four volumes and a set of books she has wanted for her own for many years. Each member of the staff has signed her name in Volume I. We are looking forward to Mrs. Breckinridge's eightieth birthday in 1961, and another such gala occasion. Although it is impossible for many of us to get our tongues around Mac's Gaelic, in all of our hearts is the wish for you, Mrs. Breckinridge, 'Lang may your lum reek!'

A DELIGHTFUL BOX OF PRIMROSES, picked by kindly fingers, arrived one morning recently from friends in Devon, bringing a message that Spring is really on the way, and brightening the desk in our editorial office.

With this yearly gift comes a message in Devon dialect; this time it is—

"Though us be mighty short of most things we can still vind a vew Primroses for 'ee this Vestival Yur."

Thank you, very much, friends in Devon!

Awards to Blood Donors.

ON APRIL 3RD, HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL attended the Royal College of Surgeons to present awards to "long service" blood donors.

A bouquet was presented to the Princess by a lady who had received nearly 300 blood transfusions during the past ten years.

Each of the recipients of the awards has given at least 50 donations of blood—69 men and 16 women; the men received a silver lapel badge and the women a silver gilt brooch.

The design of the Award, which has been personally approved by His Majesty the King, shows two interlocking hearts surmounted by the Crown and resting on a scarlet background.

In addition to the silver gilt awards, silver awards are available for donors who have given 25 donations and bronze awards for 10 donations. Of the 500,000 donors in the Transfusion Services some 5,000 will be receiving silver awards and 70,000 the bronze. These will be presented locally through the various regional centres.

This makes a grand total of over 75,000 awards.

SIR CECIL WAKELEY, PRESIDENT, ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, then spoke:—

"We are living in a mechanical age in which year by year we see more mechanical transport on the roads and in the air; and the number of accidents which occur each year are increasing. Many of these are severe and require blood transfusion to save life; you are all familiar with these cases, the daily Press and the B.B.C. are continually reminding us of the fatalities and I wonder how many people realise that there would be many more but for the timely blood transfusion. In war time the mortality of our sailors, soldiers and airmen would be enormously increased but for blood transfusion.

"Since 1939 it is estimated that the consumption of blood for transfusion has risen 50 times. This is as a result of the growing consciousness of its usefulness stimulated by the great practical value it was found to possess in the treatment of injuries in the second world war.

"Given an adequate blood transfusion service many grave injuries which formerly would have been fatal have now been brought within the realms of successful surgery. Likewise internal hæmorrhage produced as the result of injury to such vascular organs as the liver, spleen or kidney would

have to be considered much more serious if it were not for the value of blood transfusion. There are now many recorded injuries of the heart itself the safety of whose treatment has depended largely upon transfusion.

"Disease, too, can be the origin of serious hæmorrhage. Nose bleeding is simple and common enough but occasionally resort to transfusion is very necessary. Bleeding from the gastro-intestinal tract arises from either peptic ulceration or as the result of cirrhosis of the liver. Thanks to blood transfusion the former is frequently amenable to cure by surgery and the latter is sometimes alleviated.

"Hæmorrhage as an accident or unavoidable incident is found in many operations in all branches of surgery, and with the increasing scope of modern operation transfusion has been given an indispensable place.

"Loss of hæmoglobin gives rise to anæmia which has an adverse effect upon post-operative recovery due to poor tissue healing and a susceptibility to infection. The anæmia may result from an infective process for which operation is indicated or be the effect of slow bleeding from malignant disease.

"In the third group of patients blood transfusion is required to promote hæmostasis. A feature which is lacking in two blood diseases, hæmophilia and purpura and in jaundice. Hæmophiliacs are no less liable to surgery than others and run a constant risk which is greatly diminished by a timely transfusion. In a similar way sufferers from purpura may be helped while hæmorrhage associated with the surgery of jaundiced patients is now a thing of the past.

"Modern surgery would be enormously curtailed if blood transfusions were not available when required."

DR. RUSSELL BRAIN, PRESIDENT, ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, made the following remarks:—

"Blood transfusion in medicine is a field in which active and important research is going forward.

"When the bone marrow which forms the red blood cells for some reason fails to produce these in adequate numbers the patient suffers from what is called aplastic anæmia. Before the days of blood transfusion this disease was almost invariably fatal. Now, however, it has been found that if repeated blood transfusions are given to a patient, and this treatment may need to be continued for many months, then in a considerable proportion of cases the bone marrow recovers and the blood spontaneously returns to normal.

"Another medical use of blood transfusion is to replace abnormal with normal blood. A small proportion of newborn babies suffer from a breakdown of their red blood cells owing to an incompatibility between their own blood cells and antibodies to them which have been formed by the mother and passed into the baby's blood stream. The modern treatment for this blood disease of the newborn child is to remove from the child's circulation its own red blood cells which are susceptible to the antibodies and to replace them by transfusion with blood cells of the same kind as the mother's and which, therefore, are not susceptible to the antibodies.

"There is a third use for blood transfusion which in relation to future developments is perhaps the most important of all. It has been found possible to separate out from the donor's blood particular substances which are needed by patients, who can thus receive exactly what they require without having to have either a transfusion of whole blood or an injection of blood serum. This has been applied to the isolation of antibodies to particular diseases. What are called the gamma globulins, for example, include the antibodies to measles and in order to treat measles, or prevent it in those exposed to the infection, gamma globulins can be given instead of the blood serum of those who have recovered from the disease. Similarly it has been possible to isolate thrombin, a substance necessary for the coagulation of the blood and of great importance to surgeons, and it is

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)