

Birthday Greetings to Her Majesty Queen Mary.

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE was despatched to Her Majesty Queen Mary, Colonel-in-Chief, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, on the occasion of her birthday:—

"On behalf of all ranks of Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps throughout the world I humbly offer your Majesty, our Colonel-in-Chief, with an assurance of our devoted loyalty, the warmest congratulations on the occasion of your Majesty's birthday.
Matron-in-Chief and
Director of Army Nursing Services."

The following gracious reply was received:—

Buckingham Palace.

MATRON-IN-CHIEF, WAR OFFICE, S.W.1.

"Most grateful to you and all ranks of Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps for message of loyal good wishes for my birthday.
MARY R."

Review.

Illegitimate Children and Their Parents.*

IN THEIR PUBLICATION OF "Illegitimate Children and their Parents," the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child will earn the gratitude, not only of the Social and Moral Welfare workers, for whom, as a guide, this book was compiled, but of those who would wish to learn something of the terrible human need in this vast field of work.

To peruse the some 70 pages of this excellent work, is to realise that the unremitting humane service of the Council—begun in 1918, for legislative reform to help the illegitimate child who does not ask to come into the world, reflects their endeavour that he shall have every possible chance of a happy healthful life.

In her inspiring foreword, the Editor, Lena M. Jeger, B.A., shows how various and sometimes intangible are the problems that must be solved in the difficult task of giving the help for which the unmarried mother, often "pitifully" young, really craves, and at the same time the moral uplift to guide her in making the best of her regrettable circumstances.

There is evidence that many unmarried mothers are bringing up their children with no help from the fathers, and it is now felt that single mothers should be trained to use their talents, instead of being thought suitable only for domestic work.

The Editor explains that this book is purposely called "Illegitimate Children and their Parents," because there is often too little concern with the un-married father. In our social records he is an elusive figure, often anonymous, alternately reviled, or beloved, and alas! there are the tragic cases too, where the father, anxious to make amends, enters on a loveless marriage, "a course which often brings disaster."

In view of the high illegitimacy birth rate there is an increasing need for a greater measure of educational and preventive effort—statistics record that since 1918 there have never been less than four illegitimate babies in every 100 live births. In 1949 there were in England and Wales 37,074 illegitimate babies born.

We feel that the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child renders an inestimable service towards the Welfare of the Nation in their issue of this pre-eminent work, where the social and moral welfare worker, in her high calling, will find invaluable expert guidance on every aspect of the conditions and complexities that may arise.

In conclusion we would ask just one question—"Does the Law deal severely enough with the procurator?"

We most heartily desire that this book, so ably describing the Council's undaunted mission of mercy, will receive the very wide support it so well deserves.

A. S. B.

* National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child, 21, Coram Street, London, W.C.1. Price 3s. 6d. post free.

Mental Patients Saved by Brain Operation.

Tenth Anniversary of New Technique

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, Mr. Hilary Marquand, speaking at Warlingham Park Mental Hospital, Surrey, recently, on the tenth anniversary of the performance there of the first operation for pre-frontal leucotomy in this country, referred to the notable work done by the hospital both in this field and that of electric convulsion treatment. Though it was still too soon to assess fully all the results, the Minister said that there could be no doubt that the operation had led to the discharge of many patients who might otherwise have ended their days in a mental hospital.

Dealing with the mental health service, Mr. Marquand said that it was not always appreciated that 40 per cent. of our hospital beds were in mental hospital and mental deficiency institutions. The actual number of patients on January 1st, 1951, was 143,289 in mental hospitals and 53,798 in mental deficiency institutions.

Before the passing of the Mental Treatment Act, 1930, certification was almost an indispensable prerequisite before many patients could receive treatment. Now 60 per cent. of the patients admitted in any one year came as voluntary patients.

Approximately one-third of the patients admitted to mental hospitals are discharged as "recovered"; many others are discharged with their symptoms relieved.

The number of certified patients discharged within one year of admission is about 40 per cent., and in the case of voluntary patients is much higher.

This large turnover is due to the intensive treatment which is now general in most mental hospitals. Psychiatry had made great strides in recent years, not only in regard to purely mental and surgical techniques but also over the whole field of remedial treatment, including occupational therapy, social and recreational activities, and so on. Another factor was the increasing facilities for out-patient treatment. Since the National Health Service the number of out-patient clinics—frequently organised in general hospitals—had increased. It was a healthy sign that there was now a general awareness of the problems of mental health.

Dramatic Fall in T.B. Deaths.

Biggest Annual Decrease for 21 Years

DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS in England and Wales fell by 20 per cent. last year, the biggest fall recorded for any one year since 1929, announced the Minister of Health, Mr. Hilary Marquand, recently.

The death rate per million for respiratory T.B. last year was 321, compared with 403 in 1949.

Reviewing the position since the National Health Service started, Mr. Marquand said in part:—

"We have provided 3,550 extra beds for the treatment of tuberculosis in the first two and half years of the Service, and recruited 1,500 extra nurses to the staffs of sanatoria and tuberculosis hospitals. But the really important advance has been in methods of treatment. We think we have considerably improved the quality of specialist service in this field and added methods such as use of beds in general hospitals and home treatment. Fortunately, just at this time, too, new drugs—streptomycin and P.A.S.—came along.

"Now, in the mortality figures for 1950, we see the first dramatic improvement. In 1949 the death rate per million for respiratory tuberculosis was 403 (516 for men and 301 for women); in 1950 the figure was 321 (422 for men and 227 for women). This represents a reduction of 20 per cent. in one year—the biggest annual reduction since 1929, the earliest year for which comparable figures exist."

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