

Good Progress of Modern Prophylaxis Against Leprosy.

By Sir L. ROGERS, C.I.E., M.D., F.R.S.

The complete revolution in the whole outlook of leprosy prophylaxis, effected by the discovery and establishment of the efficiency of the modern treatment by injections of soluble derivatives of chaulmoogra and hydnocarpus oils in early cases of the disease, has necessarily taken time to be so widely recognised as to effect materially the now largely obsolete measures based on the compulsory segregation of advanced cases. Nevertheless, there is increasing evidence in various parts of the world that the age-old cruel lifelong imprisonment of lepers must soon give place to the voluntary attraction of the cases for treatment in the early curable stages of the disease, and this modern method is incompatible with rigid isolation laws. The League of Nations Health Committee have recently appointed a Leprosy Commission of experts, which includes Colonel J. O. Graham, C.M.G., I.M.S., a leading member of the Association's Indian Council, and we have been invited to co-operate with this Commission in their work of preparing a plan for the International investigation of leprosy, and are gladly complying with the request. In a report to the League by two prominent leprologists of the Dutch East Indies they have advised the plan long advocated by us, namely that all lepers be examined by a small board of medical experts, who are empowered to allow early uninfected cases to be treated at hospitals or at home without being isolated. Again, in the Philippines a number of centres are being opened for the treatment of lepers in the more amenable stages, instead of sending them to the Culion isolation colony.

In our tropical African possessions the policy of relying on the voluntary admission to treatment colonies is proving far more effective in attracting the lepers than former compulsory measures, Tanganyika Territory having made a good start in this direction in place of the compulsory isolation which has been in use more or less since the pre-war days of German administration. By the end of the present year we hope to have several thousand voluntary admissions to treatment centres in various British African possessions; we are now spending much of our funds on these centres to very great advantage.

Good reports continue to reach us from all parts of the Empire

on the use of sodium hydnicarpate in the form of Alepol, and also from Fiji, where Dr. Neff is using sodium gynocardate " C " (hydnicarpate) as manufactured by Messrs. Martindale and Co., and this preparation has been sent to several other reliable workers for further trial. The cheapness, simplicity of use, and comparatively painlessness of these remedies render them an important advance in therapeutics. The hopeful character of the reports from various centres published in this and other numbers of

" Leprosy Notes " make it unnecessary for me to write further on this subject, as they speak more eloquently of the extraordinary advance in one decade, from the hopeless outlook of the compulsory segregation methods then solely relied on, than anything that I can say.
