

Success of the Latest Treatments.

By THE EDITOR.

That the latest treatments for leprosy are successful is proved by the reports which are continually being received from medical men and women in all parts of the world.

Dr. E. Muir, in the October, 1928, issue of *The Scottish Nurse*, wrote:—

“ That, especially in the early stage, leprosy is remediable, so that if suitable means are taken all active signs will disappear, and, provided the patient's general health is maintained, he will remain well and free from the disease.”

Readers will not forget the statement made by the same authority in his article entitled “ The Campaign against Leprosy,” published in these “ Leprosy Notes ” in July, 1928, where he said:—

“ But given ordinarily favourable circumstances, a patient determined to get better and a doctor who understands his work and is willing to take trouble, there are few cases in which all active signs of leprosy cannot be stamped out.”

Dr. Victor Heiser, Associate Director for the Far East of The Rockefeller Foundation, one of the great authorities in the world on leprosy, whom we quote elsewhere in this issue, recently said:—

“ There is so much difference of opinion as to what constitutes a cure in leprosy, that I hesitate to interpret results. But it may be said that there are thousands of persons in the world to-day who were once diagnosed as lepers but are now restored to their homes. No leprologist, no matter how experienced, can find evidence that these persons are still lepers, and so far as can be ascertained they are not capable of conveying leprosy. It is true that a few have relapsed; but what of that, in comparison with the many that have remained well? At Carville a number of patients have been released as they have recovered. Think of the hope implanted in the breasts of the lepers in many lands, and the stimulus there has been to increased effort among those who are trying to help. It is certainly encouraging to have recoveries where only failure was encountered before.”

Those who, like the present writer, have had to do with lepers for a good many years, well know the wonderful difference that exists to-day wherever lepers are cared for, and it is almost

entirely due to the use of the latest treatments for the disease. Whether it is wise to use the word "Cure" is a debatable point, but I think that most authorities would go so far as to agree that it is no exaggeration to say that "leprosy is curable in the early stages." Where Dr. Heiser and Dr. Muir would write of "recovery" the ordinary layman would feel inclined to use the word "cure." Both probably mean the same, that the leper is apparently recovered, and is free of the disease.

Remembering this, the following statements convey cheering news.

The Jamaica Mail, Kingston, prints a telegram from Georgetown, British Guiana, as follows:—

"Referring to the work of the Mahaica Leper Asylum the current number of the 'Catholic Standard' says, 'Several genuine cures of the loathesome disease have taken place since Dr. F. G. Rose has been in charge of the institution, which demonstrates that the dreadful disease is not incurable if treated in its earliest stages.'"

The South Pacific Mail, Valparaiso, says:—

"It is announced from Caracas that twelve patients suffering from leprosy have been discharged, completely cured, from the settlement at Cabo Blanco. It is understood that the application of recently discovered specifics is revolutionising the measures taken for combating the disease."

The Star, Toronto, Canada, publishes a Washington, D.C., telegram, which reads:—

"Eight lepers have just been released from the National Leper Home at Carville, La., as apparently cured and no longer a menace to the community, according to an announcement of the U.S. public health service here, under which the national leprosarium is operated."

It is, of course, clearly realised to-day that "treatment" means much more than the injection of a particular drug. It certainly includes the giving of some preparation of one of the oils used for leprosy, whether given by injection or by the mouth, but it also includes the treatment of the other diseases that may be present, and also the treatment of the leper as an individual. By that one means the provision of suitable employment (Dr. Muir and other authorities advocate hard work) and the endeavour to provide mental stimulus and spiritual solace.

The importance of all these points has not always been realised, but each has its place in dealing with lepers. If each has its rightful place, there is every reason to expect real and lasting success in leprosy work.

F. O.