

Leprosy Relief in Cyprus.

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Cyprus is the largest island situated in the Eastern Mediterranean. Its position is some sixty miles West of the Syrian Coast, and forty-six miles South of the coast of Asia Minor. The island has an average length of 140 miles and a breadth of forty-five miles. The population of Cyprus is about 900,000; of these two-thirds are Greeks and the remaining third are Turks. The island really consists of a fertile plain running between two mountain ranges, the Southern and Northern littoral ranges. The Southern group of mountains is known as the Olympics, and the highest mountain in this range is Troödos, which is about 6,400-ft. The Northern group of mountains is divided into two ranges, the Eastern and the Western; the latter, the Kyrenic Range, separates the plains from the beautiful and picturesque town of Kyrenia.

The history of the island is full of interest. The Phœnicians seem to have been the first people to colonize it. The island then passed into the hands of Egyptians and Persians, and finally in B.C. 58 became a Roman province. During the rule of the Byzantine Emperors it was the seat of an Archbishopric. From this time onwards began the Turkish bid for supremacy. In the Crusades the island again became prominent, and Richard Cœur de Lion made Limassol one of his bases. Cyprus finally passed into Turkish hands in A.D. 1570, and remained under Ottoman rule for three centuries. In 1878 the British gained controlling interest and a High Commissioner was appointed. After the War Cyprus was proclaimed a colony, and all payments by Britain to Turkey were discontinued.

In a country which has always been in close contact with the Palestinian coast, and has had trade connections with Egypt, it is not surprising that diseases which are common to the mainland have also gained a footing here. Bilharzia, the scourge of Egypt, has been discovered in one area of the island. Malaria is very prevalent in the plains, and leprosy has existed for many decades. The Government has recently taken a keen interest in the leper problem, and it was in this connection that the writer was asked to visit the island in order to help.

The work for lepers in the island is centred in the Leper Farm at Nicosia, which consists of the Farm, or Colony proper, and the Leper Hospital. The patients are permitted to live with as great freedom

as safety allows. The hospital provides accommodation for cases which are ill, or have bad ulcers. These are extremely well cared for by the Sister-in-Charge, who has only recently arrived, and has already made her influence felt in a remarkable manner. The efficiency of the hospital is mainly due to her enthusiastic personality. The District Medical Officer at Nicosia is in medical charge of the Colony, and is very anxious to do all that is possible to uplift and help the patients. The best available treatment is being carried out, the whole farm is being conducted on sound lines, and compares favourably with any of the better types of institutions seen in the East.

At present the only method for controlling leprosy is one of compulsory segregation. When one realises that almost all the cases are of the infectious skin type, and have been in such a state from one to three years before isolation, it can be readily understood that this system has not been an unqualified success. Considering the number of lepers in Cyprus is probably under 200 it ought not to be a difficult matter to bring the problem under control. So far Government have not moved further than segregating known cases of leprosy, and no effort has yet been made to search for foci of the disease, or persuade early cases to come for treatment.

The day for rigid compulsory segregation is, or should be, past. In a highly civilized community, with a limited number of lepers, some sort of compulsion is probably necessary in order to isolate infective cases efficiently, but this compulsion should only be exerted on those cases who cannot isolate themselves properly, or who refuse treatment.

In any scheme for combating leprosy it is essential that the public, and especially the medical men, should be educated to an intelligent understanding of the disease. For this purpose some responsible Medical Officer should be sent to India to study the methods of leprosy treatment and prevention. On his return he should be made responsible for organising a campaign based on the training of medical men, treatment and propaganda. If the island were surveyed and certain foci of the disease found, then this anti-leprosy campaign could be chiefly concentrated on these areas. The system of compulsory segregation should be replaced by one of notification similar to the one devised at home for venereal disease. All cases that are non-infective, or mildly infective and have sufficient means of isolating themselves in their own homes, should receive treatment at suitable outdoor centres. Those cases who either refuse treatment, or else are infectious, and have no facilities for isolating themselves, would have to be transferred to the Nicosia Leprosy Hospital until such time as they became non-infective.

Until some measure is devised whereby the early cases are treated apart from leper institutions, and are not subjected to compulsory segregation, control of the disease will be extremely difficult, if not impossible. No anti-leprosy scheme is complete without the hospital, colony and out-patient clinic, all linked up with a system of training medical men and the general public. Cyprus is only a small island and has a civilised people and an efficient government, and leprosy should not remain in its midst. Therefore, with such a plan as outlined above it should be possible to control leprosy, if not completely eradicate it from the island in a decade or two. The renewed efforts which the Government are, and will be making, are sure to be watched with keen interest by all leprosy workers, because as yet no country has demonstrated the possibility of eliminating this menace.

Leprosy Work in the Philippine Islands.

THE LEONARD WOOD MEMORIAL FUND.

AMERICAN GENEROSITY.

President Hoover has approved the Leonard Wood Memorial for the Eradication of Leprosy, in a letter to Secretary of State Stimson, honorary chairman of the memorial, in connection with the plan to observe May 1 as Philippine Day. On that date an effort will be made to complete the raising of a \$2,000,000 fund to be used to wipe out the disease in the islands.

Mr. Hoover's letter follows :—

“ I wish to express my sympathetic interest in the Leonard Wood Memorial for the Eradication of Leprosy, and to commend this great humanitarian effort now being made in the Philippines by your organization. The accomplishment of the aim of the Leonard Wood Memorial is in the highest degree commendable, and is not only a fitting monument to one of our noblest citizens but is a means of expressing a spirit of real helpfulness toward the Filipino people and eventually to the world, through the eradication of the ravages of this dread disease.”

Over \$1,000,000 of the fund already has been contributed, and the money will be spent for the erection of hospitals and laboratories under the plans formulated by General Wood before his death. On May 1 nearly 200 cities have signified their intentions of co-operating in the drive to raise the remaining amount.

—(*The New York Herald Tribune.*)