

Itu Leprosy Colony, Nigeria.

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Report for the Year April 1st, 1931—1932.

PRESENTED TO THE CALABAR PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE OF
THE BRITISH EMPIRE LEPROSY ASSOCIATION.

THE number of patients treated during the year was 1,012. The provinces from which they came are tabulated as follows :—

Owerri	...	...	...	...	455
Calabar	...	...	...	...	322
Ogoja	...	...	...	...	179
Onitsha	...	...	...	...	41
Warri	...	...	...	...	6
Benin	...	...	...	...	5
Cameroons	...	...	...	...	2
Togoland	...	...	...	...	1
Sierra Leone	...	...	...	...	1
Total	...	...	...	...	1,012

During the year, 52 were discharged and there were 21 deaths. New admissions numbered 182, including 50 crippled and debilitated cases from the Port Harcourt Settlement ; 60 not included in these figures went away for food ostensibly and did not return. A number were definitely improved and probably did not see any reason to return.

Treatment.

The treatment during this entire period has been with a mixture of hydnocarpus oil and its esters, which we make in our own laboratory. It is given by injection subdermally and intradermally twice weekly according to the individual charts of temperature. The results have been reasonably satisfactory. A rapid cure for leprosy has yet to be discovered. The 52 cases discharged were rendered symptom-free after being with us for three to four years. All traces of active disease had disappeared, pigmentation had returned to the skin partially, and sensation was complete except in some cases in the feet. The marks of leprosy are somewhat difficult to eradicate. The result is, however, a great advance on what was once a hopeless outlook for the sufferer. We have always 150 or so, in whom the chances of complete cure are remote, that is those who came first in a state too far advanced to be checked by any drug. They are fed, their ulcers dressed and their lives rendered more comfortable than they would be in their towns.

We take them in not because there is much hope of cure, but because they can be helped, and in any case many of them are driven from their towns or brought by their friends, skilfully deposited on our beach or road and abandoned helpless and quite unable to return.

As for the remainder, *i.e.*, the majority who are in the intermediate stage, some get steadily worse in spite of treatment, but there is no doubt that the great majority are distinctly improved. The lesions cease to increase and become less erythematous, the pigment returns to some extent to the skin, and the ulcers heal. They are stronger, feel more and feel better. We have proved that the drug has certainly a deterrent effect, as those who go home and for one reason or another stay at home for prolonged periods, in them the disease frequently breaks out in all its active forms, and the condition is so much worse. The treatment is painfully slow, but I estimate that of those present just now, if there is patience on both sides some 40, or 50 per cent. will go out symptom-free.

It is a matter of deep regret that so few cases come in the really early stages.

As for the external application we use 1 in 15 carbolic acid, or Ung. Hydrarg. Iod. Rub., 1 in 2 with vaseline, which have the effect of removing the outer epidermis, and when it is healed the patch is considerably darker. We use Avenyl in oil for patients suffering from syphilis before putting them on to the ordinary injection, while intestinal worms, hook-worm disease, etc., receive due attention. A few major operations and a great many minor ones amounting to several hundred were performed during the year

Untainted Babies.

There were eleven in the hostel nursed by clean nurses. One was taken home to be cared for by friends. So far, none of these, or those cared for in previous years, so far as we have heard, have taken the disease.

Industries.

The past year has been one of great activity, especially since last October when Mr. Paterson, Master of Works, came out. While the value of the work done cannot be stated in terms of hard cash, the fact that all the work of the colony with the exception of four men and three nurses in the Babies' House—that is for close on 1,000 people—is done by the patients themselves is a point worthy of attention. Every one does his share of the work, and the patients are kept occupied mentally or physically from morning to night. There is the work of nursing, police, sanitation, transport,

temperature-taking, occupying 30 clerks, carpentry, blacksmith-work, soap-making, cement blocks, native house-building and repairing. The erection of a hospital for women gave employment to many, while agriculture absorbs the greater portion of the labour for six months of the year. All patients, men, women and children get work which is organised under Headmen according to their strength and ability. There are always 100 or more, who for one reason or another are unable to do anything, while children and another 100 adults are only fit for lighter duties.

Much time and labour has been spent clearing more bush for future planting and although the farm is not what one may call a remunerative concern, it is without doubt the most profitable way of using the labour we are forced to employ. The farm products of last year are being used to feed the poor, and a further and larger area will require to be cultivated this year to provide for the steadily growing number on the poor list. Some 30,000 to 35,000 yams were planted and two or three tons of coco-yams along with vegetables, also 20 acres of cassava. A garry*-making industry has been developed at a cost very little under market value. This "very little under" does not by any means cover the cost of planting, but yet we are prepared to use the word profit rather than loss, for thereby we have been able to use the labours of the work-list, and so keep lower the number on the poor-list.

The extraordinarily low prices prevailing in the native market are against us showing a more profitable report. Last year at this time the price of garry was 5s. to 7s. a bag, while to-day it is purchased for 2s. We have also to-day 30 men and women employed in palm-products. These supply oil for soap, oil for the poor, and oil and kernels for sale. This shows a considerable rise in the amount of oil procurable from the same area. Two years ago there was scarcely enough oil to supply the needs of the colony, and now, during the last three months, we have been able to sell two puncheons,† and nearly a ton of kernels. This remarkable increase is due to the clearing of the bush, tillage of the soil and the weeding out of unprofitable palms and parasites. The money received from the sale of palm products has just more than paid for the labour employed. Again, the present prices obtainable are against us showing a profit, but this also may be considered a saving. It is our intention to cultivate a large area with selected palms; 1,200 seedlings have been supplied to us by the Agriculture Department.

* Garry is a flour made from Indian corn.

† A puncheon is a local measure (volume).

An attempt is being made to establish a milking strain of goats and thereby supply fresh milk at a reduced cost to the weak and the babies. It is too early to report on this scheme beyond mentioning that we have imported from England a valuable animal for stud purposes. We also hope to produce goats' flesh at a price less than that of stockfish, which is a considerable item on the food-bill. Joint efforts are continually being made to cut costs, to improve conditions and to utilise labour to the best advantage, to economise where economy will not hinder progress.

Educational, Social and Religious Work.

The expenses of this work are entirely defrayed by private contributions principally by private friends at home. We have six schools in the colony and three school buildings.

1. Children's Ibo school, 8 to 11 a.m.
2. Children's Efik school, 8 to 11 a.m.
3. Men's Ibo school, 8 to 10 p.m., three nights weekly.
4. Women's Ibo school, 4 to 6 p.m., three nights weekly.
5. Adult Efik school, 4 to 6 p.m., three nights weekly.
6. Adult school for the teaching of English, 4 to 6 p.m., two nights weekly.

The children are taught the usual school subjects, while the object of running adult schools is principally to enable them to read the Bible in their own language.

The Scouts, the Girl Guides, and the Brass Band, all help to brighten the life of the colony, and frequently provide concerts, and entertainments of various kinds. The gift of a cinema during the year was much appreciated, and the first display will remain memorable in the minds of the audience, African and European alike.

Some 1,000 garments, gifts from Ladies' Work-parties in the Church at home were distributed during this period. A new Church with a seating capacity of 800 was opened in August, a native building entirely with a floor which rises to the back, mud-seats, mud-pulpit and font. The band leads the singing, and the services in the Church are certainly an important feature of the colony life.

The ideal aimed at is to preserve as much as possible of the ordinary native life, except in so far as that which interferes with good government, and health, and comfort. There is a native court for deciding petty disputes, a market assembling daily from 5 to 6 p.m., for selling goods or produce made or grown in their own private plots, and the colony continues to be a happy place in spite of discipline and restrictions.