

Newspaper Cuttings

Leprophobia. The following is an interesting study in social psychology taken from the Manchester Evening News:—

“Although every effort has been made to kill it, rumour still persists that through the eating of bananas a case of leprosy has occurred in Manchester.

This rumour has been heard in various circles. It is always a variation on the same theme.

To-day I spoke to the man who, with his family, is said to have been the victim.

‘The rumour has been going round for about three months,’ he said, ‘but I have been unable to discover how it began. At first it was to the effect that my three-year-old daughter had got leprosy as a result of eating bananas.

‘Later it was spread about that my wife contracted it, and most recently that I myself had been taken away.

‘All three of us are in excellent health, but the rumour has been spread to such an extent that it has been causing me grave concern. People are talking about it in the buses and everywhere. If I could find out where it originated I should take steps to stop it.

‘I fear that it may be doing damage to the business and that people are avoiding me. A greengrocer has complained to me that the sale of his bananas has suffered as a result of the rumour, and I have even been approached by a wholesale firm dealing in bananas to ask me what steps I propose to take to put an end to it.’

Dr. Walter St. Clair McClure, Senior Assistant Medical Officer of Health for Manchester, said that it is quite impossible for infection to be carried by bananas or by any foodstuffs in the manner suggested.

'The whole thing is absurd,' he said. 'There is no case of leprosy in Manchester now and there has not been a case here for a great many years.'

Leper Martyrs Body. President Roosevelt has authorised the transportation to Belgium, in an American warship, of the body of Father Damien Deveuster, "Martyr of Molokai," says the *Irish Independent* Brussels correspondent.

Father Damien went to Molokai, in the Pacific, to minister to the lepers, and himself contracted the dread disease. Preliminary steps in the process for the Beatification of Father Damien were taken in 1931.

The body will be taken to Antwerp, and thence to Louvain, where it will be placed in the St. Joseph Chapel belonging to the Order from which the Apostle of the Lepers started out in 1863.

The U.S. President's gesture is the result of a personal letter from King Leopold of Belgium, written at the request of Cardinal Van Roey.

The cottage in which Father Damien was born in the hamlet of Hinde, near Tremeloo, has been acquired by the neighbouring convent. Nothing has been changed in the house since the famous missionary left it.

Father Damien was the brave priest among the lepers of Molokai whom Robert Louis Stevenson defended against attacks in a letter which has become a classic. In writing it, "R.L.S." feared that he had transgressed the laws of libel, but he was prepared to lose every penny in the interests of truth and justice.

Solomon Islands. The decision of the Bishop of Melanesia to reopen the big leper colony of Quaibaita on the island of Mala, in the British Solomon Islands, early in the New Year, was announced in London.

The number of lepers on Mala is estimated to be at least 400, and there are 100 out-patients who are treated at a permanent dispensary on the island. The colony is to serve the whole of the Solomons.

Nigeria. Lepers in Nigeria.—An important development of work among lepers is taking place at Onitsha, Southern Nigeria. Some two years ago the Director of Medical Services in that area approached the C.M.S. with a request that the Society would form a leper colony. At that time the cost seemed to be prohibitive, but subsequently help came from various sources. The native administration has made a generous grant; £1,500 has been guaranteed by private donors, and the Mission to Lepers and the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association promised £500 each. The C.M.S. has a doctor in view for this post, and Archdeacon Basden is making all the necessary arrangements.

Australia. The question whether leprosy is infectious, contagious, or not is likely to be revived by a recent case in Perth.

Some years ago Matron Hopkis, who was thought to have contracted the disease while in charge of hospitals in the north-west of this State, returned to Perth, and later showed signs of leprosy. She was

placed in the lazaret at Woorooloo, which is about 35 miles from Perth. While there she was nursed for a considerable period by a nurse who, however, discontinued nursing a considerable time ago. This nurse has now developed symptoms which are stated to be those of leprosy, and she in turn has been taken to the Woorooloo lazaret.

Dr. Wu Lien-Teh, the Director of the National Quarantine Service of China, said, that this was his first visit to Australia, and therefore, he was not in a position to discuss the health questions of the Commonwealth. It seemed to him, however, that one problem which Australia had to face was that of *leprosy*. The Government appeared to have this disease well under control, and he did not think that it would ever be a really serious problem in this country.

Leprosy not hereditary. In 1887 the management of the Almora Asylum for lepers, where the system of separating the children from their leprous parents was launched for the first time in the history of the world, came to the conclusion that "lives of children brought up apart from their leprous parents, instead of being blighted by disease and suffering are now healthy, useful and happy. This decision was based on the success this system has achieved in that in a period of 25 years only once was it necessary for them to transfer a child from the Orphanage to the Asylum. Generally speaking the result has been satisfactory in all such homes.

But on investigation it was found that of all children born and reared during 30 years in the 'neglected leper colony' of Tarn Tarn, two only escaped the taints, and even these were doubtful."

Pigs and Leprosy. We cull the following from the Qua Iboe Mission Report (Nigeria):

"There were pigs searching about for food. We have not been accustomed to regard these animals as Epicureans, but here I am told they will even feed on dead bodies.

It appears that when a person dies of leprosy, the relatives do not bury the body, for fear the spirit will come back to trouble them. By throwing it into the bush, where it will be eaten by pigs or other animals, the spirit is supposed to go into the animals."

Carville Leprosarium. U.S.A. Dr. Danner stated that of the "750 lepers admitted to the hospitals since 1921 a total of 171 have been parolled as 'symptom free.' He estimated that there were more than 1,000 lepers in this country."

Another Priest Victim. The Rev. Leo Lejeune, of the Marist Fathers, a missionary in the Fiji Islands, has caught leprosy of a very contagious form, a *Fides* message states, and has been transferred to the isolation colony on the island of Magokai.

Father Lejeune was born in Petitvoir, Belgium, in 1876, and has been in Oceania since 1901. For the past thirteen years he has had charge of the intellectual and moral training of the native teachers employed by the Marist Missionaries in that part of the Pacific

There are 525 lepers in the Magokai colony, Father Lejeune's

new home. It is an admirably equipped and conducted establishment, founded by the British Government, and staffed by the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary. There are fifteen European and American sisters and twelve native sisters working among the lepers. From time to time cures have been declared, and the fortunate persons sent back to their homes under observation. It is not impossible, therefore, that, under the care of a skilled doctor, Father Lejeune may be freed from the dread disease. Father Francis Xavier Nicouleau contracted leprosy while acting as chaplain at Magokai, and died there in 1928.

South Africa. "Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, Minister of Public Health said: 'Our leper institutions in South Africa are not just segregation depots, they are primarily hospitals for the treatment of those suffering from the disease. Yet compulsory segregation remains the basis of the methods that are employed, and, primarily in the interests of the community, the leper has to be subjected to restraint and deprivation of liberty. That surely carries with it a debt to be paid by the community to the lepers, and for that payment the services rendered by the impersonal State can hardly be regarded as adequate. The segregation of the lepers tends to make us forget them. It is up to us to fight against that tendency, and make a conscious effort to alleviate their lot.'

'I welcome the part that Toc H is beginning to play as the keeper of the community's conscience in this regard,' concludes Mr. Hofmeyr.

The five leper institutions in the Union have during the past decade changed considerably in character. Whereas previously they were institutions primarily for the segregation of lepers, they are now hospitals for the treatment of those suffering from leprosy, staffed by five full-time and two part-time medical officers, four lay superintendents, three matrons, eight sisters, 25 European and 10 native nurses.

Each institution has a fully equipped hospital and provides facilities for research work, while at the West Fort Institution, Pretoria, all the necessary facilities are provided and a medical officer specially delegated for systematic research work."

China. "The China Mission to Lepers is an international organization which has a committee of all nationalities, and has existed here for some time. In the past it has carried on educational work, given treatment and conducted its affairs through a central office.

The idea to have a national leprosarium has recently gained favour here, and \$80,000 and 100 mow of land were obtained for its erection. This leprosarium, adjudged to be the best of its kind in China, will be opened to the estimated 2,000 leprosy-stricken residents in the three municipal areas by the middle of October. Building construction is expected to be completed at the end of this month. It is designed to have accommodations for about 500 patients, but pending further expansion, it can only accommodate 100 lepers. The first unit which now occupies only 20 of the 100 allotted mow of land at Miaochongchen, Tachong, consists of 20 buildings: 12 cottages of the modern type, which makes possible the segregation of lepers, enabling them to lead a quiet home life."

The Shop. In the Leper Settlement of Tanu the patients are rationed by Government!

"Perhaps you will ask, if they are rationed by the Government, what do they want with money? The answer is, THE SHOP! This is an institution second only in importance, and not second in popularity, to the dispensary. Government rations are all very well, but housewives—and bachelors, too—like some relish, and the highly-flavoured native cooking requires a large variety of etceteras. So every Saturday, when the missionaries cross to the larger island for their Sunday rest and renewal, without which it would be impossible to carry on, they take with them a long list of special orders. In addition to the regular supply of tea, sugar and cigarettes, many odd things are specially commissioned. Chewing-tobacco, lime and betelnut, dried beans, saffron, cedar-bark incense, books, khaki shorts (1 rupee per pair), shirts (price ditto), coloured paper for ear ornaments, are some of the items which have to be provided.

In its time the shop has been potent as a means of discipline. If the lepers proved quarrelsome or insubordinate, the ladies had only to announce, "The shop will not be opened on Tuesday or Thursday," and the rebels were quickly reduced to order—by their friends, if not by their own feelings."

Canton Conference. "The Second National Leprosy Conference convenes here Nov. 8 under the auspices of the Rev. T. C. Wu, general secretary of the Chinese Mission to Lepers.

Lepers.

On the committee completing arrangements for the conference are Drs. F. K. Chen, Daniel G. Lai, James L. Maxwell, F. Reiss, E. S. Tyau, F. C. Yen and Y. Y. Ying. The congress will continue two days, with a number of delegates from other countries remaining until next week for sight-seeing and visits.

Dr. F. C. Yen, president of the National Medical College of Shanghai and concurrently president of the Chinese Mission to Lepers, will preside over the main meetings. A general assembly will be held to discuss general and administrative aspects of the problem. Reports from different leprosaria throughout the country will be heard.

There also is to be a round-table discussion on various phases of leprosy control, such as survey, finance, discipline, new policy, industrial therapy, standardization of records, research work, training institute and resolutions on legislative problems.

Among the prominent doctors from other countries to be present are Dr. George W. Wright, official representative of the American Mission to Lepers for the Philippine Islands, and Dr. W. H. Wade, chief of the Pathological Department of Culion Leper Colony, Philippine Islands.

The first National Leprosy Conference held in 1932 in Shanghai proved such a success that it was voted at that time to hold a second one in Canton in 1935, and from all indications of the opening day, this one holds every prospect of surpassing its predecessor in its attainments."