

## REVIEWS

**Leprosy in India, 1941.** Vol. XIII, No. 2. April, 1941. **Studies of the Lepromin Test** by Dharmendra and S. S. Jaikaria.

The authors report that positive lepromin reactions have been obtained in persons in whom the chances of exposure to leprosy are very remote. It does not therefore appear to be one of specific allergy. No direct evidence was obtained for or against the theory that the positive test is dependent on the resistance of the tissues. The increased number of reactions with increasing age is compatible with either theory. The incidence and degree of reactions is more marked in endemic than in non-endemic areas. Thus exposure to infection and increasing age influence the number of reactions.

**A note on Leprosy in the Kangra District of the Punjab.** There is little leprosy in most parts of the Punjab but more in Kangra than elsewhere. Its elevation varies from a few hundred to over 10,000 feet and it is sparsely inhabited. The known cases number 803, or 0.1%. The disease is uncommon at altitudes under 2,000 feet and most common between 4 to 6 thousand feet. The neural and lepromatous cases are about equal in number, but the lepromatous type is the more frequent at over 2,000 feet. The proportion of cases under the age of 15 is under 5% and of above 35 is 56%, which is unusual for lepromatous cases. Further studies are being made.

A note by Dharmendra states that the chaulmoogra oil of ancient Hindu medicine is *Hydnocarpus Wightiana*.

**They Walk Alone.** A Leper's Life. By Perry Burgess. (Dent 12/6.)

Our readers will know well the name of the author of this book. Dr. Burgess, after a distinguished career in other fields of social service, was from 1925 to 1930 the National Director of what

is now the Leonard Wood Memorial (American Leprosy Foundation) and since 1930 has been its President. In these capacities he has studied lepers and leper institutions throughout the world and has done work of the greatest value in the organisation of leprosy work in the United States and elsewhere.

He has now written a remarkable and moving book which will appeal to the general reader and the expert alike. The writing is simple and direct for the most part, but in its descriptions of scenery it is graphic and colourful. It is admirably fitted to convey, as it does, the essential truth of the tale it tells.

This is the life history of a leper as narrated by himself. His name and the names of others have been altered, but the experiences ascribed to them are vouched for as true.

"Ned Langford" was infected with leprosy when serving as an American soldier in the Philippines. Only after many years did the disease declare itself and only gradually did he realise the tragic possibility and, later, certainty. With the help of a brother it was arranged that he should be reported as dead from a motor accident and so he disappeared from his family and country.

The main part of the story is concerned with his life in the Leper Colony at Culion where he spent some 25 years. There, after a time of mental struggle, he succeeded in rising above the horror of his fate. He never recovered but nevertheless created and lived a new life, one full of interest for himself and of benefit for his fellow-patients.

Ned Langford's work consisted in teaching the lepers self-help, and in organising and leading them in co-operative enterprises which provided for the needs of their community, fish, electricity, light and power and the like. It is an inspiring record of what the lepers of Culion accomplished for themselves. Its value is summed up in the words of a visitor from Calcutta who says: "Nothing is more important, few things are, in fact, so important, as instilling some degree of cheer, hope and the consciousness of being useful into the head of people who must be shut away. I expect to carry back to India with me word of what has been done here, and I am certain that your work will bear fruit not only on Culion but in many places which you will never see or know about. Good luck, and thank you for letting me see what a man can do who refuses to be defeated."

Mr. Burgess's name and position are sufficient guarantees for the accuracy of the medical details of the book. It is not a treatise but much may be learned from it by anyone who is not a specialist. At its end there is a useful appendix giving answers to some of the questions commonly asked about leprosy.