
FROM THE JOURNAL OFFICE

A DEPARTMENT OF CASE REPORTS

It is an object of this JOURNAL, as the official organ of the INTERNATIONAL LEPROSY ASSOCIATION, to further the purposes of the Association. These as stated in its constitution are to encourage and facilitate mutual acquaintance and coordination of effort among people concerned in leprosy work, and to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge of leprosy and its control, "... and to this end to publish a scientific journal of leprosy."

The Editorial Board recognizes that the requirements are in some degree peculiar. On the one hand the qualifying word "scientific" in connection with the proposed journal was written in quite deliberately. That that requirement has not been lost sight of is indicated by a letter from one colleague: "We believe that critical laboratory work will become increasingly important in anti-leprosy efforts, and it is very good to see that the editorial policy of the JOURNAL is as definitely involved with the purely experimental phase as it is with purely practical clinical problems." Another writes—we hope not admonishingly—"In order for the JOURNAL to have the influence it deserves it is necessary, of course, that the best scientific ideals be maintained in connection with its publication." And it need not be held a secret that just before the first number of the JOURNAL was to appear the whole project was suspended for a time because of fears in certain quarters that there might not be submitted for publication a sufficient quantity of worth-while material—the emphasis being on "worth-while"—to justify a special, international periodical even of quarterly issue.

On the other hand it is realized that the objectives of the Association will not be attained unless the JOURNAL, while maintaining scientific standards, meets to a considerable degree the needs of the greatest numbers of those who

¹⁰An opportunity has been had to discuss this matter with Dr. I. Santra, of India, who stated that in their educational work in that country they point out that as the word "dhal" covers all of the pulses, of which there are several varieties, so "chaulmoogra" covers the several oils of which that from the seeds of *Hydnocarpus wightiana* is one.

are engaged in actual work with leprosy. These are clinical men in active work who, however appreciative of scientific studies they may be, have immediate needs that are strictly "practical." There has been a question about how well these needs are being met, a question that is not answered by the reflection that if more matter of other kinds were wanted by those for whom the JOURNAL is published they would supply it. The mere labor of preparing a formal article causes many interesting observations to go unrecorded, or the feeling that such an observation may be too isolated, or fragmentary, or lacking in scientific value may inhibit the recording. Yet in the long run there may be much of value, one way or another, in such observations if they were recorded.

Consideration of this question led to a suggestion that it might be advantageous if the JOURNAL should follow the example of various other medical periodicals and provide a separate department for reports of the kind referred to, if they should be contributed. Such reports might, perhaps, be supplemented by editorial comments on clinical, pathological or other features which they bring up, such comments to be by technical collaborators. Commenting on this suggestion one of the officers of the Association says:

"I am very heartily in favour of running a section in the JOURNAL headed 'Case Reports' for recording clinical material, etc. I think this will be a real help to some of our members to whom much of the JOURNAL is stiff reading. This is not intended as a criticism of the JOURNAL—I think it is very excellent—but it comes into the hands of a good many whose knowledge of leprosy is very superficial. Personal comment on such case reports is very desirable otherwise they lose much of their value to the ordinary man. I am tempted to write up a case"

It is, therefore, the present intention to inaugurate a "Case Report" department for brief, simple notes on especially interesting cases, or on pathological or other specimens or phenomena observed. Whether or not such a department will actually be inaugurated depends entirely upon the readers of the JOURNAL—upon whether the proposal is of sufficient interest to them to induce them to provide the material for it.