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 **Miracle at Carville.**Author(s) : [MARTIN, Betty.](#)Book : [Miracle at Carville.](#) 1950 pp.v+302 pp.

Abstract : Leprosy is a physical disease caused by a microorganism. But it is more than that. In whatever country it is found there is something about it which makes it a social disease, because it is regarded by the public with fear and horror and it breeds shame and the desire for concealment in the sufferer himself, and in his family. Books have been written depicting this condition, perhaps the best is *Walk Alone* by Perry BURGESS [see this *Bulletin*, 1941, v. 38, 674]. But the uniqueness of the present work is that it is a true autobiography, written by one who spent a decade passing through this gruelling experience.

Much has been written on the sulphone treatment in recent years, but here

the first time a personal picture of the long-drawn-out mental agony of leprosy at last the wonderful relief when an effective drug clears up first the clinical picture and renders bacteriological examinations negative. It was at the National Leprosarium, Louisiana, that sulphones in the form of Promin were first tried out in leprosy. The author and her husband were among the first to benefit from the treatment. The first result was a discouraging exacerbation, but when this had subsided the patient was much better, chronic ulcers of the legs healing up and the patients being re-energized and stronger and fit for work. Gradually it came to be realized that the sulphone was permanently effective, unlike the many so-called "cures" of the past. This was the "Miracle of Carville", and certainly it did appear as a miracle to these poor sufferers to whom so often in the past hopes had been raised only to be dashed to the ground months later.

The book is written in a simple, interesting style giving details of every-day life and fears as felt and seen first in the home and then in the leprosarium. The story, a flight of the couple by night from the institution when the disease advanced, their attempt to be arrested, and then relapse and return to Carville where more years passed in despair, with gradual weakening and encroachment of disease. This is the background against which appears at last the dramatic discovery of the effectiveness of the new treatment for leprosy. Up to page 222 almost breathless interest is maintained, but the next 100 pages are occupied chiefly with propaganda, useful in itself especially for the American reader but for the reader outside America clashing with the free narrative of the rest of the book. The narrative is resumed again in the last 25 pages.

This book should be read and pondered on, especially by all engaged in the study and care of those afflicted with this, till recently, saddest of all diseases. *Ernest*

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