



Gratia A. Countryman and Family Papers.

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In a very old and authoritative book, we find a very penetrating sentence: "He that seeth his brother in need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him."

In these trying days, we are feeling as individuals a burden of sympathy and an impulse to share our worldly goods as never before.

Do we not as clubs, as institutions, as organizations, feel the same impulse to turn our common help toward relieving the common need. May I apply this to the institution which I know best. We librarians must realize that in our way we are doing a great relief work. Men and women are suffering not only from physical deprivation but from harassed minds and discouraged spirits. Being out of employment and worried, the days must be passed somehow. We know that to lose oneself in a book is to find diversion and fruitful occupation. The more that we can persuade people to come to the library and find mental occupation, or to use this enforced leisure ^{as an opportunity} to study and to promote their efficiency for the better times ahead, the more ^{our} libraries will be fulfilling their function.

The smallest library can contribute its best efforts to this end. It can spread a welcome to its book ^{shelves} treasures throughout its community. Books, just good readable books are our tools, and can often reach the inner man and put iron into his soul when other sources fail. No library, small or large, should fail in this present emergency to use its resources to the limit for the benefit of its community.

MINNESOTA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

CONDUCTING THE

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SEAL SALE

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11 W. Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minn.

November 30, 1932

Miss Gratia Countryman
Main Library
Minneapolis

Dear Miss Countryman:

I want to thank you for so kindly agreeing to speak about Christmas Seals over WCCO.

I am enclosing a talk which you can read. If you wish to change it any way, feel free to do so.

I am also enclosing an introduction which the Announcer can read, if you will present it to him.

You are scheduled for WCCO, Friday at 2:15 p.m. The studio is in the Nicollet hotel.

Thanking you again for consenting to talk,

I am

Margaret McEachern
Assistant Publicity Director



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MISS GRATIA COUNTRYMAN

F RIDAY, DECEMBER 2 1932

WCCO-----2:15 P.M.

SUBJECT: CHRISTMAS SEALS

ANNOUNCER: At this time, we have with us Miss Gratia Countryman, chief librarian of the Minneapolis public libraries. Miss Countryman will speak to you briefly on behalf of the Christmas Seal campaign.
Miss Countryman-----

MISS COUNTRYMAN:

I came directly to this broadcasting studio from the library. The library was crowded with men and women, reading. One woman was reading a book of poetry by Keats. Another was reading "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte. A man was chuckling over the dry humor of Artemus Ward, while his companion was engrossed in one of Eugene O'Neill's plays.

And as I left them, I wondered if they knew that each one of those writers had suffered from Tuberculosis. Despite that disease, they accomplished much. But we, interested in promoting the success of the Christmas Seal campaign, hope to save our young people from becoming its victims.

Tuberculosis is a particularly cruel disease. It does not strike at the old people who have lived long, useful lives. It strikes at the youth of our land. It is rightfully called The Foe of Youth. Why the young should be its victims, we do not know. But this we do know. Those young people must be guarded. We can do that much for them. By working through the medium of the little Christmas Seal, we can help save young, promising lives.

The world today needs the services of every intelligent man and woman. We cannot afford to let Tuberculosis rob us of a single useful life when we have it in our power to save that life.

I mentioned a few writers who suffered from Tuberculosis. Let me tell you about the losing fight it caused Keats, *the poet*. All of you love his immortal line- "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

Keats was born in a stable, the son of a worker there. But he died an immortal at the age of 25.

His mother and brother both died of Tuberculosis. Being with them, he was exposed to the germs. And because he didn't receive protective care, he contracted active disease.

He studied to be a doctor. But in those days, surgery was not attractive. There were no anesthetics. The poor patient was strapped tightly to a table. The operation was performed with nothing to dull his pain but a lead bullet to clench between his teeth. He could not move a muscle. He could only groan.

Doctors then did not know how to stop the bleeding when an artery was cut. One day Keats cut an artery on a patient. The patient died and Keats announced he was through with medicine.

He could have been a good doctor. He proved that. But he found out he liked writing poetry better than operating. So he began to write. He made friends with literary men. And he fell in love with Fanny Brawne.

But Keats knew he had not the right to ask her to marry him. He knew he had Tuberculosis. He knew he was soon to die.

But he poured out his ideas and hopes into her sympathetic ear. And we are all indebted to this young woman for some of his finest poetry.

When his first great work appeared, he had barely three years of life before him. He believed there was no cure for him. In his day, everyone agreed that if you had Tuberculosis, you had to die of Tuberculosis. There was no way out of it.

Keats died at 25. What a pity! He suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis. Today, we know that that is the form most easily cured. Dead at 25 when he could have been saved and allowed to write more poetry for the ages.

If he had lived today, Christmas Seals would have taught him how to get well.

Then there were the Bronte sisters, Emily, Ann and Charlotte. They lived nearly 100 years ago in a remote part of the North of England. Their mother died early. Their father, a clergyman, suffered all his life from what he called chronic bronchitis. Today, doctors feel that his bronchitis was Tuberculosis.

As a result of it, two of his five little girls died of consumption when they were hardly more than children. The three who lived became the most promising young writers in all Great Britain. But they, too, died early of tuberculosis.

The Bronte sisters led a stern, hard life. For companionship they had only their books and each other. They showed early and fatal signs of Tuberculosis.

Yet their unwholesome home was the background for a literary miracle.

With great daring, the three sisters sent a novel apiece to London publishers. "Jane Eyre" was the title of Charlotte's book. It became the sensation of the day. Many of you have read it.

"Wuthering Heights" was Emily's book and "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall" was Ann's. They came to be regarded as milestones in the history of the English novel.

But the sisters did not live to taste the sweetness of success. Emily died after her book was published. Ann lived a year longer.

Charlotte died at 36. She wrote three great novels. She had just begun to venture out of her shyness and sorrow. For six months she had been happily married.

"Must I die now when I have so much to live for?" she asked pitifully in her last illness.

Christmas Seals are asking you to answer her by helping to prevent unnecessary deaths today. Somewhere in this audience listening to me may be another Bronte family needing the help of Christmas Seals to save equally brilliant children.

I want to emphasise the fact that Tuberculosis can be cured, if found in time. It is important to find the early cases of infection. And that is what Christmas Seals are doing every day of the year. They are saving countless lives in Minnesota.

The Christmas Seal campaign deserves your wholehearted support.

~~Not~~ revised
