

His Fighting Chance

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT "HIS FIGHTING CHANCE" HAS BEEN PASSED FOR
UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION

CROWN FILM UNIT PRESENTS

JOHNNY GREEN IN
HIS FIGHTING CHANCE

COMMENTARY SPOKEN BY MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND MICHAEL REDGRAVE
AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIGHT FOR JOHNNY

His name is Johnny Green, and he is 2 years old. He looks well enough but there is something wrong with him: he has had infantile paralysis or to give it its proper name, poliomyelitis. Johnny had polio badly. It left his limbs limp with palsy. But the full effects of this disease are seldom lasting. Now he is recovering and getting some power back. Like this. A torch is like a new toy, pleasant to play with and interesting, Just watch his face. But still he can't get his head off the bed. It would be nice to grasp it with the other hand too. There's nothing he can do about that yet.

Maybe polio is a better name than infantile paralysis. They were always adult cases and now it attacks grown-ups as much as children. John Broadbent was about nineteen when he caught polio and he is typical of many. It could have been flu but he thought he might be sickening for something and sensibly went to bed.

In the earlier stages, there's often not much to distinguish polio from some other diseases. Well, this sort of test narrows down the search. John can't quite kiss his knees as he used to be able to quite easily. But the doctor goes on looking for more definite signs. You see, that's alright. But there is a weakness here in the left leg.

The sooner the doctor can be sure about polio, the better the chances of John's recovery. Well, he was sure. But early treatment is so important that patients are admitted to hospital even in quite doubtful cases. Doctors err on the safe side.

... PARALYSIS: 662 NEW CASES REPORTED

... PARALYSIS: GRATIFYING DROP

And in fact, about 20 per cent of the first notified cases turn out not to have polio but something else, often serious enough to require a hospital treatment.

The problem then is to help patients lead happy and useful lives, at the same time to encourage the use of the paralyzed limbs and so speed their return to full activity. Helping patients to help themselves rehabilitation offers tremendous scope for the ingenuity of both doctors and patients. The methods of rehabilitation come from a study of many diseases and injuries. The technique which measures returning strength with polio also brings back activity to those crippled by other illnesses or accidents.

Doctors can tell the proper moment which varies with every patient to start active exercises. At first, the patient can barely help but as long as she feels she is helping, that is the thing. Recovery is the

aim. Confidence grows. Before long, patients encourage one another and hardly realize it. It may be a long battle.

Of those who have won that battle, the late president Roosevelt was the foremost. As one of the great men of our time, he holds a firm place in the affections of the people of Britain.

“It is with both pleasure and sadness that I welcome Mrs. Roosevelt here today. I am shortly going to invite her to unveil the monument to her husband, the late president of United States of America.”

Let Mrs. Roosevelt say what faith in rehabilitation means:

I can remember when to have polio meant that you remained a cripple all your life. A great deal has been done since then. Watch these people respond and you will see what rehabilitation means, from the simplest exercise to this, where water supports the limbs. A pool was built at the White House for my husband to exercise in. For most people it is out of reach but in Britain, hospital treatment exists as a right. Progress is not always straightforward and simple. With severe paralysis you need mechanical aids. Recovery can be imperfect and seem so slow. There are those whose rehabilitation is delayed for weeks or months while they gain strength but they remain happy. Who is that? This is partly because their intelligence is unharmed and partly because everything is done to stimulate interest and build up confidence.

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Then it is a natural step to occupational therapy, making patients use damaged muscles. Sheila Harris does not walk but she is determined to live a useful life and she will. But most polio cases are like John Broadbent. They fight back and they recover. And there are no serious effects though it takes time, of course.

Of the rest, 4 in 5 are able to return to work.

Felicity Lane Fox has undertaken a political career which, I well know, is strenuous. How much it means to her to be less dependent on others!

In the arts, among producers and writers, Miss Richmal Crompton, the authoress whose stories are a joy to so many.

And so with other polio patients. The almoner of this very hospital is one. She drives a car with a special hand clutch and works as hard as someone sound in every limb.

John Broadbent knows there must be changes in his life but he is ready to meet those changes. First he needs a job he can do mostly sitting down, then training all over again. For him, draftsmanship is new. What are his feelings?

“In spite of infantile paralysis I can now take an active part in everyday life. I enjoy the noise and bustle of the working world, the smell of a workshop, and my everyday contacts with other people. These things, which others take for granted, mean a great deal to me for they mean I am once more one of the crowd.”

And Johnny Green? Here is this little boy. He is 3 now, a year after you first saw him and still in hospital.

He is not like a grown-up. He has never even walked. He has to learn everything, using his arms for instance.

But skilled doctors and nurses are going to help him. His parents are going to help and encourage him. From then he will gain confidence. And I can tell you this: he has a better chance of making good with the advances there have been in medical techniques since then than Franklin Roosevelt had when he first started along the hard road back.

So go ahead Johnny! Go ahead and win through.

THE END

CROWN FILM UNIT

A CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION FILM

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