

## Medical Matters.

### VACCINATION.



WHATEVER opinions may be held concerning the advantages of vaccination, everyone must feel that the present condition of affairs is little short of deplorable. If the Vaccination Acts are wrong they should be altered; but to maintain the Acts on the Statutebook, and yet not to enforce them, tends to bring the law itself into ridicule and contempt. It was generally expected that when the Royal Commission made its report, some Parliamentary action would be taken. But it was seven years before the Commission concluded its work, and the Government have thus far shown no intention of proposing legislation in the matter. Meanwhile, in every part of the country, the provisions of the existing Acts are being neglected, and no attempt is made by the local authorities to enforce them. In fact, in some large towns, such as Leicester, it is indisputable that some of the very persons who are entrusted with the duty of carrying out the Acts almost openly advocate disobedience to the law, with the natural result that it has become a dead letter. It is believed by the great majority of medical men that this neglect of a precaution and preventative will sooner or later involve a natural retribution in the shape of a virulent epidemic of small-pox. But, at least, so long as the law stands it should be obeyed—that is a dictum with which most people will agree. Meanwhile the Local Government Board has been making valuable inquiries into the methods of vaccination pursued in various Continental countries. The result of the investigation has just been published and circulated amongst Boards of Guardians. It would seem that, except in Paris and other large towns in France, the practice of vaccination direct from the calf to the arm has been discontinued, the use of calf lymph preserved in glycerine being almost universal. The use of calf lymph instead of human is now so general and it affords such excellent results, while at the same time it undoubtedly prevents the possibility of conveying diseases from child to child which formerly existed, that it seems certain that in future legislation the importance of this particular method of

vaccination will be strongly emphasized. Indeed, this is one of the recommendations made by the inspectors of the Local Government Board, who have conducted the inquiry to which reference has been made; another being that the animal vaccine stations of the Board should be entirely reorganized both as regards construction and administration.

### LEPROSY.

THE serum treatment has now been tried in the case of this ancient and most rebellious disease. An eminent South American physician has for some years been conducting experiments in this direction, and has recently published the results which he has attained and a full account of the methods he has employed. Briefly, it may be explained that he bleeds the patient suffering from leprosy and the serum is separated from the blood. Then the serum is injected into a healthy horse, and after three injections, at intervals of ten days, the horse is bled and the serum is separated from the blood. This serum is then injected into patients suffering from leprosy even in the most advanced stages. The results obtained are certainly remarkable. Each injection, which was given as a rule every third day, caused a marked "reaction"—chills, fever, perspiration, neuralgic and muscular pains all over the body, frequently some eruptions on the skin, and generally some giddiness. If the fever was considerable the injections were stopped for a time and then given less frequently. Apparently in every case the most marked improvement was caused. The general health became much better, the tubercular swellings characteristic of the disease became smoothed down (so to speak) and gradually disappeared, either by absorption or by suppuration; the ulcers on the skin and mucous membrane became healthy instead of sloughing or indolent, and finally healed completely; and finally the sensibility of the skin became normal. These results have received close attention in South America, and the remedy will doubtless be accorded a full and careful trial in every country in which leprosy is endemic, especially in South Africa and India, in which countries the Governments have, within recent years, made special efforts to isolate lepers and treat them with greater care and kindness than has hitherto been the rule.

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