

## Medical Matters.

### THE MEDICAL SESSION.



OCTOBER 1st remains the New Year's Day of the medical profession, although the somewhat recent innovation whereby medical students can also commence their studies on May 1st, has, to some extent, deprived the old date of its distinctive character. But the great majority still begin their pupilage in the Medical Colleges in the Winter Session, and the good old fashion of an introductory ceremony in October is still maintained. A few Schools keep to the Lecture and Distribution of Prizes; when the success of the past year is rewarded, and the right hand of fellowship is held out, on behalf of the Medical Staff, to those who are about to enter their great calling. Others celebrate the event by a Dinner, where old Students can renew the friendship of former days, and the new beginner can, under cover of a dinner speech, hear what great things his Alma Mater has done in the past, and what high traditions he will be expected to uphold, and, in his turn, transmit to others. The advantages of either form of reunion are obvious, and it would surely be well if the Nursing Schools of the future could be organized upon lines similar to those of the Medical Schools of the present day. For one thing, it would certainly be well if the plan already in force at St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals could be generally adopted, and Probationers could enter only on some four definite dates in each year. In due time, also, we may, perhaps, see the institution of some annual gathering at each Nursing School, to draw old workers together, and to impress the novices with a high sense both of the fellowship of their profession and of the responsibilities of their future work.

### SOWING THE WIND.

For some four years, whilst the Royal Commission on Vaccination has been pursuing its critical inquiry into this subject, it is generally admitted that the Boards of Guardians throughout the country have been more or less lax in enforcing the powers confided to them by law for the maintenance of compulsory vaccination. Some have openly confessed that the matter appeared to them to be *sub judice*, and they have, therefore, declined, in a manner which appears to us to be both illogical and illegal, to carry out the provisions of a Statute which certainly has not been repealed. This is an

assertion of a principle which can hardly be defended, for it amounts to an apology for the violation of any law provided that a few faddists can exercise sufficient political influence to bring about an inquiry into the working of that law. As our American cousins would put it, such a course of action is decidedly "previous," and in this particular instance, we would go further, and say that it is fraught with danger to the whole community. There is good reason to believe that, in large districts, compulsory vaccination has been so neglected, that there are large numbers of children who have not yet been protected. In the event of an epidemic—and, perhaps, even the most infatuated opponent of vaccination, will not deny that small-pox is rapidly becoming more prevalent and more fatal—the mortality amongst these children would be terrible. And the cost of isolation, moreover, would be enormous, and, in all probability, would be wasted money, inasmuch as it would be impossible to make the measure effectual, because of the rapid spread of infection. The signs of the times are evident, and, thanks to the faddists, this sentimental country is sowing the wind for a whirlwind of loathsome disease.

### THE PROGRESS OF CHOLERA.

It is a matter for much congratulation that the autumn has arrived without the expected outbreak of Cholera. The best possible proof has, therefore, been furnished that, so far as prevention goes, both our knowledge and our arguments are correct, and our methods successful. It has undoubtedly been a valuable object lesson to other nations that this country has been able to keep the enemy from effecting a landing in force, without the cumbersome, and, as we argue, useless, and, therefore, misleading defence of quarantine. It is well known that, for the past two months, cases of Asiatic cholera have occurred in various towns—chiefly seaports. But by immediate isolation and careful disinfection, the plague has, in every instance, thus far, been effectually stayed, and there is now good grounds for hope that, with the advent of colder weather, there will be few fresh cases imported. Of course, to a large extent, this eminently satisfactory result is due to the greatly improved sanitary condition of the country as compared with the state of affairs in 1863, or in earlier epidemics; and thus the large sums expended in sanitation are proved to have been a valuable investment. But the greatest credit is also due to the Medical Department of the Local Government Board, and to the Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors of the seaports, and of the various towns where cases have occurred, for the energy and skill with which they have isolated the infected and protected the healthy.

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