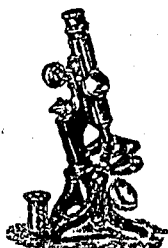


## Medical Matters.

### MEDICAL AID ASSOCIATIONS.



AS everything which affects the medical profession is of interest to Nurses, it will not be out of place to refer in this column to a subject which is at present a burning question in all medical circles. Many years ago, it became the custom for medical men to allow and even encourage their poorer patients to form themselves into what were termed Medical Clubs; that is to say, so many score or hundreds of persons paid to a common fund some small sum per week, the total amount sometimes aggregating to a considerable sum and being paid to the club doctor, who in return undertook to attend upon any of the members during illness. The majority of working men are rarely ill, and consequently the system was of mutual benefit. The doctor received a regular addition to his income, the members when ill obtained excellent attention. Unfortunately, however, certain insurance societies traded upon this system, and on the principle of the grocer who encourages the sale of his tea by giving teapots to his customers, these societies offered to those who insured with them that they should be attended by medical men in any illness which might befall them; the society, of course, arranging with a medical man to give his services in such an event. The system proved so popular and so remunerative that it rapidly spread, and now there are few towns or even villages into which the agents of these societies have not penetrated. Medical men at first accepted the appointments of referees offered to them by these companies with mutual satisfaction. But gradually abuses have crept into the system, which have rendered the conditions of the work quite intolerable to the profession. The medical officers find themselves practically the servants of the local agents, and liable to insult or even dismissal at the will of uneducated Jacks-in-office. They find themselves called upon to attend, for the sum of four shillings a year, upon well-to-do tradesmen, and even persons in better circumstances and higher social standing, and that they are expected to attend for the same sum, upon such hundreds of patients, that it is a physical impossibility for them to do justice to the sick. All over the

country, therefore, the profession is in revolt against this system, and medical men are everywhere combining to resist the encroachments of these Medical Aid Associations.

### MESSAGE FOR CONSTIPATION.

ATTENTION has been called to the many advantages of treating chronic constipation by massage of the abdomen, in preference to the administration of strong internal medicines. The procedure consists of systematic massage along the course of the small and large intestines, for eight or ten minutes at a time, two or three times a day. The diet is carefully regulated, and the patient is encouraged to indulge also in gymnastic exercises. It may be remembered that it was shown, in these columns last year, that the use of a mild galvanic current to the intestinal muscles, regularly applied, is also a most useful measure in many cases of chronic constipation. Massage, combined with electricity, has been found to cure many of those distressing cases which prove completely rebellious to the use of ordinary aperient medicines.

### MEDICAL WOMEN.

A MATTER which is exciting considerable interest in medical circles is the request from medical women to be admitted to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of London. The former have replied adversely to the request, and, for some time, it appeared as if a similar want of chivalry would show itself also amongst the latter gentlemen. But, although a considerable diversity of opinion has been expressed, a recent meeting of the Fellows of the College of Surgeons has resolved by a majority in favour of the admission of women. It is also noticeable that at the College of Physicians, when the matter was debated eighteen years ago, the request of the women for admission to the examinations was refused by 68 votes to 18, whereas on the recent occasion the voting was only 59 against 50; that is to say, that the opposition has dropped from 73½ per cent. to 15¼ per cent., a startling and most significant change of opinion in less than two decades. It is impossible to believe that the College of Physicians will be able to maintain its present attitude. Women have obtained equal rights with men in other professional matters, and their admission to examinations at other Universities and Corporations is now an accepted fact.

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