

## Medical Matters.

### THE NATION AND THE COLONIES.

One of the most important subjects of both medical and imperial interest at the present day is that of Tropical Medicine, and the address delivered at the London School of Tropical Medicine by Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford, on "The Nation and the Tropics," when the chair was taken by the American Ambassador, was as opportune and interesting as it was brilliant and instructive.

Professor Osler said that the two problems of the first rank in dealing with subject nations were order and health, and it was impossible to overrate the importance of modern sanitation. In this country sanitary organisation was in a fairly satisfactory condition, but there still remained to be obtained complete victory over typhoid fever, and the reduction of mortality from tuberculosis and children's diseases, while not even a truce had yet been arranged with cancer. It was different with the Empire at large. Some 60,000,000 perhaps lived under good and improving sanitary conditions, but a very different story must be told of our vast dependencies with their teeming millions. The great enemies of the tropics were malaria, plague, cholera, yellow fever, dysentery, beriberi, relapsing fever, and certain parasitic diseases, such as anchylostomiasis. Of all but one of these they knew the germs, the conditions of their growth, and in nearly all the mode of propagation.

Yellow fever illustrated the importance of effective organisation, and the experience in the Isthmus of Panama was a striking illustration of the efficiency of modern sanitary methods in one of the world's great death traps. In 1908 malaria, dysentery, and beri-beri combined killed fewer people there than the two great killing diseases of the temperate zone, pneumonia and tuberculosis. The anti-malarial campaign was being pushed on with vigour and success in Italy, India, parts of Africa, and the United States, and a vigorous campaign was successfully proceeding against the group of diseases caused by the trypanosomes, and sleeping-sickness, which seemed within recent days to have threatened the very existence of the race in Uganda, showed a steady diminution.

It was necessary that those who took up the heavy burden of securing health in the tropics should have organised centres from which the work might proceed. The sleeping-sickness bureau under the auspices of the Royal Society was a model of this sort. Similar bodies had dealt with plague and malaria. Such organisa-

tions should be placed on a permanent basis, and unified under a Central Tropical Institute, in touch, through its different departments, with its workers all over the world. By far the most useful work during the past twenty years in British medicine had been the result of carefully planned expeditions sent out partly by the liberality of the citizens of Liverpool, particularly of Sir Alfred Jones, and partly as Commissions by the Government and the Royal Society.

Professor Osler expressed astonishment at the good work done on a total capital of less than £40,000, by the London School of Tropical Medicine, founded 10 years ago by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, with the great advantage of the guidance, and the prestige of the name of Sir Patrick Manson, dean of students of tropical medicine. The School had trained nearly 1,000 men for work in the Colonies and dependencies. England had had the first start, but the United States, Germany, France, Holland, and Japan were in the field. It behoved the country to equip adequately such a school as that, giving it the necessary professorships, a large hospital, laboratories, museums, and libraries, and in connection with it subsidiary schools in the tropics. Such a scheme was well within the possibility of achievement, not needing more than an endowment of £2,000,000.

### THE MEDICAL TREATMENT OF LONDON SCHOOL CHILDREN.

The Education Committee of the London County Council has approved further arrangements with the hospitals for the medical treatment of children attending the public elementary schools of the metropolis. The Day Schools Sub-Committee has been in communication with 55 hospitals, and received replies from 50. Of these 18 were not desirous, or unable to undertake additional work, and 5 are treating school children without charge. The authorities of the other hospitals desired financial assistance, and the Committee have been in negotiations with them, and on the basis approved by the Council are prepared to pay a sum not exceeding £50 a year for each additional medical assistant working one half day a week, and 2s. for each child treated.

The proposal to insert in the agreement with the hospitals a stipulation that the waiting-rooms and other accommodation should be satisfactory to the Council, and the hours of treatment convenient to working class parents, was rejected, as likely to give offence to hospital authorities, who, if entrusted with such important work, could be trusted to carry it on under good conditions.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)