

THE JENNER SOCIETY.

WHEN a theory has been confirmed so completely by facts as has the proposition that vaccination effectually performed will prevent an individual from contracting small-pox, or at least so fundamentally modify the disease that it is no longer a serious malady, there is in many minds a natural distaste to fight the battle again or to be constantly defending the position against the attacks of ill-informed or prejudiced persons. It is unfortunately the case that in the past this feeling has been allowed to influence too much the attitude of the medical profession towards antivaccinators. The opponents of vaccination have formed an aggressive organisation, which, after having been engaged for years in circulating misstatements about vaccination, is now occupied in trying to minimise the importance of the finding of the large majority of the Royal Commissioners.

The National Antivaccination League, as it now styles itself, used to be called the London Anticompulsory Vaccination Society. It is true that it has all along, through its most active supporters and speakers, carried on a crusade, not against compulsory vaccination, but against the vaccination laws as a whole; now, however, it openly admits that its object is the entire repeal of the Vaccination Acts, the abolition of the practice of vaccination under the auspices of the State, and the abrogation of the regulations which enforce vaccination before entry into the public services.

Even during the progress of the epidemic of small-pox in Gloucester the antivaccinists endeavoured to induce the inhabitants still to refuse vaccination and revaccination. The League had long been active in Gloucester, but in spite of the object-lesson which Gloucester afforded of the consequence of their mischievous activity, its leaders still hoped to be able to beguile the citizens. It was in this emergency that the Jenner Society was founded. It was felt that, as the public mind had been systematically poisoned by the misrepresentations of men who could or would not recognise the mischief they were doing, it was necessary that an effort should be made to provide an antidote. It is satisfactory to find that as soon as the matter was brought under the notice of the leading men in the county of Gloucester, they showed themselves ready to support the movement. Sir John Dorington, M.P., the Chairman of the Gloucestershire County Council, brought the details of the proposed society under the notice of the Standing Joint Committee of that body and of the Court of Quarter Sessions, and the Committee expressed their cordial approval of the movement. The Lord Lieutenant of the county, the Earl of Ducie, whose valuable services to the cause of sanitation as President of the Royal Sanitary Commission of 1869 are well known, became President of the Society, and the Dean of Gloucester Chairman of its Executive Committee, which was joined by all the leading authorities of the county.

The Society was appropriately given the name of the Jenner Society, in commemoration of Dr. Edward Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, who resided in Berkeley, in the county of Gloucester, and it is an interesting coincidence that the Society was founded in the year in which fell the centenary of his great discovery. Under the able direction of its energetic Honorary Secretary, Dr. Francis T. Bond, the medical officer of health for the combined districts of Gloucester, literature containing correct information as to the history of small-pox and vaccination, and refuting misrepresentations which were actively distributed by the opponents of vaccination, was circulated in Gloucester and in other parts of the county where the disease had broken out.

Of the value of the work in Gloucester a satisfactory proof was early obtained, but it also became obvious at an early date also that a similar need existed in other parts of the country, and the Jenner Society, even before it had completed its local work, already found itself regarded as in some sense a national organisation.

The Executive Committee of the Jenner Society are willing to undertake to carry on the work of the enlightenment of the public upon a national basis. The early work of the Society, however, since it had a local character was carried on by means of funds subscribed locally; the national work must be given a broader basis, and it is much to be desired

that this Society should receive support from all those in all parts of the country who are impressed with the importance of vaccination. The Council of the British Medical Association early in the present year voted the sum of £100, and financial aid has also been received from the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, but the strength of such a society and its influence on public opinion must be the greater the wider the field from which its supporters were drawn.¹

The first annual report of this Society records the obligation under which it has been to numerous individuals, both in and out of the medical profession, who have advised and aided them in the provision of literature and in other ways, "especially to Dr. McVail and to Mr. Ernest Hart, whose services in the cause of vaccination are so well known to all who are acquainted with its history." But a work of this kind should not be left to individual enterprise or private exertion. The Antivaccination League, as we have already stated, is an active and aggressive body, and it would be a great mistake to underestimate the harm which such an organisation might do in misleading public opinion. The League claims to have upwards of 120 local branches in various parts of the kingdom. It is able to incur considerable legal expenses, and it has recently made an appeal for a subscription of at least £1,000. Its misguided efforts should be met with knowledge, energy, and discretion, and the advantage of the existence of a central body such as the Jenner Society to render assistance to local efforts in combating the propaganda of the National Antivaccination League must be obvious.

CHOLERA IN INDIA IN 1895: THE REVISED RULES.

CHOLERA REGULATIONS FOR TROOPS.

THE necessity of revising the cholera rules for troops and prisoners was strongly urged by Mr. Ernest Hart when he visited India. He pointed out that they were largely founded on obsolete principles leading to absurd and useless manoeuvres. Consequent upon his public criticism, they were recalled, and have now been subjected to revision by a committee specially appointed, composed of the Quartermaster-General, the Principal Medical Officer of the Sanitary Commission, and Mr. Hankin. They have now been satisfactorily brought into harmony with the doctrines of the day. The need of habitual sanitation of cantonments and camps is fully recognised, and the necessity of special sanitation in view of an impending or actual outbreak acknowledged. The possible conveyance of infection by water and food, by supplies from contaminated villages and bazaars, and by the agency of persons, native servants, coolies, etc., living in infected quarters, constitute the main groundwork of the scheme; and the habit of localisation which the disease affects is fully taken into account. Escape from infected areas is the measure resorted to when sanitary precautions, habitual and special, prove unavailing; and the manner of escape is made to depend upon the gravity of the occasion and information obtained as regards the incidence of the disease in the neighbourhood. The rules are divided into sections concerning (1) precautions necessary in anticipation of cholera; (2) measures to be adopted on appearance of cholera; (3) fumigation and disinfection; (4) other points requiring the special attention of medical officers; (5) returns and reports; and (6) responsibility of commanding officer. On each of these heads the instructions are ample and clear. The direction to march at right angles to the wind is retained, but it is stated to be dictated by a regard to the comfort of the troops rather than for the purpose of dodging a cholera-laden breeze.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT.

The report of the Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of India for the year 1895 sets forth in great detail facts relating to the prevalence of cholera amongst the general population and amongst troops, European and native, and prisoners throughout India. Information is also given regarding outbreaks among pilgrims proceeding to Mecca, and the results of bacteriological investigations conducted

¹ The Treasurer of the Society is Mr. G. E. Lloyd Baker, Hardwicke Court, Gloucester, and the Honorary Secretary, Dr. Francis T. Bond, Gloucester.