

COMPULSORY NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Medical journals in Great Britain agree that it is indisputable that the "compulsory notification of infectious diseases," with all it may involve, has become one of the most "burning" questions of the day. There the profession are almost a unit in their opposition to making the duty and responsibility of notification incumbent upon medical men, though, for the most part, they are favorable to the principle of notification, but think the duty should be imposed upon the householder, custodian or guardian of the patient. In this we are disposed to agree with them. Unquestionably, in the interests of the public health, prompt notification should be given to the health authorities, in order that means may be at once employed for preventing the spread of the disease, but we can see no good reason why the medical attendant should be compelled to perform the duty when it can be just as effectually done by those who engage the physician. In the few cases amongst the poorest class (very few in this country), in which there would be indifference and irresponsibility, we are convinced the medical attendant would invariably, without compulsion, give the necessary intimation.

Dr. Carter, of Liverpool, Eng., has founded an association for opposing the compulsory notification by medical men, and according to the *Medical Times and Gazette*, it has "rapidly become a numerous and powerful society, with branches in many of the large towns." As regards the United States, competent lawyers there assert that such a compulsory measure would be unconstitutional.

While we heartily approve of the plan of compulsory notification—we have advocated it years ago in this JOURNAL, and were the first, so far as we have any knowledge, to advocate such a measure in this country, we do not think it wise to place the responsibility on medical men. It will tend to create opposition to the principle of notification, and disturb the harmonious relations existing between medical practitioners and medical health officers.

In some cities in Great Britain, a fee of fifty cents is paid physicians for notification, and the plan has been found to work well. But we cannot see that the fact of paying a fee, small or large, does away with the objection to compulsory notification.

THE *Citizen* states that at the vegetarian restaurants in the city of London, Eng., the dinners daily served average 1,550.