

THE ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

WE should deserve and receive the censure of the art world if we were to go beyond our last, and criticize pictures which have no bearing, direct or indirect, on the life-work of the medical man; all we have ventured to do in previous years has been to direct the attention of our readers to the contents of the Royal Academy in their relation to the class of questions which come within the four corners of our editorial responsibility, and year by year our task becomes more difficult because of the want of active help given us by the painters themselves. Urged, no doubt, by commercial necessity and the demands of dealers, they turn out of their studios, with unflinching regularity and almost mechanical skill, the same subjects treated in the same way, when the cold winds of winter mellow into spring. Suns rise and set, gently heaving tides dash on mussel-clad rocks amid the approving screams of attendant gulls, rivers flow, flowers bloom, trees bear and shed their leaves, domestic scenes are enacted whilst war and chivalry clash by, and imperfectly-clad maidens sprawl about in varied attitudes, but hardly any one does anything for us. They manage these things differently in France. It was only the other day that eager competition at Christie's raised the price of a representation of vaccination by one of the leading members of the younger Parisian school up to £1,500. Nothing could be more realistic than the scene. The operator is just beginning his work, whilst sympathizing friends look on, and a long row of victims who have passed the chair sit with their scratched arms in full view drying themselves in the sun. Visitors to the French Salon will remember other pictures of the same class. A surgeon removing an ovarian tumour and a physiologist at work in his laboratory are some of the topics treated with the unflinching realism of the foreign school. This may perhaps encourage our budding R.A.'s, or even those within the circle of the elect, to cast aside tradition and burst forth into fresh fields and pastures new. What an infinitely wide range of subject opens up before them! The first tooth would inevitably "fetch" the mothers of England, whilst the painful uncertainty attending a rosy blush on the forehead and the various premonitory symptoms of the exanthemata leading up to their full development might be treated with dramatic significance. Then operative surgery might claim the attentions of the brush and appendicitis might obtain an even enhanced measure of social distinction by being brought within the limits of the painter's art.

But leaving these imperfect hints to fructify in the minds of those who are ambitious of such recognition as originality can confer, let us with all due thankfulness for small mercies stroll through the rooms of the Royal Academy, and see if there is anything of special interest in our own line of business. The only truly pathological picture, if we may use such a phrase, comes from the easel of Mr. Ernest Normand, who, in his "On the Threshold," furnishes a painfully realistic portrait of a young man, evidently far gone in consumption, wistfully gazing, under the superintendence of a sympathetic dog, on a world which he must so soon leave. Excellent although the intentions of the painter are, there is no special charm of execution to relieve the mournful character of such a subject, and we should be surprised to learn that any one can be found amid the anxieties and worries of ordinary existence to depress life's mercury still further by placing it on his walls. Last year we took occasion to describe Orchardson's masterly supper scene, where the Borgia is sombrely contemplating his victim under the reposeful splendour of an Italian evening sky, and we now find another kindred scene in No. 289, the surrender of Capua and the passing round the poisoned cup. The figures are too small to enable us in their somewhat exalted position to trace with any accuracy the effect of the particular drug employed, but all seem somewhat perturbed, some from its effects and some from anticipation; the dramatic effect, however, is somewhat impaired by the small scale of the work and the academic dryness of the execution.

Turning from these lugubrious topics, it is refreshing to meet amid the weary and somewhat dreary waste of portraiture the familiar forms of two old friends, placed on the canvas with complete success from very different artistic standpoints. Sir R. Douglas Powell is sitting on his consulting chair and looking at us with the calm reflecting expression which seems so completely in harmony with his pale refined features; the general colour scheme is pitched in a low reposeful key, and everything is carefully finished after the method of what has sometimes been called the "tight school."

On the other hand Sir Hermann Weber has evidently stimulated the fullest powers of his compatriot. Herkomer is here seen at his best, and has given us a singularly bright and animated version of the characteristic personality of his sitter, and delighted us with the robust handling and harmonious vigour of what is undoubtedly one of the best portraits of the year.

Mrs. Jopling gives us a palpably realistic version of Lieutenant-Colonel Manders, M.D., but we hardly think that Dr. Donkin has received full justice at the hands of Mr. Cyrus Johnston. We well remember the look of alert, and on occasions almost aggressive, intellectuality which used to hang about our friend's features; and we wonder whether this has been softened by time, or whether contact with the subtler and sadder medico-sociological problems which now engage his attention has subdued the vivacity which was so much appreciated by his friends.

In the Sculpture Room we find two very successful busts of past and present worthies. Mr. Drury has very cleverly reproduced the look—half mournful and half resigned—which partially hid the genial humour and unflinching friendliness of one of the finest-natured men that ever lived—the late Sir William MacCormac; and Sir John Williams's strong and sagacious face has fared well under Mr. Gascombe John's chisel.

And here we must take our leave of the Academy of 1903, which seems to be in no way inferior to its predecessors, with the final comment that, so far as we can discover, nothing has been contributed to its walls by any member of the medical profession.

THE EPIDEMIC OF SMALL-POX.

THE number of small-pox reports received this week shows clearly that the disease in most parts of the Midlands and some of the northern counties is in no way decreasing in prevalence.

No reports have been received from Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmorland, but we are afraid that this does not mean that no new cases have occurred.

From Yorkshire, the only report concerns Bradford, where there have been a number of new cases from different parts of the town.

In Nottinghamshire there is perhaps some improvement; Mansfield has apparently managed to check the spread, Hucknall Torkard reporting nothing fresh, and Nottingham having only a few fresh cases.

In Derbyshire the disease is certainly spreading steadily. Long Eaton has had more cases, and there are new centres at Greenhill Lane and Shirebrook, while Little Eaton, close to Derby itself, has had 2 or 3 cases.

In Staffordshire, Burton reports the importation of a case from Derby, while at Wolverhampton there is a fresh crop of cases. The course of the disease in this town has been irregular, cases having recurred from time to time since Christmas, but the sanitary authorities have been able to prevent any serious outbreak. A useful object lesson was given by one incident. There were forty-four inhabitants in one house where a case occurred, and forty-three of them submitted to vaccination, the forty-fourth, a youth, refused to be vaccinated, and subsequently developed small-pox, his being the only case that occurred among the contacts in the house.

In Warwickshire there is also marked progress in the spread of the disease, and further cases have been reported from Longford, Aston, Gravelly Hill, Nuneaton, Walsgrove-on-Sowe, and New Inn Bridge. Longford has now had 12 cases, and at Coventry the outbreak is decidedly increasing.

From Leicestershire the news is also bad, but decidedly instructive. Loughboro' has had some more cases, and Billesdon and Market Harborough are fresh centres. In Leicester itself, after a scare of a week, the Town Council congratulated itself on having got things under on the strength of no fresh reports for a couple of days, but they were disillusioned by a rapid spread which brought the total up to 97 in less than three weeks. Twelve deaths have already occurred, 10 of the deceased never having been vaccinated at all, while the other 2, who were middle-aged, had not been vaccinated since early childhood.

In Northamptonshire, there may be some ground for believing that the disease is not going to be severe; but Kettering is a fresh centre and the hamlet of Raunds another, while Northampton itself is still infected.

From Cheshire there is only one report, that of 3 cases at Northwich. From Oxford, Worcestershire, Gloucester, and Shropshire there are no reports to hand, nor yet from Lincolnshire, and Cambridge, and Bedford.

From Lancashire the reports vary. Some newspapers speak as if there were a decided decline in the extent of the epidemic and number of cases. Our own correspondent, however, states that the disease keeps "forging ahead," both in the towns and in rural localities, and that in Salford the 215th case has been reached.

In Liverpool, at the date of the last weekly statement to the Municipal Council, there was some decline in the number reported during the week. Orrell and Scholes, however, are new centres, and Wigan, Crewe, Heywood, and Whittlefield reported a considerable number of new cases. At Whittlefield and Heywood incidents that have occurred show the