

# Our Changing Complaints

"EVERYTHING changes. . . Even our epidemics, the very diseases, are changing!" an eminent doctor has said. It is true. "The ills that flesh is heir to" change in character; some that are serious and deadly in one generation become mild and unimportant in the next.

Smallpox was once a shocking and devastating thing that left its trail of blighted and dead. There were periods in our history when it raged as a plague, and half the people were pock-marked, many died every year, and many were blinded. Then vaccination robbed it of its terrors. In its "black," or confluent, form it is still the ghastliest of afflictions, though to-day it is mostly a trivial affair. Indeed, a headache and a mere pimple, which is all it may present, may easily be overlooked.

Diphtheria has undergone much change, and is by no means so serious as the thing of twenty years ago. Anti-toxin has snatched away its armaments, and made it amenable to some extent. Scarlet-fever, too, that was growing sadly deadly to children a few years back, is milder.

### Dangerous Measles

"SLEEPY sickness"—that was unknown, at any rate, as such,

a few years ago, and that developed a deadly meningitic character—is now much less harmful in some of its phases, though in others it is still sufficiently nasty and uncannily unsettling afterwards.

Measles, that triviality of childhood of a generation or two back, has changed for the worse, and is causing some concern to the pathologists, and those whose business it is to study the incidence of epidemic disease. It is not so many years ago that the writer heard a consultant say, "Ordinary measles is nothing, and the German form is negligible!" The oracle would hesitate to make such a pronouncement to-day, for both complaints need watching and care now in view of their sequelæ.

Rheumatic troubles, also, especially in the chronic forms, have not improved their characters, and are becoming so prevalent as to threaten to cripple the nation unless research clears up certain obscure patches; for though some wonderful things have been done with inoculation with autogenous vaccines of special streptococci, one cannot go about injecting the populace wholesale, and—it doesn't always act.

These are but a few of our troubles which have changed.



# Wife's New Status

By A BARRISTER-AT-LAW

Interesting changes—some, indeed, rather startling—were brought about in England by the coming into operation with the year 1926 of the new 130,000-word Law of Property Act. The ancient customary land law of England vanishes at a touch; the romance of copyhold, gavelkind and Borough English disappears, and the customary heir of property in this or that famous manor will be known no more.

The heir-at-law is doomed, for the State has taken on itself to ignore certain blood relationships, which could be done previously only by a testator in the exercise of his right to dispose of his property as he willed.

Property which, in the case of intestacy, would have gone to distant relations will now, failing nearer kin, pass to the Crown.

In future there will be only two kinds of legal ownership in land—fees simple and leaseholds for years, much in the same way as absolute ownership and the ownership of the hirer are alone recognised as legal ownership in the case of chattels. Copyhold and fancy tenures are abolished and turned into ordinary freehold (the lords of manors re-

ceiving reasonable compensation), and all land will descend on intestacy exactly as stocks, money or goods, but in a new fashion.

### Husband And Wife Equal

With regard to the devolution of property on the death of the owner intestate, all property will go in the same way. Personal chattels—furniture and the like—go to the surviving husband or wife absolutely, together with the residue up to £1000. Subject to that, if there are no children, or grandchildren, the surviving spouse takes a life interest in the whole, or, if there are children or grandchildren, in one-half. The residue goes to such of the children living at the death of the intestate as attain 21 or marry, the issue of deceased children taking the share which their parent would have taken.

Husband and wife are for the first time placed on an equal footing. The new Act does not penalise the children of a young man who marries under 21. In the new Act the protection given to a person who takes the title deeds as security is not to be infringed at all.



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