

pox, which to the most uneducated, as the western Indians, whose traditions tell of whole tribes destroyed by epidemics of it, is looked upon as so loathsome and terrible that armed men have been known to guard the banks of a stream to prevent men from an infected settlement crossing, the most primitive societies recognize that common action may properly be taken to avert what is or may become a general danger or calamity.

The postulating of such a principle for the action of society must seem to most people wholly unnecessary and commonplace in view of the facts illustrated by a hundred years of history; and yet, we have only to read extracts from the daily press, from many particularist magazines, and indeed from many so-called scientific journals, to learn the truth of that proverb: "Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he;" and to find medical officers of even large Canadian cities assuming reactionary attitudes with regard to the duty of the individual and of the community in dealing with outbreaks of this disease—if the cases be mild—by means of vaccination and prompt and thorough quarantine.

However commonplace it does seem necessary to recall a few facts culled from the pages of history. Dr. Brooke (1766 A.D.) says, in his *General Practice of Physic*: "Smallpox has been for ages, and continues to be, the terror and destroyer of a great part of mankind. . . . In the ordinary course and duration of human life scarce one in a thousand escapes the smallpox." Before this, indeed, Ben Jonson had written an epigram to smallpox beginning with:

"Envious and foul disease, could there not be  
One beauty in an age, and free from thee?"

while at the beginning of the nineteenth century we are informed that 90 per cent. of all the inmates of hospitals for the blind in England were there on account of smallpox. Dr. George Bell, of Edinburgh, wrote in 1802 that the smallpox in Europe for more than 1,000 years has descended with undiminished violence from generation to generation, and every effort made hitherto to extirpate it has failed. Of epidemics in America we have statistics of Boston from 1721-1792 in which it is stated there were seven epidemic years, during which the average population was 14,714 and the average number of cases 5,600, or 38 per cent.; while Simon says of it in the 16th century: "In Mexico it even surpassed the cruelties of conquest, suddenly smiting down 3,500,000 of population and leaving none to bury them."

Such was the monotony of history and statistics at a time when Jenner made his memorable discovery, imitating, except in the source of his virus, the practice introduced into England from Constantinople by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu of inocu-