

A notion, calculated to do a great deal of harm, has long been disseminated by persons who are unwilling to admit the protective power of vaccination, and who try to explain the relative scarcity of small-pox in civilized communities by any theory except the right one. They contend that small-pox depends on filthy local conditions, that it is a disease of the poor and communities who neglect sanitary measures. Dr. Tebb, who has recently published a work, entitled "A Century of Vaccination and What it Teaches," supports this view, quite forgetful of the fact that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries small-pox attacked the high as well as the humble. In the family of William III. of England, his Queen, his father, his mother, his uncle and two cousins, children of James I., all died of small-pox, and the king himself barely escaped with his life. During the eighteenth century one Emperor and two Empresses of Austria, six archdukes and arch-duchesses, an Elector of Saxony, an Elector of Bohemia, a Dauphin and a King of France, a King of Sweden, and a Czar of Russia were all numbered among the victims. Surely all these distinguished persons could not be consistently classed among people who suffered from the prevailing ignorance and neglect of sanitary measures. Then again, to show that it was an omnipresent plague in England, when Jenner began his experiments, Gilbert Blane estimated that "an adult person who had not had small-pox was scarcely met with or heard of in the United Kingdom." When servants were advertised for it was common to specify "they must have had small-pox in the natural way." In 1688, in an advertisement for a counterfeiter, it was noted as a means of his identification that he was "without pock-holes." At the Institution for the Indigent Blind two-thirds of the applicants were made blind by small-pox. Thanks to the genius and bold experimentation of the immortal Jenner, small-pox has been controlled to an extraordinary extent by vaccination. In some countries it is so rare that in the opinion of German authors "it is no longer observed in civilized countries, and may soon be considered an infection which will possess a purely historic interest." So far this happy desideratum cannot be recorded of the United States, in which over 3,000 cases of small-pox occurred during the past year. In the Province of Quebec no considerable epidemic has arisen since 1885. Since that memorable year, when the Province of Ontario was visited by the scourge, only trifling outbreaks have occurred among us. At present there are no cases of small-pox in Ontario.

Immunity to small-pox can be procured by having the disease itself or by reliable vaccination—a statement the truth of which few will be prepared to deny. That many parents and guardians in Ontario, while persuaded of its truth, have yet neglected to present infants and young children for vaccination, has probably been due to doubts entertained by them as to the purity of the vaccine lymph in general use. The existence of a similar feeling has been noticed in England. On the occasion of a recent