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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

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According to the constitution of this Association, I am now called on to deliver an address, setting forth the conditions of the profession in this province, with such suggestions as I deem it proper to make. In referring especially to the relations existing between the profession and the public in Ontario, I may say, in a general way, that they are pleasant and satisfactory. Our efforts, in a private way, and in a public way, are at least fairly well appreciated. The public are frequently kinder to our profession than we are to each other. In this respect history is simply repeating itself.

If we consider some of the triumphs of medicine during the century now closing, we will find that some of our heroes got but little or no support from their professional brethren. One of the most important features of the early years of the century was the complete triumph of vaccination. Edward Jenner had perfect confidence in vaccination in 1770; but, after that, he labored quietly and persistently for thirty long years before he published his first treatise on the subject in 1800. We were told by Dr. Ward Cousins last year, that, although the new method spread rapidly over the whole civilized world, the acceptance of vaccination was due to the efforts of public-spirited men rather than to those of the members of the medical profession. Many of the doctors of that time considered vaccination as pure quackery, and even charged the vaccinator with flying in the face of heaven.

About the middle of the century Semmelweis made a great discovery in midwifery. In 1844 he enunciated the view that puerperal fever was caused by the introduction of putrescent substances from without, and used chlorine as a disinfectant. By his new method he reduced the mortality in one of the lying-in hospitals from 11.4 to 1.27 per cent. Notwithstanding the proof he adduced, his views were bitterly opposed by