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THE SOCIAL PHASE OF SMALLPOX AND VACCINATION.

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PROF. SEDGWICK, of Harvard, in his recent work defines public hygiene as *the science and the art of the conservation and promotion of the public health*. Accepting this as a practical definition of the scope of public health, it is evident that we may very properly discuss the relation in which diseases, of which smallpox is the type, stand to the interests of society, whether as individuals in a social unit or community or as citizens of a nation which enacts laws for the government of its own people. Much argument may be had as to the extent to which individualism or *communism* in its exact sense should be the underlying principle in legislation; but practical common sense and general experience, as seen in every day business, in educational, municipal and religious affairs, teaches that what cannot be done so well by the individual alone, as by a number acting together for a common end, may properly come within the sphere of governmental and municipal action. The strength of this position may be pressed still further in any case where the action or inaction of one individual directly endangers the welfare or health of another. Such has been the subject of common action, even in those primitive communities, whether in past or present time, which have sacrificed a member of the tribe—even their choicest youth—to placate an offended deity, or who have put to death wendigos or witches, supposed to exercise malign influences whether upon men or cattle. We may then properly conclude that in the instance of a contagious disease, and especially of small-