

which a pet theory does not "work" as it should when an attempt is made to put it in practice. We all know, that is, the medical profession knows, that vaccination and revaccination are preventives of small-pox, and that, as a rule, those who have small-pox are those who have not been recently vaccinated or revaccinated. In Michigan the intelligent classes are more generally vaccinated than are the ignorant and improvident. If all persons could be vaccinated and revaccinated about once in five years, small-pox would be prevented, seems to me to be extremely probable. Where, then, is the objection to compulsory vaccination? I will try to explain. In my opinion, there is a fallacy in the assumption that a State law theoretically compelling vaccination will actually result in securing vaccination more general than can be secured by educational methods. My objection, then, to a State law for compulsory vaccination is, that vaccination would not be so generally performed where it was most needed under a compulsory law as it may be under the present law.

Mr. Simon, many years a leader in public health work in England, once feared that the people might mistrust a gift which the law would compel them to accept. Dr. Baker said: "To present to a man facts and reasons, relative to vaccination, as abstract proportions is one thing; he may thus be convinced; he may be convinced also as applied to his own child; but tell the same man that the law says that he himself must submit to having inserted in him a virus that will work a change in his blood, probably make him slightly sick for a few days; then his feeling of repugnance may be sufficient to prevent him from accepting any evidence of prospective good which can be put before him.

"Compulsory vaccination of an intelligent adult person is such an interference with the liberty of the individual relative to his own person, as in my judgment is not for the public good. I think the final result will be better if the natural risk of the death penalty by small-pox be permitted to each responsible person. There can be no doubt that intense feeling or emotion powerfully influences the acceptance or non-acceptance of evidence,

by even the most intelligent persons. The anti-vaccinationists have had the aid of such men as Herbert Spencer—perhaps the greatest philosopher of our age,—and of Alfred R. Wallace who shared with Darwin the honor of first publishing the principle of natural selection. Mr. Wallace does not stop with opposing compulsory vaccination, but attacks the principle of vaccination itself, as do most of those who oppose compulsory vaccination.

"One of the strongest reasons why I do not favor compulsory vaccination is that such a law at once leads the people to discuss the subject of the interference with their own persons, and to decline to listen to facts and reasons supporting the belief in the beneficence of vaccination.

Of course Dr. Baker favours vaccination, and after quoting statistics from the New York health department, he continues: "Without doubt, prompt notification and isolation, and thorough disinfection are important measures for the restriction of small-pox, but in such instances as the one just quoted, it is vaccination that prevents outbreaks from becoming epidemics. . . . Michigan is greatly more than England endangered from small-pox through its spread by immigrants and travelers, yet during the ten years, 1878-1887, while the State Board of Health has been trying to secure vaccination through the educational and advisory methods of the present law, the reported mortality from small-pox in Michigan has averaged only about 13 annually per million inhabitants, while in England in the same years it has been about 54, or a little over four times as great. We must admit, however, that much of the recent immunity from small-pox in Michigan has been due to prompt notification, isolation and disinfection, and that the vaccinal protection of the inhabitants of Michigan is not what we could wish; for the public good vaccination and revaccination should be much more general; and I appeal to the medical profession to give its support to the present law, and to do what it can to disseminate among the people knowledge of the importance, and beneficence, of vaccination and revaccination, without which knowledge no law on the subject will be useful to the people of this free country.