

COMPULSORY VACCINATION.

This subject will come up in the future for a good deal of heated discussion. No new Act looks towards a much more general application of vaccination than has been the practice in the past. Further, it is now under the boards of health and not under the boards of education. But there will be the ignorant agitator whose business it seems is to keep up strife and retard progress. To show that this is no imaginary view we quote the following editorial from a leading newspaper:—

“The new medical health regulations foreshadow a marked trend toward general vaccination. What is really known and professionally agreed upon about vaccination is that it generally entails a sore arm for a few days or weeks, rarely for a year or more, and in extremely rare cases it entails permanent injury or death. As to its prevention of smallpox leading medical authorities differ widely, and as neither side has any proof except uncertain statistics that show both ways their differences are intense, and even violent. One recognized school of medicine discards it entirely.

“Those who oppose vaccination deny the right of official authorities to intentionally afflict them with one disease on the uncertain hope of saving them from the uncertain danger of taking another. They say let those who seek safety in vaccination have their safety. It cannot be any affair of theirs if others refuse to risk such safety. The unvaccinated are no menace to the vaccinated if the operation gives immunity. If the vaccinated reply that their immunity is uncertain the argument cuts both ways. It would be well for the law to be administered with discretion until more is known as to the dangers and preventive effects of vaccination.”

Now, the medical scientist is not aware of these contradictory statistics. He is fully aware of the arguments and statistics of such men as Alfred Russell Wallace. But the educated medical man knows that his statistics were false and misleading. It would be quite false to state that there is no small pox in the German Empire. There are in that great country of over 65,000,000, many foreigners who come from all over the world where vaccination is not practised, or is not compulsory. It is quite a different thing to say that there is no smallpox among the native Germans. Japan has a very strict vaccination law, yet many escape vaccination and there are many foreigners in that country. This accounts for the fact that there is a good deal of smallpox in Japan. Many are improperly vaccinated. These things do not militate against the wonderful preventive value of proper vaccination.