

SELECTED ARTICLES.

FACTS ABOUT SMALL-POX AND VACCINATION.

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1 The Mortality from small-pox is much less now than in prevaccination times.

Bernouilli, the famous mathematician, calculated that no fewer than 15,000,000 of human beings in the last century died of it every 25 years. Süssmilch, an eminent statistician of the time of Frederick I, estimated that nearly everyone had small-pox, and that it carried off a twelfth part of mankind. In London in 1660-79, of every 80,000 deaths, 4,170 were from small-pox. In Iceland in 1707-9, it killed 18,000 persons in a population of 50,000. In Glasgow, a large and very insanitary town, in 1783-1800, of 31,088, deaths or burials from all causes, 5,959 were due to small-pox. Chester, which on the other hand was described by an eminent authority of the time as a town of "almost incredible" healthiness, had fewer than 15,000 inhabitants and contained in the year 1775 only 1,060 persons, or one in 14, who had not had small-pox. In Kilmarnock, with 4,000 or 5,000 inhabitants in 1728-64, of every 1,000 children born alive 161 died of small-pox. In the village of Ware, in Hertfordshire, after an epidemic in 1722, only 302 persons in a population of 2,515 had never had the small-pox. Such examples could easily be added to. Great diminution of small-pox mortality occurred after the introduction of vaccination where small-pox inoculation never prevailed, and also in places where small-pox inoculation had prevailed.

2. The greatest diminution in the small-pox mortality is found in the early years of life, in which there is most vaccination

In Geneva in the period 1580-1760, during which there were 25,349 small-pox deaths, 961 of every 1,000 were under 10 years of age. In Kilmarnock in 1728-64, of every 1,000 small-pox deaths, 988 were under 10 years of age. In a total of 36,755 deaths from small-pox at all ages occurring in Kilmarnock, Edinburgh, Manchester, Warrington, Chester, Geneva, and the Hague in various prevaccination periods from 1580 onwards, 17,252 were under 2 years of age. In the present day, on the other hand, vaccination being performed in infancy and having its greatest protective influence in the earlier years of life, small-pox has to a great extent departed from children and transferred itself to later and less protected ages. In London in 1884, of 1,000 small-pox deaths, only 343 were under ten years old. But this calculation includes both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons. In the vaccinated community the corresponding figures were not 343, but 86; and in the unvaccinated, not 343, but 312. Among the unvaccinated the 612 is better than the Geneva