

# THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD

A Monthly Journal of Medicine and Surgery.

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MONTREAL FEBRUARY, 1886.

## THE SMALL-POX EPIDEMIC.

At last Montreal is free from small-pox, and, so far as this disease is concerned, she has a clean bill of health. This most desirable end has not been accomplished without a vast amount of work, in which several agencies have played an important part. While we have not failed to state our opinion that, in the early part of the epidemic, the Health Department of the city was not equal to the work, we cannot, now that matters are once more bright, but give our praise to the work it did during the terrible month of October, 1885, and since. Alderman Gray, in the direction of his Board of Health, is deserving of the warmest thanks of every citizen of Montreal. It may be true, perhaps, that in the early history of the epidemic, neither he, and for that matter, others, did not at first realize the possibilities of the future; but in this connection it must be remembered that the chairman of the Board of Health, although elected to that position because of his believed aptitude for its duties, is a gentleman engaged in a business which demanded a large share of his attention. While we had a right to anticipate that its functions would be more scientifically looked after than they had been, we had not the right to ask that his own business interests should suffer. Alderman Gray, however, so soon as it became evident that the scourge was taking a firm foothold among us, realized the position, and, throwing aside all his private interests, devoted himself all but wholly and entirely to the work of stamping out the disease. It was he, we believe, that induced the Government to issue its proclamation, establishing the Central

Board of Health, and the wisdom of this action no one now doubts. His re-election to the same position this year is an expression of confidence on the part of his confrères in the City Council, and it is endorsed by those of our citizens whose good opinion is worth having.

In the working out of all these multitudinous details which fall to the lot of the Board of Health, especially after the opening of the Mount Royal Hospitals, the able hand of a noble citizen, Mr. Tremble, was constantly seen. This gentleman, without fee or expected reward, was a volunteer of which our citizens may be proud. The members of the Citizens' Committee on the Board of Health were also useful, and did their part in restoring the good name of Montreal. The Citizens' Committee, also, were useful. It had many excellent members, but one or two cranks at times threatened to spoil some of its work. The good sense of the majority, however, kept them to their proper sphere, and the result proved their wisdom. The immense number of vaccinations performed by their Vaccination Committee was an important factor in arresting its spread. The money they spent was well placed. In hospital work at the Mount Royal Hospitals the noble self-denying labor of both the Roman Catholic and Protestant nurses should never be forgotten. It is beyond all praise. Dr. De Bonald and Dr. Gardner did their duty conscientiously and well—we need not say more concerning them. In the Justices of the Health Court, Montreal was fortunate in having two such fearless and upright men. Their judgments were above suspicion, and exercised an influence which extended far beyond the City of Montreal. The Central Board of Health, brought into existence on the 4th of September, 1885, by Proclamation of the Lieut-Governor, was the focus from which all power emanated. Their rules and regulations—which had and still have the force of law—are perhaps the most comprehensive and severe that have ever been created to stamp out a small-pox epidemic. Their power was well illustrated when, under one of its rules, St. Cunegonde was brought to terms by the erection of barricades at all the streets entering into Montreal. It has still a heavy work on its hand, for small-pox is still epidemic in many parts of the Province. And, lastly, Montreal was more than fortunate in having as its mayor Mr. H. Beaugrand—a man of rare energy and decision of character. His action was ever most opportune, and throughout the whole epidemic he was never once found wanting. The gratitude of every sensible man in the city is his, and as his return for a second period by a large majority, is well assured, we trust a more tranquil and peaceful time is in store for him.