

SMALL-POX AND VACCINATION IN GERMANY.

(Continued.)

In this issue we conclude a brief analysis of the statements issued by the Imperial Health Office, in Berlin, of the evidence on behalf of vaccination. The report, published by the German Government, has proved interesting to the people of Great Britain at the present time, and is replete with useful reminders for the people of Montreal, to whom small-pox is not by any means an unknown disease. The closing paragraphs of the article published in the British Medical Journal deal with the question of personal liberty, and the evanescent character of the protection afforded by vaccination:—

2. *Personal Liberty.*—The answer to this objection is that the law, framed by the community through its representatives, implies—not direct physical compulsion; this is never contemplated, but—an obligation on the part of every individual to be vaccinated for the benefit of the community, and penalties are imposed if this obligation be neglected. The law offers choice of doctor, choice of place, and even free vaccination, under the strictest regulations as to care in the operation, the purity of the lymph, and the health, comfort and propriety of all concerned. The liberty of the individual is curtailed in every community in a thousand ways. He may object conscientiously to paying taxes, but physical force would be applied if he did not. School compulsion is infinitely more severe than a solitary compulsion to vaccination and revaccination. The individual must be subordinated to the good of the whole community, and universal vaccination is absolutely necessary to ensure the advantages of vaccination to the whole community. No other effective means of combating small-pox is known, a disease as fatal now as ever it was to the unprotected. Instruction and persuasion are no good without the legal obligation, for people get careless.

3. *The Evanescent Character of the Protection.*—But there is ample proof that the vaccination in early childhood, repeated in early puberty, of the individuals of a community renders each of them practically as safe from death by small-pox, and very nearly as safe against an attack of small-pox as survived small-pox itself. Even one vaccination in childhood affords a great protection against death by small-pox. These statements cannot be questioned; they admit of no cavilling. They are based on the experience on the part of every nation of a hundred years of small-pox.

The work concludes thus: May 14th, 1896, was the centenary of Jenner's first vaccination. May the foregoing exposition aid in increasing the number of those who look back to that day with gratitude.

An appendix contains the whole vaccination law of Germany, with form of all the certificates and lists

required by it; also the whole of the subsequent additions relating to calf lymph.

Another appendix relates to the numerous graphic charts inserted, and fully explains them. In 1893, the primary vaccinations were 1,326,754, with a successful percentage of 96.3; the calf lymph vaccinations were 98.5 per cent. of all the vaccinations, the whole constituting 87 per cent. of the vaccinations due according to the lists.

The revaccinations were 1,107,025, being 96.7 per cent. of those due. The successes were 91.7 per cent., a remarkably high percentage, showing thoroughness; and the revaccinations with calf lymph were 99 per cent. of the whole number.

A dreadful coloured map of Europe is given, showing the small-pox mortalities of its countries. A table of these mortalities for some or all of the 5 years 1889-93 is also given, with a summary of the law in each country. England is first discussed. The unvaccinated percentage is adverted to as rising steadily, and the free revaccinations as diminishing.

In 1896 a dreadful epidemic raged in Gloucester. "England by this epidemic received a smart warning, and, if the attempts to hinder the law which were then so marked extend further, the time may soon be at hand when England will find herself in the same condition again as in the middle of the century."

Hungary has adopted since 1887 compulsory vaccination and revaccination, though in 1892 only 78 per cent. of the primary vaccinations due were effected. But there is already a notable decrease of small-pox.

Italy adopted primary vaccination in 1888, and school vaccination in 1891, and small-pox has rapidly decreased.

Thus Germany, Hungary and Italy have taken up the only logical position regarding vaccination.

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The present attempts of the "conscientious objectors" in England to hinder the law makes the reference to the Gloucester outbreak very timely.

NEW BRUNSWICK FIRE UNDERWRITERS.

The annual meeting of the New Brunswick Board of Fire Underwriters was held on 9th inst., and was very largely attended. The retiring president, Mr. A. C. Fairweather, made an excellent address, in which he referred in glowing terms to the future prospects of St. John and of Canada. The election of officers was then proceeded with and Mr. R. W. W. Frink was elected president; Mr. Peter Clinch secretary, and Messrs. Mitchell D. Sweeney and A. Gordon Leavitt auditors for the ensuing year. The New Brunswick Board of Underwriters is the oldest fire insurance association in Canada, its establishment dating from 1865. Mr. Frink is the New Brunswick Agent of the "Western," and the London Assurance.