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FEW REMARKS ON VACCINATION AND RE-VACCINATION.

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On the 18th May, 1861, an act was assented to by His Excellency the Governor General "To provide for the more general adoption of the practice of vaccination." That act provides that no public money should be paid to any Hospital, unless it had a small-pox ward; that the City Councils of Quebec, Three Rivers, St. Hyacinthe, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Sherbrooke should contract with legally qualified medical practitioners for the vaccination of all those who might come to them; and that convenient places be appointed in each ward for the purpose. By that law, parents are bound to take their children to be vaccinated within three calendar months after their birth; to exhibit them to the medical practitioner on the eighth day after vaccination; and to obtain from him a certificate of successful vaccination. But if the child is not useful for vaccination, a certificate to that effect is to be given, and every succeeding two months the child is to be taken to the medical practitioner, until vaccinated, or found insusceptible of vaccine disease. Parents who do not comply with the requirements of this act, are liable, upon conviction, to a penalty not exceeding five dollars; and no such plea of conviction should be sufficient defence against any complaint which might afterwards be brought against the parent or guardian for non-compliance with the provisions of the act, respecting the same child.

Such is the substance of a law which is good so far as it goes; but which is defective in being too limited, and too partial in its scope. It was the duty of our Provincial Parliament to have followed the legislatures of other countries, and to have passed a law to render the practice of vaccination compulsory, not only in the larger cities, but throughout the province. Such a law would not have been considered inquisitorial, and would have reached persons of all conditions, and of every locality. As it is, the residents of the larger cities alone benefited; and such of them, only, as were, of their own good pleasure, to submit to the repeated invitations of the public vaccinators. The smaller towns, as Brockville, Prescott, Port Hope, Belleville, Cobourg, &c., and all the numerous villages are unprovided with public vaccinators; while in country districts, physicians in private practice, to whom is left the duty of vaccinating, are rarely to be found in some places in Eastern Canada, at least—are not applied to for that purpose. The mass of the people intended to be benefited by this law are not provided with the necessity for, or the usefulness of vaccination—nay, many have a deep rooted prejudice against the practice of "putting a scab from

a cow upon the skin of a Christian." In this city, notwithstanding the policeman's alarm bell, notices in the newspapers, occasional promptings from the pulpit, and large posters in certain localities indicating offices for vaccination purposes, only about 400 have availed themselves of the services of the public vaccinators during the past two years; and of these, the greater number were vaccinated when the act, through the agency of the City Council, first obtained partial publicity.

Were all the rest attended to by private practitioners there would be no occasion to find fault; but it is not so: there are many families whose children never have been, and without some stringent compulsory law, never will be inoculated with the vaccine virus. Yet small-pox is, *par excellence*, a Canadian disease. It is rarely absent from this city, and never absent from the country. In every town and village throughout the province numerous traces of its former presence are visible. If we visit the French Canadian districts we find family after family "spotted" with it; and many a mother will tell us she has to deplore the loss of a loved one, by a disease which added to the usual horrors of death, the swollen distorted features that forbid the last embrace—nay even the last sad look of recognition. In those districts where small-pox is most prevalent, vaccination is unknown; and I am assured by professional gentlemen of the highest respectability in country districts, it is useless to attempt to convince many of the humbler classes that there is any conservative influence in the practice. Many regard small-pox as one of the necessary ills associated with our existence. The child must get its teeth, have measles, scarlatina, hooping-cough, and small-pox. And some go so far as to expose the child to the contagion of the latter when its health is good, hoping thereby it might run the gauntlet with greater comparative safety. The untutored savages in this country fly from it in terror; and when one is stricken with the disease (and it is supposed to have had more victims than the "fire-water," introduced by the beneficent white man) he drowns himself—preferring a resting place among the fishes to lying a bloated, putrid mass, with no one to venture near him to moisten his lips.

'Tis strange a subject so deeply affecting the community, should not have received attention earlier; and 'tis passing strange that when attention was at length directed, a bill of the nature described—so partial in its scope and action—should have been foisted to lead persons to repose in fancied security, believing something had been done to ward off this loathsome malady. I cannot say what the success has been in the other cities and towns mentioned in the act, but in this city we have not an entirely vaccinated population. Within the past few weeks, small-pox has carried off large numbers in the west end and in the east end of the suburbs; and here and there throughout the city it has marked