

ciety, the *Small-Pox*; and against the infection of which, the experience of nearly half a century, throughout almost every corner of the inhabited world, has served to establish *vaccination*, as a security* and which, it had been calculated, the course of a few years would altogether annihilate, has, within two years (and particularly the present one), exerted its direful influence in several sections of Lower Canada, and been attended with the most calamitous consequences and destruction of human existence.

About thirty years since, large grants of money were provided by the Provincial Legislature, for the promulgation and extension of Vaccination throughout the Lower Province, but the hurried and imperfect manner in which its operation was effected, and the instructions of the Board (appointed to carry the provisions of the law into effect) executed, in several parishes, leave the inhabitants much room to doubt the efficient security to the vaccinated, against variolous infection, for hundreds of grown and aged persons have lately been attacked with the *Small-Pox*, which, in many cases, proved fatal from its confluent nature.

For several years back, Vaccination has also been intrusted to illiterate persons, totally ignorant of its characteristics, either by experience or from the description of others; and, I may also add, that several medical men have been extremely inattentive to those numerous constitutional and local peculiarities which weaken its preventive power and security against the existing disease. There are, however, several respectable practitioners who assert, that many who have been vaccinated, and who then appeared to have gone through all the characteristic stages of the *Vaccina*, have, some years subsequently, taken the *Small-Pox*. To these exceptions to the preventive power of the *Vaccine* disease, and *they are too many not to influence the minds of some with terror and annoyance, are we now unhappily indebted for the renewal of the Small-Pox-inoculation, the tendency of which has been, not only to spread and multiply the disease, but to afford a constant source of infection.*

The question (and it is a very important one) with several medical gentlemen, respectable from their long standing and experience, is, whether the

* We take occasion to differ from our Correspondent on the value to be attached to the act of vaccination. We think that it is commonly a modifier of the type of a subsequent attack of *Small-Pox*, by no means a preventative. As to the propriety of some Legislative interference in preventing *inoculation*, we heartily concur with Dr. Von Iffland. We have seen the most disastrous consequences attend the practice, putting entirely out of the question the fact that each inoculated case becomes itself, afterwards, the source of new infection. By a late Legislative enactment in Great Britain, a fine and imprisonment are the legal reward of every one who practises *inoculation*, and we have read of this penalty having been carried into effect in at least two instances. —Eds.

mode of transferring *independently* the lymph from one patient to another, does not induce some diminution in its specific properties, with a variation in the specific characters of the disease engendered by its use from the genuine type; and, from the facts already before them, they entertain the opinion, that the *Vaccina* should be repeated after a certain number of years. They are also strengthened in this opinion, from the important consideration, that, in several rural sections of the Province, the lymph communicated from one system to another, traces its origin to its first introduction among them, and which is no less than thirty years back!

My long experience has not failed to introduce to my observation many failures in the security of *Vaccina* against *Small-Pox*, and under circumstances which, at the time, produced such doubts upon my mind as were not dissimilar from those now entertained by my medical friends, but they were soon removed upon more mature consideration. It cannot be denied, that the lymph, though originally possessing the specific virus, may suffer a decomposition, either from putrefaction, or some less obvious cause, and produce a *spurious disease*, which, although bearing, in some instances, a striking resemblance to the genuine, may be detected by a very attentive and experienced Vaccinator. The failure as a preventative of *Vaccina* may also be ascribed to unknown peculiarities of the constitution, to intervening disorders, independent of the *Vaccina*, and to inflammation excited by accidental causes in very young children, ill-fed and ill-nursed.

We are also well informed of the multitude of instances in which means have been employed to communicate the *Small-Pox* to those who have been known to go through regular vaccination, and in which neither repeated inoculations, nor exposure to the disease in its most malignant type, have been able to produce any effect.

The means of ascertaining constitutional pervasion, in cases of *Vaccine* inoculation, have been practised, with, it is said, the most satisfactory results, for upwards of forty years, by several Vaccinators. It is to Mr. Bryce, a Surgeon of Edinburgh, that we are indebted for practical observations on this test. I cannot, however, but place in doubt its decisive criterion, on the ground that constitutional affection is often present in the *spurious Cow-Pox*: and this doubt, I am persuaded, cannot but be also entertained by others, although long experience and observation may have taught us to distinguish the external characters of the genuine, from the *spurious pustules*.

The test here proposed, is founded on the known fact, respecting *Small-Pox*; viz., that if a person be