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Original Communications.

VACCINATION IN CHRONIC SKIN DISEASES.

(Read before the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Montreal, Oct. 29th, 1880.)

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—In the number of the *British Medical Journal* for Sept. 4th, 1880, a letter appeared from Chas. D. Drury, M.D., Bucklersbury, Eng., giving his experience of the result of vaccination in three cases of chronic eczema, which was most gratifying.

This communication interested me very much at the time, inasmuch as it recalled to mind many cases in my experience as public vaccinator, in which I had seen skin eruptions of various kinds disappear at the time of vaccination, and apparently as the direct result of it.

I am aware that it is contrary to the preconceived notions of the profession to vaccinate any child having a skin eruption, and when in 1876 I was appointed one of the public vaccinators we were strictly prohibited from vaccinating any child, "with eruptions behind the ears or elsewhere on the skin." And we were particularly cautioned against collecting vaccine lymph from any child with "eruptions on the skin," notwithstanding that some of our prominent local medical authorities then held, and still hold, that no other virus or blood contamination can be communicated or conveyed with vaccine lymph.

Four years of experience (during which time I have vaccinated over 7,000 persons) has taught me many practical lessons on this subject, among others these: that, 1st. There is no danger incurred, and there need be no hesitation in vaccinating any child suffering from a cutaneous eruption.

2nd. That most skin eruptions disappear immediately after vaccination.

3rd. That there is very strong presumptive evidence of the communicability of various blood contaminations through the medium of vaccine lymph; and,

4th. That the absence of red blood corpuscles from lymph does not guarantee the absence of blood taints, simply because germs of disease float in the serum of the blood in the same way that blood corpuscles themselves do, and may find their way into the lymph poured out into a vaccine, as well as any other vesicle; and who shall say that blood corpuscles convey poisons; or that the liquor sanguinis is not the medium of their communication. Or, that a cancer, or a syphilitic cell, may not be present in the lymph exuding from an apparently healthy child's arm, although to the naked eye it may appear perfectly clear and transparent.

Our authorities moreover described pure lymph as "liquid, clear, limpid, translucent, sometimes slightly yellow and moderately viscid."

Now I take exception to the "sometimes slightly yellow" characteristic, and unhesitatingly say that