

Dr. Meek was asked for a paper on "*Puerperal Septicæmia, its Causation and Treatment*," for the next meeting.

Dr. English will report a case.

## British Columbia.

*Under control of the Medical Council of the Province of British Columbia.*

DR. MCGUIGAN, Associate Editor for British Columbia.

Owing to the small-pox having broken out, Dr. McGuigan's time has been fully occupied as health officer and he has been unable to furnish editorial material for this issue.

The report of the Commissioner appointed to enquire into the late epidemic outbreak of small-pox in this Province contains matter of much interest, as it traces to its source the origin of the outbreak. The concluding portion of the report is as follows :

### PROTECTION AGAINST CONTAGION FROM ABROAD.— SMALL-POX AND VACCINATION.

The best protection against all invasions of contagion seems to reside, not in the first line of defence, viz., quarantine : Through any quarantine, isolated cases, it is shown by experience, will find their way ; but in the second line, isolation and sanitation. Any case which penetrates through quarantine must be immediately taken up, isolated, and treated in such a manner as to prevent its propagation. It seems to be universally admitted that all these contagions are propagated by means of germs : whether carried in the air, or by water, or in solid filth of any description may be disputed. But this further is everywhere admitted, that cleanliness, both of the person and of the man's surroundings, diminishes the *nidus* in which such germs flourish, and also diminishes the susceptibility of individuals to yield to their attacks. And as a principal means of cleanliness a copious supply of pure water is essential. With these precautions it is tolerably certain that no contagion will ever become epidemic.

As against all other contagions these are the only provisions which can be made, viz., isolation and sanitation. But as against the particular disease of

small-pox there is the well-known and approved prophylactic vaccination, to the supereminent value of which all the professional men examined before us testified quite unanimously. There were differences of opinion as to the mode of operating, some preferring calf lymph provided from vaccine farms, some preferring arm to arm vaccination ; but all agreeing as to the great value of the operation. The experience of the Province in the recent epidemic shows, however, that vaccination and re-vaccination, by no means affords the perfect protection against contagion which has been sometimes supposed. The experience here, however, may to some extent be due to the inert points used. Yet there can be no doubt that vaccination very greatly lessens the chances of infection, and still more frequently disarms small-pox of its virulence. In the recent epidemic, out of one hundred cases treated by Dr. Richardson, fifty-three had been vaccinated, but only six showed four scars, *i.e.*, fully vaccinated. And out of thirteen deaths only one vaccinated person died, and he was suffering from a complication of disorders. That is, one vaccinated person died out of fifty-three attacked, and twelve unvaccinated persons out of forty-seven attacks. This is certain, that although doctors and professional nurses are obviously more exposed to contagion than any other classes of the community, not a single doctor or professional nurse was attacked during the whole course of the epidemic here. They all believed and trusted in vaccination. There are no statistics to show the numbers of vaccinated and unvaccinated persons here ; but probably the vaccinated are far more numerous—far more than the ratio of fifty-three to forty-seven ; in which case the percentage of attacks, as well as of deaths, is largely in favour of vaccination. In fact, only six out of one hundred attacks had been fully vaccinated.

Against this universal consent of all who had made a professional study of the question, we offered to take the evidence of all who professed the contrary opinion. Two champions presented themselves. One, who appeared much the stronger in his views, had confessedly not studied the question at all, and the mere vehemence of the expression of his opinions of course entitled them to no weight, but rather detracted from their impressiveness. The other, Mr. Greig, had devoted a great