

THE SMALL POX HOSPITAL.

We do not wish to be considered unnecessary alarmists, but we would remind our readers that during the past four or five years small-pox has been very prevalent, lulling in the summer, to break out with greater virulence towards winter. We have heard that the city contemplate closing the small-pox hospital at the Hall house. This is all very well if another suitable place be provided. The small pox wards of the Montreal General Hospital must be removed or else the hospital will be ruined as a general hospital. It has been stated that the governing body of the Montreal General Hospital feel that in closing the small-pox wards they render themselves liable to action for damages. The reading of the 24 Vic. Cap. 24, clause 1 is that "no warrant shall hereafter issue for the payment of any sum of money granted by the Legislature to any hospital, unless nor until a certificate, signed by a medical officer of such hospital to the effect that there is in such hospital a distinct and separate ward set apart for the exclusive accommodation of patients afflicted with small-pox has been filed with the clerk of the Executive Council." Now this we take it does not oblige any hospital to keep up a distinct and separate ward for the accommodation of small-pox. An hospital may be intended exclusively for some special disease or condition. Take for instance Lying-in hospitals, of which in this city there are some three or four, this clause in the Act applies equally to them, and yet no man in his senses would counsel connecting a small-pox ward with any of these institutions. We have carefully looked into this subject and find nothing in the charter of the Montreal General Hospital which can be construed into an obligation to keep open a small-pox ward. But take the other side of the question. How would an action lie supposing the friends of a deceased person went to claim damage in consequence of their relatives having contracted small-pox which led to their death, they having in good faith entered the hospital to be treated for a slight surgical injury or trivial attack of