

Canada Medical Journal.

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SANITARY REFORM.

In the last number of this journal, we spoke of the contagious character of certain diseases, such as Small-pox, Scarlet Fever, Measles, Whooping-cough and Cholera. We alluded, moreover, to their being eminently preventible, by the adoption of certain precautionary measures, to which we propose to allude in this present issue of our periodical.

It has been computed that Jenner's great discovery, saves from death by Small-pox each year, in the British Isles, 80,000 lives, but there is not a country in Europe in which the beneficial result of vaccination has not been fully tested and proved. In Marseilles, in 1828, Small-pox was epidemic. The Academy of Medicine, Paris, took special care to collect the statistics of that epidemic. It was found that 8,000 persons in the city were unprotected by vaccination or a previous attack of Small-pox. Of these 4,000 or one-half, took the disease and many of them died; on the other hand, 30,000 persons in the city had been vaccinated, or were otherwise protected, and of these, 2,000 took Small-pox, and some of these cases were of a severe type.

We merely mention this case, more to place it on record, than to add any material weight to the already overwhelming evidence which is obtainable on this point. The assumption that vaccination is actually and in reality a preventive to the disease Small-pox is incorrect. In a great number of cases it proves a protective power which is at once striking and unmistakable, but that it is absolutely in every case a protection against the disease Small-pox, experience has proved to be untrue. This, however, is no reason against the employment of vaccination.

Vaccination has been shown to be one of the most efficient means at our disposal, for the prevention of the spread of Small-pox. But there are other means which experience has proved to be equally efficient, perhaps of greater efficiency.

These in the main consist in isolation, strict seclusion, surrounding the sick with nurses and attendants who are themselves in-