

THE VACCINATION ACT.

This Act, assented to on the 18th of May, 1861, and which requires the councils of each of the following cities, Quebec, Three Rivers, St. Hyacinthe, Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, and London, and the town of Sherbrooke, within three months after its passage, to appoint public vaccinators, who, at least once a month, are required to vaccinate all those who present themselves (those unable to pay being vaccinated gratis, and the council paying the vaccinator twenty-five cents for each person thus operated upon), has, so far as we have been able to observe, been a dead letter, except in our own city of Montreal. In Quebec, we believe vaccinators were appointed, but we have not been able, though watching somewhat closely, to find any mention of what success, if any, followed their appointment. This Act, though in our opinion deficient in some respects, is a most important one, and the defaulting cities are deserving of censure for having so long delayed putting it in operation. Let our brethren in those cities bring the Act under the notice of the local authorities, and let not the matter rest till its provisions are being thoroughly carried out. It is impossible to over-estimate the beneficial results which would follow a rigid enforcement of even our present Vaccination Act; for it must be the experience of every medical man in Canada, that there are thousands who reach the age of boyhood, and even manhood, without having been vaccinated. How fatal small-pox is when the unprotected are attacked, needs not our pen to tell. Parents in many cases do not realize the great responsibility which rests upon them when neglecting to subject their children to the action of the cowpox. In the mother country this responsibility has been brought home, in more than one instance, in a way anything but pleasant, though we believe a few such examples would do not a little to cause every mother to have her children vaccinated within a few months after birth. We give an instance: Not long ago, Dr. Lankester, the Coroner for Central Middlesex, London, held an inquest on the body of a child, two years and a half old, who had died from small-pox, and who had never been vaccinated. Two other children in the same house, also not vaccinated, had contracted the disease and died. In evidence it was proved that the parents had been served with a notice to have their children vaccinated, which they had neglected to attend to. A verdict of manslaughter was the result. The subject of vaccination is a most important one, and we trust our readers will not fail to impress upon their patients the absolute necessity which exists for their children being vaccinated at an early age. Our attention was drawn to this subject by the presentation to the City Council of Montreal, on the 16th of March,