

PREFACE.

In Toronto, organized opposition to *compulsory* vaccination dates from January 18th, 1900, when the Anti-Vaccination League of Canada was formed—a step necessitated by the existence of a vexatious By-law, making vaccination of pupils a condition of entrance to the Public Schools. After six years of steady pushing we succeeded in “knocking out” this By-law. The Board of Education, on March 1st, 1906, by a majority of eleven to one, voted to abolish it.

This brought a marked change of policy on the part of the Board of Health. A “conspiracy of silence” was exchanged for a hysterical outburst by them and some of their learned sympathizers, ultimating in their publishing an illustrated pamphlet, to which this one is a “reply.”

The writer of that pamphlet—Dr. Chas. A. Hodgetts—indulged freely in undignified and unmerited abuse of the Anti-Vaccinists. To this we have not replied, except by allusion in passing. It ill-becomes a young man of his limited experience to use his *official* position to publish at *State expense*, aspersions of such men as have felt constrained by the evidences to oppose vaccination (see pp. 3 and 25 of this pamphlet). The words of William Lloyd Garrison are to the point here:—

“The result of reading and observation has been to make me distrust vaccination, and to become a decided opponent to all legal measures to compel its infliction . . . My chief surprise was to discover that the chief antagonism to the practice came not from the ignorant and uncleanly classes, but from men and women of the highest intelligence, sensitive conscience, more than ordinary caution, and habits of scientific exactness. Such minds do not act without cause. . .

“I need not say that I was surprised at the company I overtook. And the companionship was an honor. Here were John Stuart Mill, Prof. Sheldon Amos, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Florence Nightingale, Frances Power Cobbe, Gladstone, Bright, and other souls that have helped to light the world. Of the great medical authorities holding the same heterodox opinions, I shall speak later; but those mentioned suffice to show the nature of the lay opposition to the legal enforcement of vaccination. They were all animated by George Eliot’s sentiments: ‘I hold it blasphemy to say that a man should not fight against authority. There is no great religion and no great freedom that has not done it in the beginning. . .’

“Fortunately, laymen have not to depend solely upon their own weapons in this fight for liberty. They have the backing of high medical authorities and reputations, in addition to that of scientists and students. . . It has never been the way of the medical profession, as a body, to confess to doubts as to the value of any established medical practice. There never was an established medical practice eventually acknowledged erroneous and discarded, whose abolition was not accomplished in the face of the united opposition of the doctors.

“Of the authorities that helped to undermine my faith in vaccination, first was the experience of Dr. Charles Creighton. Selected as an orthodox physician in high standing to prepare the article on ‘Vaccination’ for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the special study of the subject revolutionized his faith, and forced him to write against the practice he was expected to champion. Ranged on the side of dissent came Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson, M.R.C.S.; Prof. Edgar Crookshank; Dr. George Gregory, for fifty years director of the Smallpox Hospital, London; Dr. John Epps, director of the Jennerian Institute, London, who had vaccinated 120,000 people; Dr.