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*Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice. Advertisements inserted on the most liberal terms. All Letters and Communications to be addressed to the "Editor Canada Lancet," Toronto.*

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## VACCINATION AS A PREVENTIVE OF SMALL-POX.

We are in receipt of a very able essay on this subject by Dr. W. C. Chapman, Vice-President of the Toledo Medical Association. Dr. C. commences with a natural expression of surprise and indignation, that in this year of grace 1876, unreasonable and fatal prejudice against it should exist in the minds of any educated or intellectual individual, and by way of showing in the most unmistakable manner, the losses sustained by a community from the prevalence of a small-pox epidemic, he quotes the following passage from a paper presented by Dr. Benjamin Lee, of Philadelphia, at a meeting of the Public Health Association in Baltimore. "An approximate determination of the loss sustained by the city of Philadelphia, in dollars and cents, in consequence of the presence of a small-pox epidemic in the winter of 1871-2, and placing side by side with this the degree in which the loss might have been prevented by judicious sanitary legislation legally enforced. The total loss sustained during the epidemic of those years is placed at the enormous figure of nearly twenty-three millions of dollars, and Dr. Lee believes that 90 per cent. of the cases, and 97½ per cent of the deaths could have been avoided, and that less than three-quarters of a million dollars would have represented the total loss by sickness, death and disability. Averaging the value of a human life, he finds that the actual loss sustained by reason of sickness, death and disability, was nearly sixteen and a half millions of dollars. He then reviews the history of the origin and spread of small-pox, in former centuries, with its frightful attending mortality, in an exhaustive manner, inclining to the belief that the disease

described by Procopius, which made its appearance in Egypt in the year 544 was true small-pox. Europe was not long free from its invasion. Gregory, of Tours, speaks of a disease which appeared in southern Europe in the year 581. From the description given by him, the character of true small-pox is apparent. In the Harleian manuscripts, published some time before the year 900, the word Variola is used, and Moore in his history of small-pox, states that the word occurs in the Bertinian Chronicles, published in the year 961. The dread in which the disease was held by the people, is shown by the following prayer, found in the first named manuscript: "In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. May our Saviour keep us; Lord of Heaven, hear the prayers of thy men-servants and of thy maid-servants; O Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech thousands of angels, that they may save and defend us from the fire and power of the small-pox." Dr. C. then traces down successive epidemics to the end of the eighteenth century, discusses the question whether it was coeval with creation or had a subsequent beginning, and whether the same causes which originally produced, may reproduce it without contagion. He rather inclines to the belief, that although the doctrine of spontaneous origin admits of being supported by ingenious and plausible arguments, the weight of evidence is decidedly in favor of the invariable origin of small-pox by contagion. He then gives the history of the introduction of inoculation as a palliation, by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, its subsequent abandonment from its proven ability to spread the disease as readily through the community from an inoculated case of small-pox, as from a natural one. From this he passes on to a glowing eulogium on Jenner, the generally believed discoverer of vaccination as a prophylaxis. We say generally believed, because we apprehend the evidence extant to prove that Jenner is due only the merit of elaborating, with great care and labor the discovery of another, is known to comparatively few members of the profession. In evidence of this we translate from *Trousseau's Medical Clinique* Tome Premier, page 43 the following passage: "The idea is far from me, of contesting the honor due to Jenner for the discovery of vaccination; it is necessary however for historic truth to make known the various documents which have been collected re-