

# WESTERN CANADA MEDICAL JOURNAL

---

VOL. II.

FEBRUARY, 1908.

No. 2

---

## ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

---

### OPSONINS\*

BY J. H. LEEMING, M.D.

Bacteriologist to the City of Winnipeg

While every new departure from recognized lines of treatment is justly regarded by the Profession at large from a somewhat conservative standpoint, it is probable that none has been surrounded at its outset by more misapprehension than the one under consideration. For this there are two reasons:—

1st. The alarm that naturally resulted from certain errors in the earlier application of the principles involved;

2nd. A resulting unwillingness to reconsider the subject in the light of later knowledge.

The principles of acquiring protection against a specific poison by introducing into the system small doses of that poison, although originated by Mithridates so long ago as B.C. 70, did not until many centuries later have any application to what may be called organized poisons. The modern method of specific prophylaxis and cure may be said to have originated from the introduction of variolation, a practice, however, which was associated with so much risk to both the patient and the community, that it had to give way to the safer method introduced by Jenner in 1797, viz., inoculation by an attenuated virus in the form of calf lymph.

---

\*Read before the Winnipeg Medico-Chirurgical Society,