

and its penal enforcement will be considered the foulest blot on the generally beneficent course of legislation during the century."

Needless to say this tirade is only the wild vaporing of a fanatic antivaccinationist. Vaccination has constantly grown in medical favor all over the world during the last twenty-five years. The more thoroughly it has been tried, the more confidence has it elicited in its power to protect. The armies of Europe present the best proof of this. They are ruled by men who would soon do away with the bother of vaccination were it not for the profound and growing conviction that to Jenner's discovery and its universal application are due the modern freedom from smallpox in camp and barracks. The disease was one of the worst and most feared scourges of army life, and is now almost unknown.

#### ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE AND VACCINATION.

WE are in the midst of reviews of the past century's work in all branches and the progress in medicine, because of its universal interest, has come in for even more than its share of laudatory review. As a rule, the opinions expressed on advances in medicine have been worthy of the magnificent development that has taken place.

No better exemplification of the maxim that the shoemaker should not go beyond his last has been furnished for many years, however, than the failure of even scientific minds to understand the significance of certain phases of medical progress. The most glaring example of the failure of a great scientific mind to appreciate a distinct medical advance is afforded by Alfred Russel Wallace's judgment of the value of vaccination.

"The Wonderful Century," the volume in which the sharer with Darwin of the development of the theory of evolution expresses his views as to scientific progress during the past hundred years, was published some time ago, but has taken on a new interest in these last few weeks, because of the oft-quoted chapter "Vaccination a Delusion." Wallace does not mince words in his declaration of opinion. He thinks that he can satisfy his readers of the certain and absolute uselessness of vaccination as a preventive of smallpox. "Vaccination," he declares, "is a gigantic delusion. It has never saved a single life. It has been the cause of so much disease, so many deaths, such a vast amount of utterly needless and altogether undeserved suffering, that it will be classed by the coming generation among the greatest errors of an ignorant and prejudiced age,

Mr. Wallace's surprising declaration can be properly understood only by a knowledge of his views on other matters related to medicine, of which he knows as little and has perhaps even less reason for his opinions than on vaccination. In the same volume, in his essay on "The Neglect of Phrenology," he says: "In the coming century phrenology will assuredly attain general acceptance. It will prove itself to be the true science of mind. Its practical uses in education, in self-discipline, in the reformatory treatment of criminals, and in the remedial treatment of the insane, will give it one of the highest places in the hierarchy of the sciences, and its persistent neglect and obloquy during the last sixty years will be referred to as an example of the almost incredible narrowness and prejudice which prevailed among men of science at the very time they were making such splendid advances in other fields of thought and discovery." Almost as erratic are Mr. Wallace's utterances on hypnotism and psychical research. "Thought transference," he says, "automatic writing, trance-speaking, and clairvoyance have been all demonstrated in the presence of living observers of undoubted ability and knowledge. The still more extraordinary phenomena—veridical hallucinations, warnings, detailed predictions of future events, phantoms, voices or knockings, visible or audible to numerous individuals, bell-ringing, the playing on musical instruments, stone-throwing, and various movements of solid bodies, all without human contact or any discoverable physical cause, still occur among us as they have occurred in all ages. It is absolutely certain that during the coming century they, too, will be accepted as realities by

all impartial students and by the majority of educated men."

Verily the prophetic picture the great evolutionist draws for us of our state of mind in the century we are just entering is not very attractive. Fortunately there is no guarantee that Mr. Wallace is either a prophet or the son of a prophet. We can then contemplate with more peace of mind than might otherwise be possible the prospective opinions by which the rising generation are to be ruled. Had his views on vaccination been given to a hero-worshiping public by themselves, without the precious antidote of his other opinions, there is in them the possibility of working. His antivaccinationism, taken in connection with the equally aberrant fancies in other fields of thought allied to medicine, only emphasizes the old, old lesson, *sutor ne supra crepidam*.

In our day of scientific specialization no one mind can appreciate the significance of progress in widely separated branches of science. To attempt to do so is to invite inevitable failure and to make oneself absurd. This Mr. Wallace has done very effectually. When Tennyson was uttering some of the senilities that even his greatest admirers found it difficult to bear with equanimity, there was many a heartfelt wish that we could muzzle our poets in their day of senile degeneration. It would seem from Mr. Wallace's twaddle that a like procedure would be eminently desirable for our men of science also as they grow old. The age-limit of rational opinion would be hard to decide, but the world would be spared so much nonsense that it could afford to lose some sparks of sense that might be missed if a gag-law were enforced after a certain age.

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