

Martin (H. A.)

on vaccination x x





# Dr. Martin on Vaccination.

[From the Erie, (Pa.,) Observer.]

DR. WILKINS—*Dear Sir:* There is nothing connected with the extreme occupation of my time that I feel more than the incapacity which it inflicts on me of not answering such letters as your last as their importance demands. In order to write this imperfect answer I have been obliged to rise at 5 a. m., and so get an hour or two of time free from the calls of patients. The letter of J. S. Skeels is like every other that I have seen from an anti-vaccinator; full of assertions and statements calculated to frighten ill-informed people, and to fill them with the belief that Jenner was little less than a fiend, and that the great army of his followers, including the vast majority of the medical profession, and *all* the men who give solidity, respectability and reliability to the profession of medicine, are heartless creatures; either knaves or idiots, who, for the sake of the generally very paltry fee received for vaccination, or because they are fools, persist in an abominable practice, utterly destructive of humanity and far worse than small-pox, &c., &c., and all this in spite of the calm logical light, making their errors so manifest, which radiates from the wise and disinterested Skeels. The simple answer to this charge against the medical profession is, that before the introduction of vaccination small-pox practice was, without exception, the most lucrative of all a physician's business. In every great city of Europe were physicians who did nothing else but attend small-pox, and at exorbitant rates. Would a man make a decent living, year in and year out, now, who attended nothing but small-pox cases? Every one who will think will see that he could not, and in this one fact is ample proof of the vast benefit conferred on humanity by the discovery of Jenner. Formerly small-pox was the constant dread of every human being who had not been through it, and even those were filled with constant apprehension for their friends and relations who had not yet passed the dread ordeal. Thackeray, by the magic touch of genius, has given (Esmond, chapter 8) a most graphic and clear idea of the old, constant-haunting dread which all men had of this hideous; this most loathsome, fearful and fatal of all human epidemics, and I would advise all who

think that we owe nothing but blame and hatred to Edward Jenner to read the chapter referred to. I have an enormous collection of works on vaccination—over 1,000—to which I am continually making additions. A leading feature of this collection is that it contains, as far as possible, all that has been written against vaccination. I subscribe to all the publications of the English Anti-Vaccine League, and read every fortnight the "Anti-Vaccinator," a wonderfully absurd little paper, which is the organ of the fools of England who must have some instrument through which to bray. I have carefully read all the rubbish to which I refer. It is all alike; all like Skeels's letter; made up of bald statements and assertions, to answer all of which in detail is simply impossible, as no human being can possibly get at the foundation of a tithe of them. I have patiently traced to the fountain head many score of the horrid stories of the effects of vaccination, and I assure you that, as a result of vaccination with the true animal vaccine virus, or even that from the human subject *carefully selected*, I have never seen or known of a case in which a single human being has suffered any real trouble. This experience of mine extends over my whole professional life of thirty years, during all of which I have especially studied small-pox and vaccination, and during the last seventeen of which these subjects have been my daily and hourly study. I know that there is no man in America who has had the facilities for the pursuit of this study that I have enjoyed, and I have conscientiously availed myself of these facilities. As an instance, I may state that during the past three and a half months I have *re-vaccinated and vaccinated over eleven thousand patients*, a large proportion of whom I have seen a second, and even a third time, and thus been enabled to study the infinitely various types and varieties in which the imperfect vesicle of re-vaccination manifests itself. During the two years and five months which have elapsed since I introduced into America the Beaugency cow-pox and the practice of *true* animal vaccination, I have vaccinated 831 heifers; every one of which has been under my constant surveillance through every stage of the disease. I only



mention these facts to convince those who do not know me that I am well qualified to write and speak authoritatively on vaccination. I have spoken of the "Anti-Vaccinator;" nothing could so perfectly manifest the inherent weakness of all the opposition to vaccination as the wretched drivelling of this, its chosen, and only organ. The great, and to all candid inquiring minds, perfectly conclusive statistics of the comparative mortality in the French and German armies, are made the subject of a "leader" in a late number of the "Anti-Vaccinator." This "leader" is heralded as a most triumphant refutation of us followers of Jenner and believers in vaccination. It is such a perfect specimen of reckless assertion and total disregard of all sound and logical reasoning; it so perfectly and fairly illustrates literally all that is written and said against vaccination, that I shall soon re-publish it, as an appendix to a pamphlet which I am preparing, with the intention of affording something like clear and fair notions on the imperatively important and woefully misunderstood subject of vaccination. Let us look for a moment at the statistics. They are official; have every possible guarantee of accuracy; they were prepared not by mere doctors, who might have had an "axe to grind," but by the almost innumerable officials of both armies, who reported the cases, the aggregate of which they represent just as they would have reported to headquarters the casualties from bowel complaint or bomb shells. The general result of all these collected reports was presented at the late statistical congress held at St. Petersburg. They are simply perfectly authentic, with every possible guard and guaranty against error. They present to the consideration of all rational human beings a general fact; so conclusive, so perfectly establishing the prodigious benefit of proper vaccination, and above all re-vaccination, that no one who really seeks truth can, after its careful study, be at all shaken in his perfect confidence in the perfect protection thus afforded, by a thousand Skeelses or a million rumors of "awful cases"—"dreadful arms"—"eating ulcers"—all of which, on investigation, if investigation were possible, as it seldom is, would prove to have no *real* relation to true vaccination at all. The general fact was that the enormous army of Germany, subjected to all those fearful exposures and hardships of war which so inevitably tend to render disease serious and of fatal tendency, even with the best and most assiduous care; acting in a country in

which a dreadful epidemic of small-pox was raging, lost 205 men from variolous disease during the whole war; while the French army, which never was of three-fifths the size of that of Germany, lost by death from the same diseases 23,468. The German army was vaccinated thoroughly, twice for every child born in Prussia, and almost every infant born in the other kingdoms and principalities of Germany is vaccinated during the first year of life, and also re-vaccinated at about the 12th year. But, in addition to this, every man, on entering the army, is again vaccinated. If the operation fails to produce a specific effect, it is immediately repeated, and if this fails, re-vaccination is repeated at certain intervals during the whole time the individual remains in the service, or until a specific effect is obtained. When this specific effect is reached, sooner or later, he is pronounced safe for the remainder of life, and perfectly overwhelming accumulations of evidence prove that the assurance is correct. In the army of France all was wrong and rotten. Thousands of the French recruits of the new levies were quite unvaccinated and re-vaccination was in no wise compulsory. The consequence was that the French army was practically an unvaccinated army. The contemptible sham of vaccination under the Government of the late arch charlatan, Napoleon III, is made manifest by the fact that the entire appropriation made for the entire support of the immensely important matter of the propagation of the animal or cow-pox virus of Beaugency was about \$1200, (6,000 francs.) This annual sum is much less than my monthly expenditure for the same purpose. All that could possibly be done with such a paltry sum, even by the noble, disinterested and enthusiastic Depaul, was to vaccinate about fifty animals annually; a number so insufficient that animal vaccination could never be, and never was, properly developed in France. It was not till I gave up a large and lucrative practice and with my son devoted undivided attention to this infinitely important speciality, with a profuse expenditure of money, that its great advantages were, for the first time, made evident. I now feel certain that very soon I shall be able to perfect my methods and tests so that I can fully ascertain the absolute perfection of every particle of virus obtained from my animals, and thus obviate defects due to imperfect knowledge of adifficult subject incident to the first commencements of such enterprizes, and which will be found

inseparable from animal vaccination, if carried on with imperfect knowledge and insufficient means, and with the sole intention of making the largest possible amount of money with the smallest possible expenditure, and at the same time undersell those who devote to the enterprize that unremitting labor and constant large outlay, without which it cannot be properly carried on. As I have before said, the one great fact taught by the Franco-German statistics is inestimable, and to all candid men conclusive. What is the answer of the "Anti-Vaccinator" sage? "If your re-vaccination, &c., is such a *perfect protection* why did the 263 die—why did anybody die?" No allowance for exceptional cases—no allowance for failure of the operation now and then among the vast number of new recruits, and seizure by small-pox before it could be successfully repeated—no allowance for delay in vaccinating from occasional deficiency in supply or freshness of virus. None at all. If one person dies of small-pox in an army, the *rule* of which is re-vaccination, even although *he* was not re-vaccinated, it *proves* that re-vaccination is worthless, or worse—while the death of 23,648 men in an army of not much more than half the size, the *rule* of which was no re-vaccination at all and next to no vaccination, proves nothing at all. This is the gist of the "Anti-Vaccinator's" "triumphant" refutation of this hard and vital fact, for a lot of verbal trash, insinuating that these statistics, with which doctors had little or nothing to do, are doctors' and "doctored" statistics, and of course *not* to be relied upon, may go for nothing, but the usual and inevitable rhetorical finishing and ornamentation of all the anti-vaccination diatribes. Statistics, from the most methodical and mathematically reliable official source in existence, are "doctors' figures," while all the ravings, and old woman's tales, a thousand times told, and gaining some additional lie at each repetition; every wild assertion of ignorance and malignity which meets the anti vaccinator's purpose is "confirmation strong as Holy Writ," and must be accepted without hesitation or question, and is so accepted by fools, who cannot see how utterly incompetent they are to decide on questions which have puzzled the wisest heads, but which to them seem perfectly settled by a few such utter, baseless lies. In Skeels's letter several "awful" cases, said to have resulted from vaccination, are stated. I know the facts connected with only one of these asserted cases, and will state them presently. The

case is that of the people nominally "vaccinated" at Westford, Mass., (not Westport; the critical and accurate Skeels has not even got the name correctly) in April, 1880, three of whom died very soon with very terrible symptoms, and many others very narrowly escaped death by most careful, scientific and bold treatment, by one of the best surgeons of New England, Dr. Gilman Kimball, of Lowell. These terrible cases did, and still do, and will continue to do, through all time, an infinite deal of harm to humanity and the cause of vaccination, but, as will be seen, they really had nothing whatever, except in name, to do with vaccination at all, but were the result of gross malpractice, which, I am sorry to say, is not uncommon, and from which similar results, though often escaped, may occur at any time. Before I give the true narration of the Westford cases, let me say that, although I have seen disease and death directly following "vaccination"—which would not have occurred if vaccination had not been done, and in which, in some few instances, not the fatal ones, however, were directly induced by vaccination—they were cases where the grossest and most culpable ignorance and carelessness was displayed in the selection of vaccine virus, or improper methods of performing the operation, or reckless exposure of the vaccinated arm to direct and long continued cold, or to vaccination of people in very diseased conditions and in whom certain cutaneous diseases were latent and were brought to the surface by the vaccination, in a manner always beneficial to the patient, but always, too, involving the physician in dispute, blame and trouble. Some of these latter cases are inevitable from the vaccination of people who are exposed to small-pox contagion and where we cannot delay vaccination till the patient's system should be in a better state, but many of the cases could be foreseen and the operation postponed to a better occasion, if the physician possessed that knowledge, and tact, and foresight which all physicians *should* possess, but which I am sorry to know that we all do not possess.

During the past four months I have vaccinated over eleven thousand people with the pure cow-pox, or animal virus, of Beaugency. As I vaccinate at least one fresh animal every day, the virus has never been more than twenty-four hours from the heifer. I have produced nearly eighty per cent. of specific effect in re-vaccination cases, and the full, perfect, typical vesicle of *vaccina* (not *vaccinia*; *vaccina*

was the original and correct name) in every primary case, at the first or second, and in some very rare cases the third, attempt. In all this vast number there was but one bad case; one which I shall soon publish for the instruction of the profession. In this case, under very peculiar circumstances, the part of the arm on which was the eruption of re-vaccination at its height, lay for over four hours embedded in snow and exposed to a driving, wet, cold snow-storm. The consequences were great pain for the first fifteen minutes, then total cessation of pain, for the painful part had been frozen, its vitality destroyed, and pain ceased, of course, with the death of the part. The man, a very imprudent one in all that concerned himself, gave it no thought, and when I was called to see him the arm was in a very bad condition, but under proper treatment was quite well in three weeks. What a treat such a case would have been to Skeels and the philosophers of his school! How such a case, judiciously narrated as simply an effect of impure and poisonous vaccination, would have frightened people from the protection which a most wonderful and beneficent discovery and practice made available and offers to all. Beside this case there was a young man who had a small abscess in the arm-pit, two months after re-vaccination, but as he had eleven of them in the same place the year before, he fortunately did not ascribe the trifling ailment to vaccination, though, probably, the Skeelsian school of sages are quite able to prove that the dangers of vaccination are retro-active, and there is no doubt that the vast proportion of their "consequences" are no more consequences than if they had occurred a year before vaccination.

I will now briefly state the Westford cases, and will do so, not from hearsay or newspaper reports, but from absolute personal observation, for I was summoned as an expert by the coroner's jury on the three people who died, and visited all the survivors who were at the time of the inquest under treatment. I was furnished with all the papers by the foreman of the coroner's jury, and urged by him to prepare a narrative of the whole case, and offered full compensation for my trouble and remuneration for all expense and outlay. I wished to make the publication, and should have done so were it not from the feeling that my doing so would have been liable to be regarded as from a desire not to elucidate truth, but to expose and injure the unfortunate practitioner (I will not call him physician) to whose shocking,

but not unusual, malpractice all the dreadful tragedy was due. In the latter part of March, 1860, the people of the little agricultural town or village of Westford, in this State, became alarmed by the vicinity of one or more cases of small-pox and the Selectmen employed the two physicians of the place to vaccinate the people. One of these physicians was a homœopath, and, of course, according to the ideas of the immaculate school of regulars to which I belong—but *all* of whose notions and dogmas I do *not* admire—a quack. The other was a "regular," in full feather, a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and all the rest of it. I am sorry to say that most of the medical experts summoned to the inquest, in great numbers, coincided in their testimony, or tendency rather to screen from the odium of his malpractice their "regular" brother—a laudable thing as far as it did not interfere with the elucidation of truth, but which in this case was very wrong and injurious in its effect on the public mind. I wish here to say that I have no sympathy with "irregulars," either in medicine or anything else, but neither do I think that the malpractice of any one should be smoothed over by sphystry, however ingenious. The agent of the Selectmen of Westford purchased from the city physician of Boston, for seven dollars, a quantity of vaccine virus, taken from the arms of children vaccinated in his office. This virus was partly in scabs and partly on quill slips or "points." The evidence at the inquest showed that all this virus was inert; good for nothing, as indeed was almost all the old, effete virus of long humanization then in use. The homœopath used *all* his share without inducing vaccine or any other effect, injurious or beneficial. The "regular" had three of the scabs. Half of one of these he used with the same utterly negative effect as his irregular "brother." He thought him that he was using up his virus too quickly and at that rate the whole town of Westford could not be vaccinated, even at the princely outlay of seven dollars, so he determined to adopt a method taught him by his "preceptor," and now we come to the malpractice which the eminent physicians who were at the inquest should, for the benefit of humanity, have made clear and manifest, even if in thus maintaining and explaining the truth a "regular" brother had been injured, or even ruined. The method which the physician's "preceptor" had taught and practiced, and which *he* was very sure had nothing at all to do with the

terrible results observed at Westford, was to break up the 2 1-2 scabs which remained, put the pieces into a bottle with a little snow water, (this snow water he insisted on decidedly, because he said he wanted the purest water). Whenever he wished to make a "vaccination" he shook up the mixture, dipped his lancet in it and "vaccinated." In this way for, I think ten or eleven days, he "vaccinated" a fair share of the people of Westford without any effect whatever, good or bad; but on the eleventh or twelfth day, when it was in evidence that when the vial was opened, notwithstanding the the 'purity' of the snow water, there was emitted a stench which, in a moment, filled the room, he "vaccinated" twenty-five people, old and young. What we doctors call dissection sores—diffuse abscess, &c., &c.—at once ensued in more than half the cases. Three of the eldest, and so least prepared to resist such poisoning of the blood, died very soon, with very terrible symptoms and suffering; some dozen others were only saved by most prompt and energetic treatment, and even those were left with maimed and useless arms; of the remainder, only a very few escaped quite clear. At the inquest, I am very sorry to say, that in the face of all this, many eminent men, wishing to screen the city physician, tried to maintain that these terrible effects arose not from anything wrong in the virus, but because of the broken, bad state of the constitutions of those vaccinated; *i. e.*, that all the bad, broken constitutions in Westford were vaccinated, by a most strange coincidence, on one day, while hundreds vaccinated during the previous eleven or twelve days, with the very same virus, presented no symptoms at all. Others, wishing to screen the regular "brother," saw in the results nothing whatever reflecting on the method of using the virus, but a very decided malignity in the virus employed. It is no wonder that the testimony of medical experts is at once the wonder and contempt of their brethren of the law. The truth was expressed in my testimony before that inquest, *viz*: That the fearful results were clearly to be ascribed to the development of a septic poison of intense and virulent malignity, at a certain stage of the decomposition of animal matter; that up to a certain time this poison did not exist; that after a certain and very brief period it was destroyed by the progress of decomposition, but that if inoculation was made with decomposing animal matter, during this brief period, such effects as those noticed and de-

plored at Westford were inevitable, if the inoculation was perfect; that is, if the poison, even in the smallest quantity, entered the circulation. I cited the world-famous experiments of Orfila which, however, the "experts" had never seen or heard of till I translated their record aloud from Orfila's book at the inquest. In these experiments M. Orfila had cut up the lean of beef and mutton, mixed it with water (whether snow water or not he failed to mention) and inoculated animals with the mixture, from day to day, just as the Westford M. D. had done. On a day corresponding to the day of the professional murder of the Westford victims, just such symptoms appeared in the animals, and no treatment being used in these cases almost always terminated in death. I said that beef and mutton were not usually considered poisonous and inoculation with a solution of either would produce no effect till, in the course of decomposition, this dreadful poison was developed; that the evidence showed that the scabs, whatever they might have had of vaccine quality when originally collected, had none when obtained by the Westford authorities; that they were then simply animal matter, as inert and powerless as fresh beef or mutton, but in any animal matter, whether leather, or glue, or blood, or muscle, beef, mutton, or scab, at a certain stage of its decomposition in water an intense poison would be developed, and its inoculation would inevitably be followed by terrible consequences. The verdict of the jury was that the three Westford victims came to their death by the use of vaccine virus, originally bad, and rendered worse by an improper mode of employing it. It was, on the whole, a fair verdict, but the only "badness" of the virus was its utter want of efficacy. The verdict should have been that animal matter, purporting to be vaccine virus, being used in a monstrously improper manner, had been the vehicle by which a most destructive and intense poison had been introduced into the circulation. I need say no more at present about the Westford cases. I now regret that I did not prepare a full report of them and of the evidence before the inquest, and I may yet do so, for it is very important that the true nature of such cases, should be fully made public. For all purposes of answering Skeels, what I have said will suffice.

I have said I knew nothing of the other big stories that he narrates, but I do not doubt that they are all susceptible of equally perfect refutation so far as they appear

to be condemnatory of vaccination, properly so called. One word more, however, of those Westford cases, and I have done. The virus used was humanized virus—from the vaccine disease induced by the use of virus thousands of removes from its original source in the cow—perpetuated by transmission from one to another individual of a species different from that to which the disease (cow-pox) is native and indigenous, and the effect, bad, good, or entirely negative of such virus, has nothing to do with the virus obtained by inoculating heifers from an original case of cow-pox and transmitting the disease from one young and selected animal of the bovine species as a means and source of vaccine supply. This is the method inaugurated in France, in April, 1868, by Prof. Depaul, of the French Academy of Medicine, and introduced by myself, Sept. 21st, 1870, in America, with virus obtained by my special agent, sent to Paris for that purpose, from the hands of Prof. Depaul himself, from several animals, vaccinated by the Professor and collected by him under the eye of my agent. Since the original case at Beaugency, the cow-pox has been carried through 591 heifers (260 by Prof. Depaul up to August, 1870, and 331 since that time by myself,) and manifests not the slightest indication of degeneration. It was with this virus that the Board of Health of Erie has been and is supplied, and will continue to be supplied so long as it seen fit to honor me with its approval and orders. It is from me also that has been obtained all the supplies with which the thousand and one imitators with whom I am bothered have, with no previous preparation or knowledge, rushed into animal vaccination, fearing that I might, but for them, make too much money and too wide and brilliant a reputation. To one of these men I gave in-

structions and a duplicate set of pamphlets and other publications on this subject, and ample supplies of virus. I have been repaid by ingratitude and a persistent effort on his part to rob me of the great honor of introducing this method of *true* animal vaccination in America. He, however, despite my aid, vaccinates such poor and badly selected animals and so few of even these and extracts such enormous quantities of "virus" from each unfortunate creature, that almost all the virus of his production is worthless; a fact of which I believe your Board of Health have had an opportunity to appreciate the reality. I send you some papers from which you may glean some information in regard to the extent and perfection of my arrangements for the vaccination of animals, and the vaccination of our own species from them. On every week day after Thursday (13th) from 11 a. m. to 2 p. m. I shall be happy to see all inquirers however sceptical—even Skeels. This hasty writing must now come to a close. I regret that my constant occupation should prevent my always answering such letters as that of Skeels. Such men are very apt to think that when their productions remain unanswered they are, therefore, unanswerable, but it *may sometimes* happen that the reason that such thing are not answered is that they are not thought worth the trouble. "A fool," the old scholastic saw says, "may ask more questions than a sage can answer," and even when a sceptic chooses to pour out a flood of assertions and aspersions it does not follow that they cannot all be disproved, because no one chooses to take the infinite trouble of disentangling and refuting them.

HENRY A. MARTIN, M. D.,  
27 Dudley St., Boston Highlands, Mass.  
January 12, 1873.









