

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

AS TO VACCINATION.

The recent agitation of the subject of vaccination in this city has wrought up a scare, particularly among children in the city schools, and in some county schools adjoining the city, that ought to be put a stop to at once. In some cases the teachers have discussed the subject before the pupils, going so far as to inform the latter that they must be vaccinated. Of course, no such order has been given, although it has been proposed. The teachers who have given it out as stated have been a cause of positive injury to the pupils in the excitement created, besides being of great annoyance to parents, consequent upon the nervousness and agitation that affects the children.

It is understood that the city attorney, by request, is looking up the legal question whether or not the health commissioner has the power to require the inhabitants to be vaccinated, upon there being occasion therefor. But whatever conclusion he may reach on the subject when there may be a probable necessity therefor, such as a threatened infection of smallpox, it is pretty safe to say that he will not take the view that vaccination may be forced upon the inhabitants as the mere sad or whim of one doctor or more. The health authorities have no more power than the charter confers upon the municipal council. And while the power to preserve the health of the city by all needful regulations is conferred, the preservation of the comfort, convenience and good order of the inhabitants is a co-ordinate requirement, and the imposition of an unnecessary regulation, whether it be an uncalculated for vaccination or anything else, is not conducive to the comfort or convenience of the people, and therefore is not authorized.

It may be urged that anything health commissioners may decide on as necessary to preserve the public health can be enforced. But that is not a logical sequence of the charter power. There are in this city physicians of first standing who hold that windows should be left wide open winter and summer, that wall paper in houses is a menace to health, that carpets on floors are repositories of death-dealing bacilli, that upholstered furniture furnishes seats for murderous microbes; and it is not improbable that their view has good foundation. But let a health board order the removal of furniture, carpets and wall-paper from dwellings, or try to root people out into the open air when there is no imperative necessity therefor—and anybody can guess the result. The orders of health boards must be reasonable when taken into consideration with existing or prospective circumstances; and in this view a requirement of wholesale vaccination does not appear reasonable just at this moment.

Again, the proposition to have children herded before certain physicians to be vaccinated, or to compel them to accept certain virus, would be outrageous if adopted. In a requirement for vaccination, the people are not to

be driven up in that way. Parents have jurisdiction over minor children, and if vaccination be required, they have the right to choose between physicians of recognized standing to perform the labor for themselves or their offspring. The schools are not to be rounded up as such; nor are children to be specially selected. Any vaccination rule must apply to all, of all ages, who have not been subjected thereto, when the necessity for it exists at all.

The NEWS is not antagonizing vaccination. We submit, however, that the treatment is known to be not free from danger; and that it is resented by many for the reason that it is charged with being the means of communicating certain forms of disease to otherwise healthy persons. Perhaps the utmost credit that can be given it without exciting much unintelligent controversy is that it is merely a supposed precaution when imminent danger of smallpox exists—but that it is a step which should not be taken, or at least need not be, save when the urgency therefor is plainly apparent.

AMONG THE MORMONS IN 1865.

Editor J. Zeamer, of the American Volunteer, published at Carlisle, Pa., has, in the last issue of his paper to hand, an article which he calls "Among the Mormons." It is chapter 19 of Mr. Zeamer's story, Across the Plains by Immigrant Wagon in 1865. The gentleman says his narrative is a true story of his trip to California and what he saw on the way; and judging by what he tells in this chapter, up to his arrival in Salt Lake City (where the narrative closes till the next issue of the American Volunteer), our newspaper friend is giving a graphic and accurate account of his experiences, free from objectionable comment or prejudiced expressions. Of course there are some slight mistakes in names, etc., such as a casual traveler would be liable to make, but Mr. Zeamer has remarkably few even of these; and his statement is given in such consecutive, straightforward and interesting form as to make it a really valuable historical account of transcontinental travel a third of a century ago. He partly came by way of Echo canyon, and the Chalk Creek route; they entered the Salt Lake valley by Parley's canyon, which Mr. Zeamer mistakenly calls Immigrant canyon, probably in confusion with Emigration canyon, a defile north of Parley's. Several columns are devoted to the journey in Utah, and afford entertaining reading. Here is an extract:

At Bear river, forty-five miles west of Fort Bridger, we came into the first Mormon settlement on our way. A low log house that was without windows stood close by the road and was occupied by two families. Other shacks, or habitations, widely separated, stood farther down the bottoms, but the one by the road was the most important and respectable in appearance. Patches of ground were enclosed by rude fences

and farmed in wheat, oats and vegetables. The crops were in a very backward state, the wheat not yet in head, and the oats not sufficiently advanced to hide the clods. The general elevation of the country was so great that there was still an abundance of snow in the hills a mile or two south of the settlement, and its white surface could be seen through gaps in the timber. Several streams, which originated up near these snow banks, flowed through the lowlands about the settlement and their water was as clear as crystal and ice-cold. One of the two Mormon men who lived in the house by the road owned a likely roan pony on which Coterill proposed to trade Mother Whitman's lame horse. The Mormon felt half inclined but affected unwillingness for the purpose of getting all out of the trade that was in it. The lame horse had cost two hundred dollars in Illinois and was nearly twice the size of the pony, but his lameness had grown so serious that he could scarcely travel at all. While Coterill and Dave and the Mormon were bargaining, I interviewed the younger Mormon, who informed me that he formerly lived in Nebraska and came to this country two years ago; that he did not like it; that there was snow all around them when he came here, and there had been snow all around them ever since. Besides these discomforts they were without the most ordinary advantages of civilized society, it being thirty miles to the nearest postoffice.

There were twelve low-headed children about the premises, all of whom belonged to the older of the two Mormons, the younger not having any. During the previous winter these two families were in dire want, and because of the deep snow were unable to get to the other settlements for relief. For one entire month—the month of March—they had nothing to eat but cast away rawhides. When a beef was killed its hide was thrown away and after being exposed to the sun and wind became almost as dry and hard as bone. When the extremity came these famished people gathered up the rawhides that were within reach of their premises, cut them up, and cooked and used them for food.

On Sunday, July 23rd, the party approached Coalville, Summit county. The record continues:

That afternoon we came upon a small Mormon settlement. It was strung out through the canyon for a mile or more. The houses were built of logs and covered with boards, and hardly one of them had any windows. The buildings and their surroundings were a cleanly aspect in every instance. Adjacent to the buildings small patches of ground were enclosed and planted with vegetables, or sown with wheat and oats. These patches were irrigated, either from Chalk Creek or from side streams that emptied into it. As it was Sunday, work with the inhabitants was suspended. Some of them were sitting in the doorways reading books, others were visiting at their neighbors, and others standing about chatting. Their clothing was of an out-of-date pattern and showed signs of much wear but was scrupulously clean, in which particular it was in strong contrast with our own. The settlers had a good supply of water and were evidently putting it to proper use.

The next morning we were awakened from our slumbers by loud reports as if cannon were being discharged down in Coalville. This was the salute with which the Mormons ushered in the 24th of July. Instead of going on down Chalk Creek to Coalville, where the celebration was to be held, we followed a road that deflected to the left, across an elevated point of land, and came out