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EDITORIAL

SCIENCE FETTERED AND DISCREDITED.

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PITIFUL was the exhibition of Science made at the recent Pan-American Medical Congress by Surgeon General Wyman. The subject of the Surgeon's address was vaccination. The address was a long and prolonged whine at the lack of scientific knowledge, "even among those of whom we have a right to expect it."

In order to appreciate the woefulness of the spectacle presented by the lecturer, it will be necessary to accept his premises to their fullest extent. According to him, it is scientifically established that vaccination is "a protection from one of the most loathsome and disfiguring diseases known," that it is "a protection against a deadly disease," and that "in vaccination we have an absolute preventive and safe inoculating material absolutely devoid of danger." Let this all be so. Yet, all this notwithstanding, the Surgeon General finds, as a matter of fact, the disease making great ravages in many places, while the "means which the God of nature has placed in our power" is made no use of, and is, with great frequency, combated.

People, as a rule, are not anxious to die; as a rule they dislike to be disfigured; and it is quite sure that no one feels affectionate towards diseases, the loathsome ones least of all. This may be considered a safe fact to build on. Now, then, taking this fact, surely known to the Surgeon General, in connection with the allegations of fact that he makes on vaccination, and which he looks upon as irrefutable, to wit, that vaccination is a sure and safe protection against the deadly and loathsome smallpox, and yet is neglected, one would seem to face a paradox of the paradoxiest: people deliberately refusing to protect themselves against what they thoroughly dislike. This is the attitude of the Surgeon General. The attitude is false, and in so far worthless. Nevertheless, the absurd attitude is valuable in that, although, unknown to himself the Surgeon General brings out into relief one of the saddest spectacles furnished by the capitalist system,—Science fettered by commercialism, discredited by the unseemly struggle for life.

The more positive the Surgeon General is on the prophylactic powers of vaccination, the stronger is the point. It is a matter of fact that the operation of vaccination has in innumerable cases been attended by dire results: diseases, as loathsome as the one intended to be barred, have been inoculated; deaths have resulted; suffering of excruciating character has but too often resulted. Granted that the Surgeon General is right, the conclusion is then inevitable that the right kind of vaccine is not always used, and the reason, therefore, is the **RECKLESSNESS BRED IN THE PRACTITIONERS BY THE NEED OF BREAD AND THE SCAMPER TO GET IT!**

The masses have no time to make distinctions. If a Surgeon General can be intellectually blind, how much more justifiable is the intellectual blindness of the masses. These see and hear of the frequently dire results of vaccination, and conclude they'll none of it, rather submitting to the ills they know, than vaccinate into their systems others they know not of. Nor, if their premises be wrong, will any amount of addresses to Congresses disabuse them.

Science is to-day a subject of traffic. Capitalism degrades her to that level. The scientists are suspected, and justly so, of uttering themselves according as their pockets (or stomachs) dictate. The scientific proposition involved in the Question of Vaccination, as in so many others, awaits for its solution the overthrow of a social system, in which the brute principle—applied in its brutest sense—of the survival of the fittest is tacitly, often expressly, the sole moving spring.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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