

THE VALUE OF VACCINATION

AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE OUTBREAK IN TASMANIA.

These diagrams were prepared by Dr. J. S. C. Elkington, the present Medical Director in Launceston, and are published with his permission. They are almost self-explanatory. Each large square is, as will be seen, divided into 100 smaller squares of equal size; each of the smaller squares thus represents 1 per cent. of the whole. The percentages are in this way shown at a glance. The black squares represent death; the red, "confluent" or very serious cases; and the blue, "mild or very mild cases."

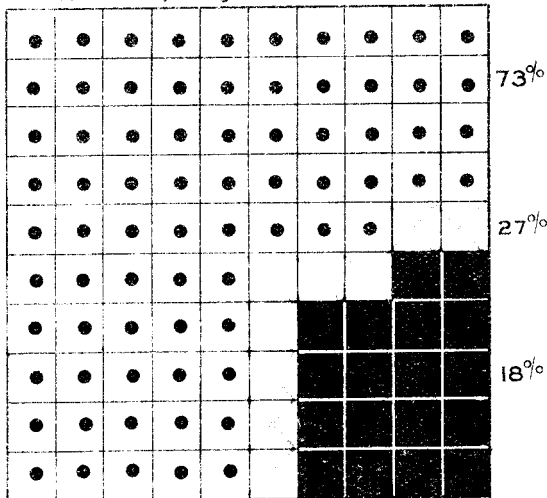
Block No. 1 shows how the disease expressed itself among those vaccinated, and Block No. 2 how it expressed itself among the unvaccinated in the total number of cases considered. Block No. 3 tells the same tale with regard to the vaccinated, only those admitted to hospital, however, being considered. Block No. 4 represents the percentages among the unvaccinated admitted to hospital.

There can be no doubt as to the accuracy of these figures. Dr. Barnard, who is in charge of the hospital, has carefully examined each patient, and full records of all the cases have been kept by him.

There are several facts which these diagrams disclose. If we take Block No. 1 we find that 73 per cent. of the total cases occurring among vaccinated people were of "the mild or very mild order"; as a matter of fact not one of these died. In some instances the disease expressed itself by nothing more than a few spots. There were 27 per cent. of confluent cases, 18 per cent. of which died. Now, if we turn to Block No. 2, we find that the positions are almost reversed. Instead of 73 per cent. of very mild cases, we have 83 per cent. of the confluent variety, and only 17 per cent. of these unvaccinated people had the disease in a mild form, while the death-rate was 33 per cent. Blocks Nos. 3 and 4 tell almost the same tale, only that the death-rate is lower.

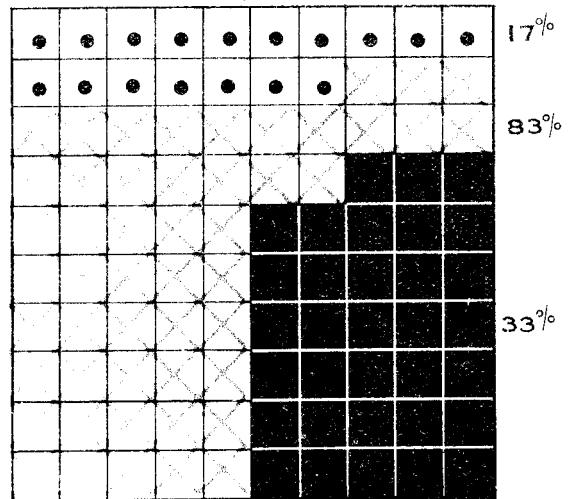
No. 1. Total cases.

Vaccinated, all ages, to 1st September.



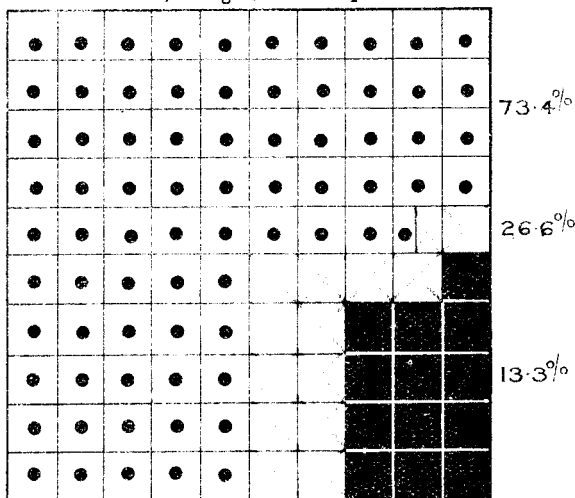
No. 2. Total cases.

Unvaccinated, all ages, to 1st September.



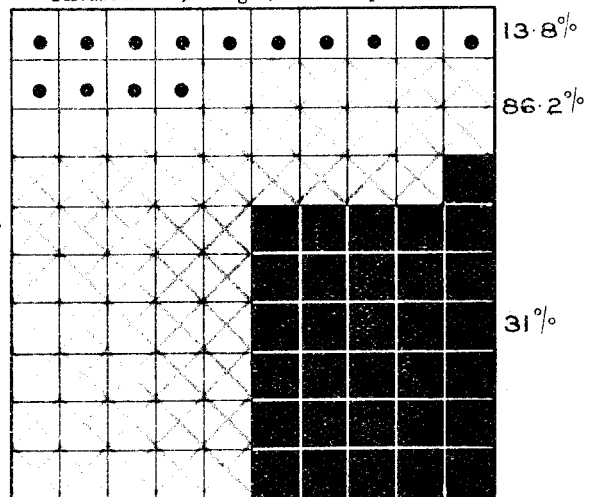
No. 3. Hospital admissions.

Vaccinated, all ages, to 1st September.



No. 4. Hospital admissions.

Unvaccinated, all ages, to 1st September.



REFERENCE. ■ DEATHS.

□ CONFLUENT.

● DISCRETE.
Mild and very Mild

One important point to be remembered is "that no person below twenty years of age who was vaccinated in infancy, and had the marks of that vaccination, developed smallpox."

Many of the opponents of vaccination point to deaths among vaccinated people as proof of the inefficiency of vaccination as a precaution against smallpox; they forget that vaccination loses its power as years go on, and that, in order to fully protect the individual against this terrible scourge, revaccination is necessary. It is pleasing to note, however, that even where vaccination in infancy has failed to absolutely protect in later life, it has in every instance so mitigated the attack that not one death has occurred under twenty years of age. The death rate alone, Dr. Elkington points out, gives but a poor idea of consequence of a smallpox epidemic. Confluent attacks of the disease nearly always leave great scarring of the face, and not infrequently cause loss of sight.

Some demur has been made at the slight restrictions imposed upon communication with infected areas; but if the people in the colony were properly protected, as they can be by vaccination, no restrictions would be required.