

marked, as became a party and an anti-vaccination organ: "The terror of this 'filth disease,' which in our fathers' time amounted almost to insanity, no longer afflicts us, who know both that its effects were exaggerated and how to deal with it by isolation without recourse to the so-called vaccine remedies, which are now rejected by a large proportion of the population of these islands. Still, as we have ascertained by inquiry that this unfortunate man did undoubtedly spend several days and nights wandering about our city when in an infectious condition, it will be as well that the authorities should be on the alert. We do not want that hoary veteran—the smallpox scare—to rear its head again in Dunchester, least of all just now, when, in view of the imminent election, the accustomed use would be made of it by our prejudiced and unscrupulous political opponents."

"No," I said to myself, as I put the paper down, "certainly we do not want a smallpox scare just now, and still less do we want the smallpox." Then I thought of that unfortunate red-headed wretch, crazy with the torment of his disease, and of his hideous laughter, as he hunted and caught the children who made a mock of him—the poor children, scarcely one of whom was vaccinated.

A week later I opened my political campaign with a large public meeting in the Agricultural Hall. Almost up to the nomination day no candidate was forthcoming on the other side, and I thought that, for the fourth time, I should be returned unopposed. Of a sudden, however, a name was announced, and it proved to be none other than that of my rival of many years ago—Sir Thomas Colford—now like myself growing grey-headed, but still vigorous in mind and body, and as much respected as ever by the wealthier and more educated classes of our community. His appearance in the field put a new complexion

on matters; it meant, indeed, that instead of the easy and comfortable walk over which I had anticipated, I must fight hard for my political existence.

In the course of my speech, which was very well received, for I was still popular in the town even among the more moderate of my opponents, I dwelt upon Sir Thomas Colford's address to the electorate which had just come into my hands. In this address I was astonished to see a paragraph advocating, though in a somewhat guarded fashion, the re-enactment of the old laws of com-

pulsory vaccination. In a draft which had reached me two days before through some underground channel, this paragraph had not appeared, thus showing that it had been added by an after-thought and quite suddenly. However, there it was, and I made great play with it.

What, I asked the electors of Dunchester, could they think of a man who in these modern and enlightened days sought to reimpose upon a free people the barbarous infamies of the Vaccination Acts? Long ago we had fought that fight, and long ago we had relegated them to *limbo*, where, with such things as instruments of torment, papal bulls and writs of attainer, they remained to excite the wonder and the horror of our own and future generations.

Well would it have been for me if I had stopped here, but, led

away by the subject and by the loud cheers that my treatment of it, purposely flamboyant, never failed to evoke, forgetful, too, for the moment of the Red-headed Man, I passed on to deductions. Our opponents had prophesied, I said, that within ten years of the passing of the famous Conscience Clause smallpox would be rampant. Now, what were the facts? Although almost twice that time had gone by, here in Dunchester we had suffered far less from smallpox than during the compulsory period, for at no one time



*A friend told me that one of the children was dead.*