

be justified I am ready to overcome my repugnance to them at once.

I can have no sympathy with those who talk such nonsense as to say that men of science ought not to be placed under restrictive legislation. My answer is at once to point to the Anatomy Act and to say that honest anatomists do not object to it, and that criminal anatomists brought it about. Dr. Klein's evidence alone was enough to convince any reasonable man that restrictive legislation in the matter of vivisection was urgently needed.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Birmingham, Feb. 17th, 1893.

LAWSON TAIT.

ARE DISEASE GERMS IN MILK DESTROYED BY BOILING?

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In the early part of 1891 I wrote a letter to THE LANCET saying it was by no means certain that disease germs in milk were destroyed by ordinary boiling, and quoted Mr. Watson Cheyne's opinion that, to make sure, the milk required to be boiled for from ten to fifteen minutes on three successive days. Dr. Fayer, in the *L'Année Médicale de Caen*, now comes forward and states that he does not believe that the germs are destroyed by boiling. The tubercle bacillus is killed only at a temperature of 110° to 115° C. Experiments made at his laboratory at the Physiological Institute show that the degree of ebullition never exceeds 100° C. Children, he says, die from enteritis, and boiled milk, it is to be feared, might encourage this affection. He considers it hurtful to children. Another matter about which there is difference of opinion is whether tuberculosis can be conveyed to human beings by means of milk from tuberculous cows. Owing to a report, it would appear, from the Veterinary Inspectors, the Public Control Committee of the London County Council have come to the conclusion that such milk must cause serious mischief to health; but from laboratory experiments recently carried out an opinion has been given that it does not cause tuberculosis. Surely such important matters as these should not be allowed to remain any longer in doubt.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Surbiton, Feb. 14th, 1893.

F. P. ATKINSON.

THE ETHICS OF OPIUM.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Having read Dr. Mouat's article in last week's issue of THE LANCET, I see no reason for continuing the controversy. My single motive for previously writing at such length was to show how baseless was the charge which Dr. Mouat had brought against the Anti-opium Circular of December, 1891, of being "a most mendacious document." I have, I believe, shown ample reason for the statements of the Circular, bringing forward a variety of facts in connexion with India with which Dr. Mouat himself was evidently unacquainted, and otherwise showing abundant cause why at least an expression which conveyed a direct insult to four of his professional brethren should be at once withdrawn. I had hoped that one who professes so great a regard for the courtesies of discussion as Dr. Mouat does would have taken this course, and until he does so I have nothing more to say to him.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

JAMES L. MAXWELL, M.D.

Highbury-park, N., Feb. 14th, 1893.

THE CONFERENCE ON CHOLERA IN ST. PETERSBURG.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

(Continued from p. 107.)

THE reports of the proceedings of this Conference appear but slowly, and it will be some time yet before a full account of the sittings will be published. In the meantime, it appears from conversations with members of the Conference that the general results have been quite satisfactory, and in some respects even more so than had been anticipated. The Conference appears to have been carefully organised to carry out the object with which it met. The questions formulated

by the earlier general meetings of the members have been fully discussed by the commissions and subcommissions and their conclusions have again been presented to the later general meetings for ratification and approval. As stated before, the commissions have held their discussions from ten till three daily, and even in some cases have renewed them after the general meetings of the Conference (held at seven o'clock each evening) and prolonged them far into the night. In this way, during the week devoted to the Conference, all the important practical questions have been thoroughly debated by bodies of medical men who may be considered as experts on the particular point submitted to them. Thus, one sub-commission, consisting entirely of physicians attached to railways, discussed the measures that have been and should be taken on the railway lines throughout the empire to prevent the introduction or to control the spread of cholera by this means of communication. A second sub-commission was devoted to the discussion of the question of quarantine. These two sub-commissions together formed the Commission constituted to decide the points raised in Dr. Tolstoi's paper on Precautionary Measures directed against the Dissemination of Cholera.¹

Having spoken above of the practical questions raised by the Conference, it may now be added that all the questions discussed were of a practical character. The many theoretical aspects of the subject do not appear to have come under consideration, or, if considered at all, have been treated only as incidental to the decision of some point of practice. The treatment of the disease, as will be shown later, has been briefly reviewed.

The question of quarantine, both by sea and land, was fully debated and certain conclusions were arrived at. Dr. Tolstoi, in introducing the general discussion on this subject, pointed out that some confusion existed as to the meaning of quarantine, the word being often loosely applied to places where detention was not practised, but where merely examination and disinfection were carried out. He would limit the use of the word to those points where detention of the healthy over the period of incubation of a threatening epidemic disease is practised; whilst those points where the examination and disinfection of luggage, the inspection of passengers and the detention of sick alone are carried out should be known, as heretofore, as "observation points." The net result of the discussion on this subject has been that the Conference condemned the principle of quarantine as thus defined, and recommended the substitution for it, alike on sea and land frontiers and on the internal lines of communication, of a system of inspection, disinfection and isolation of suspicious cases.

A paper was read by Dr. Uspenski on the Measures taken on Railways, a second by Dr. Sakharof on the Measures taken on Waterways, and a third by Dr. Yershof on Certain Practical Points in the Medical and Sanitary Services in Districts threatened by Cholera. These papers are not yet in print, but as they led to lively discussions it may be of interest to give the list of points submitted by one of the writers to be debated in committee, more particularly as they well illustrate the thoroughly practical character of the Conference. Dr. Yershof, in concluding his paper, formulated the following questions: 1. What number of medical men are necessary in a given area in relation to the number of inhabitants and taking into consideration the intensity and character of the epidemic? 2. What number of feldschars and attendants (nurses &c.) are necessary for such medical men? 3. Under what conditions are dispensaries necessary and what type should they follow? 4. The carriage of the sick. 5. The conditions under which the sick may be treated at home. 6. To what extent are the rules for disinfection, worked out by the Medical Council, capable of being officially carried out, more particularly in villages and country places? 7. To what class of person should be entrusted the carrying out of disinfection? 8. What means have appeared most suitable for disinfection? 9. To what extent has the disinfection of persons arriving from a cholera-stricken locality appeared practicable? 10. To what extent is it possible to substitute the burning of articles for their disinfection, and how could this be organised? 11. By what persons should in future the choice of members of the sanitary service be made? 12. How many such members should be trained in each district? 13. In what sort of medical institution should they undergo

¹ Vide THE LANCET, Jan. 14th.