

Again through it all there was that silent current of jealousy, inseparable from any concerted human activity even in science. Yet the purpose of this great meeting was a high one, for in the noble words of Pasteur, its object was "to extend the frontiers of life."

The International Conference preceded the Congress from April 10. It is three years since the Conference met at Washington, where a prolonged debate took place on the question of human or bovine infection being the cause of consumption. This has been the most keenly debated point in modern science, since Robert Koch, the great discoverer of the tubercle bacillus, announced in London in 1901 that the tubercle bacillus from cattle was not lethal to man. Three years ago, in Washington, he still maintained that tubercle bacilli in milk could not induce serious disease in man, and he closed the discussion by moving that further research be undertaken and the results reported to the Conference at Rome. In the interval Koch has died, but we have reached finality on the main issue. Professor A. Calmette, of Lille; Dr. H. Kossel, of Heidelberg, and Professor Sims Woodhead, of Cambridge, were the international authorities chosen to report to the present Conference. On April 12 they delivered their reports, representing a vast amount of European and American research, to an open meeting of the Conference. It is now certain that Koch was both right and wrong. A small percentage of tuberculosis in childhood may be attributed to milk, and in such cases the bovine bacillus is lethal to man. On the other hand, in the vast majority of cases it is the bacillus of human tuberculosis which is the determining cause of the disease in man. Koch rightly objected to an exaggerated importance being attached to the danger of infection from the milk and meat of tuberculous cattle, as our chief activity should be directed towards preventing the infection of man by man, and more particularly the infection of children by their parents. A controversy which has lasted for more than ten years must now be regarded as closed. There is practically unanimity of opinion as to the sources of infection.

The meeting of the Conference was of very great interest, both human and scien-

tific. The Germans, who outnumbered all the other members present, did not wish to admit even the possibility of bovine infection, and were quite prepared to disregard all the English and American researches on this subject. The French, who had previously laid most stress on infection through milk, had come round to admit the greater frequency of infection from man to man. Professor Sims Woodhead, who spoke with all the authority of the British Royal Commission, met their arguments at every point, and held to the well-known results of the English investigations. It was a fortunate proposal that the Conference should adjourn, and that a private meeting of the speakers should be held behind locked doors. This took place next morning at ten o'clock, and after two hours of deliberation it was announced that a conclusion had been come to, which was satisfactory to all parties. It was agreed that the human consumptive is the principal source of infection. It was likewise agreed that the possibility of bovine infection must not be overlooked, and that greater stringency is required in regard to the conditions regulating the sale of milk. These findings have been adopted by the Congress itself. The Report of the British Commission, which was summarized by Professor Sims Woodhead, has been most favorably received. Immediately after the Conference, the American correspondents cabled that the Royal Commission Report would become the finding of the Congress. As one of them expressively put it, "the Germans were obstinate, the French hedged, the British Report was it."

The Conference heard papers on the treatment of consumption by means of tuberculin—that is, the extracted toxins of the tubercle bacillus. Nothing, however, was added to our knowledge of this agent, which was introduced by Koch in 1892. It is very strongly felt that the commercial element was too much in evidence at the Congress. There is no one cure for consumption. If the disease be diagnosed in its earliest stages then practically all cases can be cured. This is proved by the fact that 60 per cent. of the total population react to what is called the tuberculin test, and so indicate that while they were infected they did not actually develop the