

LEGISLATION REQUIRED.

Now, if I have in the foregoing narration made out a strong case against the unnecessary and careless use of arsenic and arsenical poison, I dare say you will ask me, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" I reply that I think in many of the cases the use of arsenic should be prohibited altogether, and that in all cases it should be regulated. Also that the public should be made fully aware of the risks which they incur in its handling, and take due precaution in so doing.

On the continent of Europe strict laws are enforced; for example in Germany:—

1st. Poisonous colors are forbidden to be used in food or drink.

2nd. Articles of food must not be kept or cooked in vessels covered or coated with poisonous material.

3rd. Poisonous color is forbidden in the manufacture of toys, paper-hangings and articles of apparel.

4th. The sale of such articles is strictly prohibited.

IN RUSSIA.

The importation from abroad as well as the sale and manufacture in Russia of wall papers, light tissues, wrapping papers, children's toys, articles of food and sweetmeats containing arsenical pigments, also the paper known as "papier nacre" shall be prohibited. The list of prohibited colors contains pigments of lead, mercury, arsenic, cobalt, copper, chromium and antimony.

IN SWEDEN.

The prohibitory law enumerates the above and "other articles in water colors:—excepting such as shall contain a mere trace of arsenic from 50 square inches."

The same prohibition applies to "stuffs textiles yarn, lamp shades, sealing wax, wafers, candles, and other substances, with the similar exception of minute traces only.

IN AUSTRIA.

A decree was issued in 1876, prohibiting the use of aniline colors of every kind, in food and in fabrics, to be worn in contact with the human body, also of mineral waters containing arsenic, copper, lead, zinc and other poisonous metallic preparations.

In Baden, Bavaria, Denmark, Hesse Darmstadt and Saxony, similar regulations have been made. In France and England and the United States these regulations only apply to articles of food and drink, but vigorous efforts are being made by sanitary reformers to extend these prohibitory regulations to the class of articles which experience has proved to be dangerous to the health and lives of the community at large, a course which I venture to think Canada would do well to adopt.

Dr. T. Sterry Hunt remarked that he had been much interested in the variety of information which was embraced in Dr. Edwards' valuable paper.

It occurred to him that when he had visited gold mines in the west, where arsenical pyrites are worked, to enquire what became of all the arsenic, and he found that this was accumulated to the extent of hundreds of tons, and efforts had been made to get rid of it by mixing it with superphosphate of lime in manure for the purpose of destroying burrowing insects, but even this did not make much demand on this large accumulation. He also enquired whether it affected the health of the workmen, and this was admitted, but it was stated that they became inured to it, or if much affected ceased this employment, and the local irritation produced was relieved by poultices of oxide of iron, which appeared to be the best antidote to its effects.

Mr. R. W. McLachlan enquired if it poisoned grubs in the ground would it not also kill the earth worms which were now reckoned the most important subsoil fertilizers. Dr. Hunt said he was afraid the earthworms had been left out of the calculation, but as a geologist he would not like to lose them and perhaps if they were poisoned the birds who lived upon them would also be destroyed and the face of nature would be changed for the worse. Large quantities of arsenic in the soil would certainly be dangerous to water sources.

Dr. Wanless expressed of the paper from which he got a great deal.

Prof. Penhallow said some of the things which he had come under his notice which he believed that skin eruptions from dyed underclothing were more common than usually supposed. He also believed that certain brands of cigarettes called "sweet" contained either arsenical paper or some other poison which caused a specific sore throat or ulceration of the lips, and he would direct Dr. Edwards' attention to this source of poison. He hoped Dr. Edwards would publish his paper in the Record of Science.

Sir Wm. Dawson, in moving thanks to Dr. Edwards for his contribution, said it was a practical and valuable paper, and he hoped it would be published in the Record and have influence with the Government in adopting proper restrictions on the sale and use of such dangerous poisons.