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A DISCUSSION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN HUMAN AND BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRIMARY INFECTION IN CHILDREN THROUGH THE ALIMENTARY TRACT.*

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Until two months ago the presence of the tubercle bacilli in milk has been regarded by the profession in all countries as a possible source of much danger, and although some recent writers have stated that in their experience the danger was but a nominal one, yet in all the more important countries in Europe, the profession has deemed it wise to obtain authoritative pronouncements from their several governments, and legal enactments have been passed to guard the public against what has been declared to be a very serious menace to its health. Nevertheless, at the recent Tuberculosis Congress in London, Koch made the startling statement that the infection of human beings by bovine bacilli is but of rare occurrence; cases in which the disease has been conveyed by the milk or meat of tuberculosis cattle, or by butter made from such milk, are not in his opinion more frequently met with than are cases of hereditary transmission, and therefore the danger arising from this source may be practically disregarded.

By this statement he condemns as useless the precautions which have been declared to be necessary by every Board of Health, and which have been re-emphasized by all of us in our own professional circles:

When asked by Professor Rotch a few weeks ago to read a short

* Read before the Suffolk District Medical Society, Boston, October 26, 1901.