

all quarters of the globe, a disease affecting the domestic animals and occasionally man himself, a disease causing a terrible mortality in the herds of sheep and cattle of districts where it has broken out. But until the sixties, like all other infectious diseases, absolutely nothing, or, not to be extreme, absolutely next to nothing, was known as to its nature, nothing could be done to eradicate it. Most held with Topsy that it "grewed," the fatalists consoled themselves by declaring the disease a visitation of Providence and sat down, grimly patient, to await events.

It is true that some went as far as the theorising stage. Thus in France, in the district that may be termed the classic land of anthrax, the fertile district known as the Beauce, lying around Chartres, the farmers spoke of it as a disease of the blood. These Beauceron farmers are a curious observant race. It has been their custom to open and examine the carcasses of the sheep that die. They held that the full-blooded, best nourished animals were those most easily attacked. Doubtless the natural habit of looking upon that which is lost as best had much to do with this notion of theirs. Still so it was, they held that anthrax was a "maladie du sang," and this view, translated into scientific language by Delafond, held sway for some years in France; that is to say, plethora was indicated as the main predisposing cause of the disease. The rich succulent pasturage of the Beauce region as compared with the neighbouring sterile but anthrax-free Sologne spoke in favour of this view. Indeed it became the custom when an anthrax outbreak occurred to transfer the sheep from the Beauce to the Sologne. A further argument in favour of the same was the fact that from time to time certain farms and in these certain meadow lands were specially attacked. The mortality was appalling: as many as fifty to one hundred sheep might be found dead in the morning. Now these affected meadows were apparently the most fertile, the grass was a lush dark green; but for years they were unsafe. The farmers called them sadly the "champs maudits"—the accursed fields.

The first step forward was made by a French Governmental