

to bacterial contamination, forms a very large proportion of the daily food of the public. The nutrition of infants and young children depends greatly on the purity and abundance of the milk supply; and, seeing how frequently milk is prescribed for invalids and convalescents, it is of the utmost importance that it should not be the vehicle of any unsuspected agent. While it is possible that milk containing boracic acid in sufficient quantity to act as a preservative (say 30 grams to the gallon) might be consumed to the amount of four or five pints a day, without harmful results by most healthy children or adults, there is evidence pointing to an injurious effect of boracised milk upon the health of very young children."

"Moreover, there exists at present no guarantee against the addition of excessive amounts of preservative to milk. In 1896 the Medical Officer of Health of Birmingham estimated the amounts of boracic acid in a number of milk samples. Of these, one-half showed boracic acid in a proportion not exceeding 21 grains per gallon; in one-fourth the proportion varied between 21 and 42 grains per gallon; while in the remaining fourth it ranged from 42 up to 126 grains per gallon. Professor Blyth instanced a sample of milk, purchased in Marylebone, containing boracic acid in the proportion of no less than 80 grains to the pint. This occurred in December 1899, and the witness assured us that from time to time he had found an equally high proportion in milk samples taken in summer."

"Clearly such random use of any drug in a food calls for regulation. At present milk may be subjected to several successive treatments with preservative before it reaches the consumer. The farmer or producer sometimes does it, so does the wholesale purveyor, so does the retail dealer; lastly the domestic use of preservatives is increasing, and has become very general, and hence the milk may receive a fourth dose before it reaches the unsuspecting consumer."

"There is this further objection to the use of preservatives in the milk traffic, that they may be relied on to protect those engaged therein against the immediate results of neglect of scrupulous cleanliness. Under the influence of these preservatives milk may be exposed without sensible injury to conditions which otherwise would render it unsalable. It may remain sweet to taste and smell and yet have incorporated disease-germs of various kinds, whereof the activity may be suspended for a time by the action of the preservative, but may be resumed before the milk is digested"

The following are the recommendations of the committee which were based upon the conclusions they arrived at from their experiments and from the evidence brought before them:

"(a) That the use of formaldehyde or formalin, or preservatives thereof, in foods and drinks be absolutely prohibited, and that salicylic