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Editorial Notes.

PASTEUR AND HYDROPHOBIA.

AT the meeting of the Ontario Medical Association held in Toronto last week, the President, Dr. J. H. Richardson, delivered an address, in the course of which he drew attention to the progress made in the healing art during the last few years. He specially referred to M. Pasteur's "crowning triumph over that dread disease hydrophobia"—a disease which, in the language of the speaker, had previously "baffled medical skill." The Doctor enlarged upon his theme, and gave his hearers a good deal of more or less accurate information about M. Pasteur's methods. From the tone of his remarks it might reasonably have been inferred that hydrophobia no longer "baffles medical skill," and that the eminent Frenchman's so-called discovery is a veritable boon to humanity. When a doctor undertakes to instruct a body of his professional brethren on matters pertaining to their calling, he should at least take the trouble to inform himself as to easily-ascertainable facts. Dr. Richardson certainly took no pains to so inform himself respecting this "crowning triumph" of M. Pasteur. Those facts a layman now presumes to place before him. So far from being a "crowning triumph," M. Pasteur's alleged discovery is now regarded by the leading scientists of Europe as one of the saddest, most dismal and most complete of failures. Two years ago they were strongly disposed to believe in him, but the wisest and most learned among them have utterly thrown him over. A writer who has probed this subject to the bottom writes about it as follows:—"A little over two years ago the press of Europe and America teemed with the wonderful and brilliant achievements of M. Pasteur in preventing the development of hydrophobia in persons who had been bitten by rabid dogs, by the in-

oculation of a cultivated virus prepared from the spinal cords of rabbits that had been previously inoculated with true hydrophobic virus. Patients flocked to him from all parts of the world, received the magic injections, and were pronounced safe after a week's treatment. In most cases there was no proof that the dogs that inflicted the wounds were rabid, and in the cases of the Newark children, who went to Paris for treatment, it is a well-known fact that one child who was bitten and remained at home has been equally as free from hydrophobia as the Pasteurized children. It is even asserted that the dog that bit these children never had rabies, and is alive to-day. In spite of all the doubtful circumstances surrounding the cases, the press almost universally approved of Pasteur's treatment, and even those who could produce strong arguments against it were denied a hearing. It was enough that the great scientist claimed he had produced in his laboratory an attenuated virus that would prevent the development of hydrophobia, if used any time within three months after the bite had been inflicted. Soon, however, a patient died, and then it was claimed that the treatment, to be effective, must be received before the thirty-sixth day. The speedy death of another patient who had been pronounced safe upset this theory, and the limit of time was further reduced, first to twenty, and soon after to sixteen days. A succession of deaths occurring among those who had been treated within the shortest time stated led intelligent people to conclude that those who had been really bitten by rabid animals died in spite of the treatment, while those who had not been so bitten, if they survived the treatment, were saved (?) from hydrophobia. M. Pasteur is not to be thus put down, and therefore he must square his theories with the facts. He has made a great scientific discovery, and he must change it with every failure till the poor public is forced to swallow it. In a paper read before the Academy of Sciences of Paris, last September, he said that a sad experience had taught him the necessity of inoculating with a more intense virus. This new virus was used, and a patient treated with it died within a month; and between that time and March 1st, 1887, sixteen deaths have occurred among those so treated. An important fact in connection with the 'perfected' method of treatment is that all the patients died from what is called paralytic rabies, which was unquestionably produced by the new 'intense virus.' It will thus be seen that Pasteur is in an unenviable position. He has himself admitted that mild injections will not save from hydrophobia, and it is proved that his last invention kills instead of cures." So much for Dr. Richardson's "crowning triumph."