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AGENTS.—DAWSON BROS., Montreal; J. & A. McMILLAN, St. John, N.B.; GEO. STREET & Co., 30 Cornhill, London, Eng.; M. H. MAHLER, 23 Rue Richer, Paris.

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REPORT OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE ON THE PASTEUR SYSTEM.

In April, 1886, a committee, consisting of Sir James Paget, Sir Joseph Lister, Sir Henry Roscoe, M. P., Dr. Richard Quain, Dr. Lauder Brunton, Prof. Burden Sanderson, and Dr. George Fleming, with Mr. Victor Horsley as Secretary, was appointed by the then president of the Local Government Board to enquire into M. Pasteur's treatment of hydrophobia. On June 28, 1887, this committee presented its report to the British Parliament. The time occupied in the investigation has been long, but when we consider the magnitude and importance of the work necessary to be performed before a satisfactory report could be framed, it is rather surprising that it has been accomplished with so much expedition.

The evidence which was at the committee's disposal at the Pasteur institute was first examined, and then the results said to have been attained were verified by independent investigation. The various members of the committee have worked with great assiduity since their appointment, the work being divided, as follows:—Sir Henry Roscoe, Dr. Burden Sanderson and Dr. Lauder Brunton studied the process in Paris. After their return, Mr. Victor Horsley performed a number of experiments, and the other members of the committee came to a conclusion on the facts submitted to them.

The opinions (formed mostly in ignorance) of

medical men all over the world, have been so diverse on this subject, that it is a matter of extreme congratulation that a definite conclusion has been arrived at by such a body of men as those mentioned above, and this after mature deliberation, and after having eliminated, as far as possible, all sources of error or doubt in their experiments and investigations. The original claim of Pasteur, that he could, by inoculation, protect a man or animal from the risk of contracting hydrophobia, after having been bitten by a rabid animal, has been fully tested, and the committee reports that "it may be deemed certain that M. Pasteur has discovered a method of protection from rabies comparable with that which vaccination affords against infection from small-pox."

The importance of this endorsement of Pasteur's views can scarcely be estimated. It shows that this new method of inoculation may be used to protect men and animals against the most potent virus.

The more important matter of the prevention of symptoms in persons already bitten, is unfortunately, not so definitely understood; of course, the conditions under which such patients came under treatment, vary widely. Thus, the questions whether the dogs inflicting the wounds were really rabid, the number and extent of the wounds made, the fact of some protection against the introduction of the virus by clothing, the amount of bleeding which occurred, the difference in the intensity of the virus of different species of animals, and various other factors, rendering a definite conclusion almost impossible at the present time. But the whole evidence, which has been sifted most carefully, goes to show that it is certain that the treatment of Pasteur has prevented the occurrence of the disease in a large number of those who had been bitten, and who, without such treatment, would have died of hydrophobia.

As to the question of the danger arising from inoculation, which Pasteur's opponents have held to be as great as that of the bites of rabid animals, the verdict goes entirely in favor of Pasteur, and that, while under the intensive process at first employed, there were some untoward consequences, "the method now employed is free from serious danger." The practical outcome of the report is that, by stringent police regulations, the disease may be greatly diminished, and the committee