

Research Defence Society.

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Issued by the Research Defence Society, May 20th, 1908.

The following letter was published in the newspapers on April 24th, 1908.

Research Defence Society.

20.

SIR,

A Society has been formed, with the name of the Research Defence Society, to make known the facts as to experiments on animals in this country; the immense importance to the welfare of mankind of such experiments; and the great saving of human life and health directly attributable to them.

The great advance that has been made during the last quarter of a century in our knowledge of the functions of the body, and of the causes of disease, would have been impossible without a combination of experiment and observation.

The use of antiseptics, and the modern treatment of wounds, is the direct outcome of the experiments of Pasteur and Lister. Pasteur's discovery of the microbial cause of puerperal fever has in itself enormously reduced the deaths of women in child-birth.

The nature of tuberculosis is now known, and its incidence has materially diminished.

We owe the invention of diphtheria anti-toxin entirely to experiments on animals.

The causes of plague, cholera, typhoid, Mediterranean fever, and sleeping sickness, have been discovered solely by the experimental method.

Not only have a large number of drugs been placed at our disposal, but accurate knowledge has replaced the empirical use of many of those previously known.

The evidence before the Royal Commission has shown that these experiments are conducted with proper care ; the small amount of pain or discomfort inflicted is insignificant compared with the great gain to knowledge and the direct advantage to humanity.

While acknowledging in general the utility of the experimental method, efforts have been made by a section of the public to throw discredit on all experiments involving the use of animals. The Research Defence Society will therefore endeavour to make it clear that medical and other scientific men who employ these methods are not less humane than the rest of their countrymen, who daily, though perhaps unconsciously, profit by them.

The Society proposes to give information to all enquirers, to publish *précis*, articles, and leaflets, to make arrangements for lectures, to send speakers, if required, to debates, and to assist all who desire to examine the arguments on behalf of experiments on animals. It hopes to establish branches in our chief cities, and thus to be in touch with all parts of the kingdom ; and to be at the service of municipal bodies, Hospitals, and other public institutions.

The Society was formed on 27th January of the present year, and already numbers more than 800 members.* It is not an association of men of science or of medical men alone ; its membership has been drawn from all departments

* May 27th. The number of members is now 1,200, of whom 100 are ladies.

of public life, and includes representatives of every class of educated Englishmen and Englishwomen, including many who have taken an active part in the prevention of cruelty to animals. This fact is in itself a remarkable protest against the attacks which have been made on the researches that the Society has been formed to defend.

The annual subscription is five shillings to cover working expenses: but larger subscriptions, or donations, will be gladly received. The acting Hon. Treasurer, *pro tem.*, is Mr. J. Luard Pattisson, C.B. (of the Lister Institute) * and an account in the Society's name has been opened with Messrs. Coutts & Co., 440, Strand. The Hon. Secretary is Mr. Stephen Paget, 70, Harley Street, W., to whom all communications should be addressed.

Yours faithfully,

CROMER

(*President*).

* May 27th. Dr. Sandwith is now Hon. Treasurer.

From the MORNING POST, April 24th, 1908.

We welcome heartily the establishment and progress of the society to which the Earl of Cromer calls attention in a letter published this morning. It is known as the Research Defence Society. Its objects are "to make known the facts as to experiments on animals in this country, the immense importance to the welfare of mankind of such experiments, and the great saving of human life and health directly attributable to them." It is prepared to carry out these objects by giving information to all inquirers, publishing articles and leaflets, making arrangements for lectures and debates, and otherwise assisting all who desire to examine the arguments on behalf of experiments on animals. The Research Defence Society is, in fact, an organisation in opposition to the various Anti-Vivisection Societies. It has been called into being within the last few months to meet the vigorous campaign undertaken by those societies. It is there to see that the judgment of public opinion in this important question does not go by default. There is clearly need for an organisation with this object. The case for permitting the performance under carefully defined conditions of painful experiments upon living animals is, of course, being put strongly before the Royal Commission now sitting. The case against permitting any such experiments at all is being put not only before the Royal Commission but also before the public by assiduous writing and speaking,

by pictures at every railway station, and by the statue of the brown dog in Battersea Park. Only yesterday the text of a Bill was published which is being introduced by one of the Labour members and backed by others and Mr. Lupton with the object of abolishing vivisection altogether.

The movement against the practice of vivisection springs from some of the best elements in human nature. In nothing indeed can the world to-day show more convincing proof of increasing civilisation than in increasing tenderness in regard to bodily pain. The tortures once inflicted in the names of justice and religion have become impossible now and for ever. The question may be asked whether it is not time to make impossible all deliberate infliction of pain on sentient beings in the names of science and medicine. The case against experiments on living animals can thus be put strongly. There is no objection to that. But there is every objection to that method of putting the case which is represented by the pictures at the railway stations. These pictures represent a dog in the presence of his intended vivisector. They represent the pain. They leave out all reference to the science and medicine in whose name alone the pain may be inflicted and ever is inflicted. They should be answered by pictures of human beings and animals in some of the awful diseases from which treatment founded upon experimental methods has now saved them. The pity which cries out against the deliberate infliction of pain by man needs to be chastened by imagination showing vividly the pain which daily and hourly is being inflicted by nature. For the case of those who defend experimental research upon living animals is simply that man cannot choose whether there shall be pain in the world or not. He has to choose in effect between deliberate experiments upon animals and unpremeditated experiments upon human beings. Faced with such a reality as cancer he may either wait till the disease attacks a human being and then apply such remedies as abstract reasoning suggests, or he may deliberately give the disease to some of the lower animals and, carefully watching its progress and the effects of various remedies, attempt to put its treatment upon a footing of assured fact. Disease exists and has to be treated. Success in treating disease is more likely to come with knowledge of the causes than without such knowledge. The experimental method remains the most certain way to knowledge in physiological science, as it is in every other science. These are the simple steps in the argument that must lead to the conclusion that to bar out absolutely the deliberate infliction of pain for experimental purposes would be not to decrease, but to increase the total amount of pain in the world. Nature's cruelty would continue. Man would have refused to learn the ways of alleviation.

To put this argument is one of the functions of the Research Defence Society. It must supplement the picture of the vivisector by that of the doctor applying the remedies which vivisection has taught. The Society, however, will have another and no less important function. It will have to show also exactly what experimentation on living animals means to-day and subject to what safeguards it is conducted. The law and the practice are not in any way what they are sometimes pictured to be by popular imagination. In the first place no painful experiment may be performed upon a living animal except by a licensed person in a licensed laboratory. These licenses may be given only by specified persons of the highest standing in the scientific and medical world. They are of various kinds, according to the form of experiment to be performed. For instance, no cat or dog may be subjected to experiment except with a license which may be given only on proof that no other animal would serve the purpose. No painful experiments for teaching purposes are permitted. In the second place the majority, perhaps the overwhelming majority, of all experiments technically known as painful, though many are far from being painful in any ordinary sense of the term, are conducted for or with the direct encouragement of public and semi-public authorities. They are the direct expression of growing interest in public health.