

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SECRETARY
OF THE
VIVISECTION
REFORM SOCIETY

532 MONADNOCK BLOCK
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THE Vivisection Reform Society is the exponent of the reasonable regulation by law of the practice of experimenting upon living beings. It is not opposed to all vivisection, but to the *abuses of* that practice.

This propaganda can at present only be carried on by the publication and distribution of pamphlets, etc., for which funds are needed. It is therefore earnestly requested that any one, into whose hands such publications may come, will kindly pass them on to others, and so help to spread knowledge of the subject. Copies of such publications may be had *gratis* on application to the Secretary.

Of the members, it is especially requested that they aid in such distribution and also that they try to increase the membership. The fee of an annual member is only \$2.00; of a life member \$25.00.

S. R. TABER,

Secretary.

532 Monadnock Block,
Chicago.

To the President and Members of the Vivisection Reform Society:

During the past year there have been the following accessions to our ranks: Three life memberships and seventeen annual members.

We have continued our policy of trying to educate and stimulate a reform sentiment in the public mind by the printing and distribution of appropriate literature. Upon the shelves of some 475 public and collegiate libraries in this country we have placed copies of Dr. Leffingwell's admirable book, "The Vivisection Question," and an equal number of the Myers-Leffingwell controversy, "The Vivisection Problem"—nine hundred and fifty copies in all. Some 288 copies of the pamphlet entitled, "Illustrations of Human Vivisection," have been sent and accepted by that number of libraries mentioned. As these works will hereafter be accessible to the population of some of our largest cities and to the youth of our largest institutions of learning, it is evident that the possibilities thus created of permanent and widespread enlightenment are incalculable.

The following have been otherwise distributed:

- 4 copies of "The Vivisection Question."
- 323 copies of "Illustrations of Human Vivisection."
- 825 copies of "The Vivisection Problem."
- 831 copies of "Reasonable Restriction vs. Absolute License."
- 229 copies of "Human Material for Scientific Research."
- 425 copies of Annual Report for 1906.
- 596 circulars.
- 1,000 leaflets.

4,233, making a grand total (of books, pamphlets and leaflets) of 5471.

Your Secretary has endeavored from time to time, by means of communications to the press, to keep this subject before the public, and it is earnestly hoped that every member of the Society will contribute his share to the desired publicity by doing likewise.

The agitation for vivisection reform that began during the preceding year has not only continued but has greatly increased. The newspapers (especially the New York Herald) and some of the magazines have reflected the awakening interest of the public in this subject. Despatches, editorials, letters from correspondents, interviews, etc., have followed each other in quick succession. The growing sentiment has been further evidenced by the organization of several new societies—the New York Anti-Vivisection Society, the Society for the Prevention of Abuse in Animal Experimentation (also of New York), and the Society for the Legal Regulation of Vivisection in the District of Columbia, whose list of officers, headed by Mr. Thomas Nelson Page as President, includes some of the most eminent men in the military, naval and official circles at the national capital.

Two bills for the restriction of vivisection were introduced into the New York Legislature and another into the Legislature of New Jersey. A petition in favor of one of the New York bills was signed by over 700 physicians. The pendency of these measures gave rise to an extraordinary amount of interest and discussion; a vigorous campaign, for and against, was carried on, and the hearing at Albany before the committee to which the bills had been referred was attended by a crowd of deeply-interested auditors. In connection with the advocacy of these measures, largely attended public meetings were held in New York and Philadelphia.

It will be readily supposed that the medical fraternity was not idle in this matter. In addition to numerous communications to the press, and a concerted movement on the part of the medical societies of New York to bring pressure upon all the physicians throughout the State to in turn impress the legislators with the danger of restricting research in any degree—(though the regulation asked for was of a very moderate kind),—forty-three of the most eminent physicians and surgeons of New York City appended their names to a letter which was published in all the leading papers. The letter was adroitly drawn, for, by means of frequent references to anaesthetics, the net impression conveyed was that in animal experimentation the suffering is either nil or inconsiderable. Of course no such statement of fact was made explicitly, for no one knew better than the signers that such a statement would be false; and yet the intimation to that effect was unmistakable, and, appearing over some of the greatest names in the profession, it undoubtedly did much—as was of course intended—to lull the popular mind into comfortable inaction.

This attempt to pass restriction bills ultimately failed, but it is to be renewed with unabated vigor at the session of the New York Legislature of 1909.

At the annual meeting of the American Medical Association held in Chicago in June, 1908, the subject of the attempted restriction was discussed, and a committee of seven, for the defense of the present license in experimentation, was appointed, with the promise of ample funds with which to carry on an active warfare. So far from being discouraged by the fact that we are to be confronted by the organized opposition of this formidable association, this incident ought rather to inspire the reformers with new courage and hope. For surely nothing could more clearly

demonstrate the extent to which the public conscience has been aroused on this subject than the formal recognition of that fact which is involved in what is believed to be the first concerted attempt that has ever been made in the history of American medicine to stem the rapidly rising tide of reform sentiment.

Two other most significant and encouraging incidents have occurred within the year :

The New York Medical Journal in its issue of January 4, 1908, editorially gave its "cordial approval" to one of the two bills above mentioned; stated the fact that the bill had "met with the endorsement of many representative members of the medical profession in the State," and said, "We are willing to admit that a proper regard for the humane feelings of all right-minded persons would naturally lead to the substitution, to a reasonable extent, of legal regulation for individual discretion." These expressions, coming from such a source, can not but be regarded as an admission of the highest importance, and its significance is by no means nullified by the recantation that appeared in the same Journal's issue of the following week. The editors explained that during the interval certain "friends" urged against the bill the "entering-wedge argument." "It may well be," said the editors, "that they are right. On the supposition that they are, we must withdraw our support of the bill." It was also stated that "a number of medical men of renown" who had endorsed the bill, subsequently withdrew their commendation, and that "therefore" the editors could not "base an opinion on the first judgment" of these men of renown, and "consequently" this recantation was necessary. From this humiliating confession that the editors have no convictions of their own on an ethical question of the greatest moment and that they wait to be told by "friends" what to

think, it is evident that during the interval between these publications, the hue and cry of the medical societies had been started and had done its work. The incident as a whole shows what view of the subject is taken by humanely-disposed editors and "many representative men of the medical profession" when they are allowed to do their own thinking, and furnishes an excellent illustration of the thralldom exerted by organized medical tyranny.

In the New York "Medical Times" for July, 1908, we find the following extraordinary comments:

"We have admitted that abuses do exist in the practice of vivisection. . . . We are perfectly willing to be derided as a zoophilist or sentimentalist in advocating legislation to prevent cruelty to the lower animals." The editor then goes on to point out by what legal provisions the practice ought, in his judgment, to be regulated. He, further, refers to "the cruelty involved in ordinary didactic vivisections" and condemns certain experiments undertaken some years ago "to determine the temperatures and periods required to roast animals alive." The article concludes with a remarkable passage in which doubt is expressed whether the limit of practical usefulness along the line of animal experimentation has not already been reached. "So far as physiology and toxicology and ordinary problems of bacteriology are concerned, it does not seem probable that much farther advance will be made by vivisection." One must be familiar with the history of this controversy to appreciate the full significance of this utterance by one of the leading medical journals. Whether it will prove to be prophetic of the generally adopted attitude of the medical profession, say, thirty years hence, or whether it will prove to be a mere "flash in the pan," time alone will show.

On the whole, the events of the past year can not but be regarded with great satisfaction. When this Society was organized five years ago, such an awakening as we have seen during the past twelvemonth could not reasonably be hoped for within the life of the present generation. In order to ultimately achieve our desired end we have only to pursue our purpose of appealing, in every way within our power, to the conscience of the American people. But if the future should reveal disappointment and the end should appear still far away, let us remember that "they also serve who only stand and wait."

Respectfully submitted,

S. R. TABER,
Secretary.

November 11, 1908.

