

Annotations.

CHILDREN AS STREET TRADERS.

The Public Control Committee of the London County Council has presented to that body an important report on the employment of children in connection with street trading. This Committee recommends in connection with the Employment of Children Act, 1903, that by-laws should be framed which, if adopted, would prohibit the employment of a child under eleven years of age at all, and of a child under the age of twelve years in any handicraft carried on within any house or other buildings otherwise than for short periods and at irregular intervals. The employment of children in the business and the sale of intoxicating liquors for consumption on the premises is prohibited, and female children must not be employed in a laundry or in the business of a barber or hairdresser. Children must not be employed on Sundays in domestic work, except between the hours of seven in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon, and the period of employment must not in any case exceed three hours in all. It is proposed, however, that this by-law shall not apply to the children of Jewish parents. The Committee also proposes that a girl under the age of sixteen shall not be employed in nor carry on street trading except when accompanied by a parent or guardian, and that a child between the age of eleven and sixteen shall while engaged in street trading wear a badge in a conspicuous manner indicative of the police division and the registered number of the child.

The Home Secretary has intimated his intention to hold a local inquiry with regard to these by-laws, as his views are not wholly in accordance with those of the Committee, but he is anxious to act in unison with the London County Council in order to secure the most suitable regulations.

CLEANLINESS IN KITCHENS.

The Conference on Public Health Administration recently held at Spring Gardens has once more recalled to public memory the fact that professional beetle-killers are employed in the majority of City restaurants, if not to slay the beetles in their kitchens, at least to stop their holes. This throws an unpleasant light on the state of these kitchens, and, consequently, on the conditions under which food is prepared in them. It is asserted that "beetles will congregate where there is continuous warmth," but we believe that the

true fact of the case is that they congregate where there is grease accompanied by warmth. It is the old story of the necessity for a constant battle with dirt, if pests of all kinds are to be excluded from our houses. Fleas and other worse insects are apt to make their appearance if rooms are not regularly and thoroughly cleaned, and beetles speedily appear if grease and particles of food are allowed to lie about on kitchen floors. In tropical countries it is often asserted that it is impossible to prevent ants from getting into food, but the good housewife knows well if ants appear that she must hunt for dirty corners.

Now that the importance of cleanliness in all conditions of life is demonstrated, surely it is time that the kitchens in which our food is cooked should be at least as sanitary as the out-patient departments of our hospitals, the walls of the latest of which are lined with opaline tiles. Dirty kitchens mean dirty food, and dirty food means dyspepsia and many undesirable ailments. It is time that kitchens were removed from basements and cellars and given a more honoured place in our domestic arrangements.

RADIUM AS A MIND-HEALER.

The latest use to which the wonder-working radium has been put is the treatment of insanity, and the result of its trial in the instance reported gives hope for good results in its future use.

Dr. Robert Jones, of the Claybury Asylum, selected thorium, which is a radio-active body, but a million times less active than radium, and which has not its burning and destructive properties, for use in this case, and a specially-devised cap was made, after consultation with Dr. Mackenzie Davidson, between the quilted seams of which 500 cubic centimetres of thorium hydro-oxide were placed. A patient of the melancholy type was then selected as the wearer of the cap, and he wore it night and day. He was a very unpromising specimen, with pupils inactive to light, increased knee reflexes, and defective habits, as is common at the onset of dementia. He was discharged "recovered" in June last, very loth to leave behind him the cap to which he attributes his recovery. The subsequent accounts of him have been most favourable.

The history of radium and its marvellous powers reads more like a fairy tale than like a sober scientific record. We have only at present touched the fringe of the secrets Nature holds in reserve.

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