

Annotations.

ALCOHOL AND BUSINESS.

The Lord Mayor presided last week at a meeting at the Mansion House convened to discuss "Alcohol in relation to commercial efficiency," to which invitations were issued by the National Temperance League. Mr. J. Williams Benn, M.P., then Chairman of the London County Council, as himself a total abstainer of fifty-four years' standing, said he put in a plea for the reduction of the nation's drinking habits on the ground of commercial efficiency. It was, he said, unfortunately the fact that some of the best, most genial, and most promising men fell victims to drink. Stodgy, uninteresting people did not so readily succumb to alcoholic temptations.

Sir Victor Horsley said there was nothing else not essential to life on which there was such an enormous expenditure. From an economic standpoint we had no moral right to continue something which was a source of loss and not of profit to the nation at large.

Dr. Hyslop said there was growing up among the English people a "brainy" condition. Men were called upon to work more with their brains and less with their hands. When the English were mainly an agricultural people they might have been able to imbibe alcohol; but if the present generation were to attempt to emulate the example of the four-bottle men of a former age they would soon find themselves within the four walls of an asylum.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF CONSUMPTIVES.

An important point was raised at the Annual Meeting of the Leeds Association for the Prevention and Cure of Tuberculosis. Councillor Dr. Hawkyard pointed out that one of the great difficulties with which the Society had to contend with was the finding of suitable employment by patients when they returned to their homes. He had formed one of a deputation which endeavoured to get former patients employed as tramway conductors. Nothing had been done, however, and there was the utmost difficulty in getting a cured consumptive on to the tramways. He would be told "this is not a sanatorium," and so on. He thought pressure should be brought to bear by the Association on the Corporation. The point is a very important and difficult one. It is unquestionable that, for cured consumptives, it is of the utmost importance to obtain outdoor work, so that they may not only be cured, but keep cured.

THE HOMELESS POOR.

During the past few months the sudden changes in the weather have tried the most robust amongst us. The bitter east winds have made us draw the curtains snugly at night, and sit over great glowing fires, pile on the blankets and eiderdowns, and then complain that the wind finds its way through all the crevices and that it is "impossible to keep warm." But what of those to whom such luxuries are unattainable, who have not had even a roof over their heads on these bitter nights?

The Public Health Committee of the London County Council reports the results of a census of the homeless poor, taken on the night of February 17th by the Council's medical officer of health and staff of inspectors, with the assistance of officers of the Finsbury, Fulham, Greenwich and Southwark Metropolitan Borough Councils. The object in view was to ascertain the number of persons sleeping out in London, and for that purpose observation was made as far as possible on all likely resorts in the whole of the administrative county. It appears from the report of the council's medical officer of health that 1,869 men and 312 women were found in the streets or on staircases or under arches, or 2,181 in all. Of these 827 men and 39 women were in Wych Street, Strand, where food was being given away by the Salvation Army, and 161 men and 60 women in Whitechapel Road, where food was also being given away by the Salvation Army. In a tent of the Church Army in Clare Market, Strand, 300 men were, or had been, chopping wood. These men had received two meals during the night, and were given tickets for beds in common lodging-houses. The tickets, however, were not available for use until the following night. In the common lodging-houses and shelters that night there were 23,690 persons, of whom 21,254 were single men, 1,688 single women, 357 married couples, and 34 children under ten years of age.

The Church Army is doing excellent work in endeavouring to mitigate the distress, and on the night of the census 1,600 of the men in the common lodging-houses had been given tickets for their lodging by the Army, but it is not a comfortable reflection for those in the metropolis who care for humanity to know, as they lay their heads on their pillows, that there are thousands in the streets exposed to the inclemency of the weather. The Church Army merits the support of all who desire to alleviate the distressing condition of the homeless poor.

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