

Annotations.

THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY.

Mr. Balfour made an important announcement, and one which will be generally welcomed, when he stated, in the House of Commons, that a Royal Commission is to be appointed to investigate the problem of poverty. The last Commission dealing with the same subject was appointed in 1834. Since that time conditions have altered, and there is ample scope for an inquiry into the working of the Poor Law, and into the extent to which the existing powers of the Poor Law authorities are unsuited to modern industrial needs and conditions. Indeed, the opinion is widely entertained on both sides of the House that a fresh investigation is desirable, if it is not overdue.

The Premier stated in the House in reply to a question, "We are anxious to survey everything that appertains to the problem of the poor; whether poor through their own fault or through temporary unemployment. We are also anxious to investigate problems in regard to municipal employment, of which no one can deny the importance."

NURSES ON BOARD SHIP.

The desirability of carrying nurses on board passenger ships has often been referred to in these columns. An instance of their utility is given by Mr. Hugh W. Bayly, M.R.C.S., who records in the *Lancet* a case of surgery at sea in which he successfully performed abdominal section for a perforating duodenal ulcer in a soldier on the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's ship *La Plata* on her way home from Barbadoes. In recording the case Mr. Bayly says:—

"The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company carries a trained nurse on both its mail and inter-colonial steamers and a trained male hospital assistant on its mail boats, and the *La Plata* was taking home as passengers two time-expired nurses from the inter-colonial boats, and my best thanks are due to these ladies who devoted themselves entirely to the case, and without whose willing and able assistance a successful result would probably not have been reached."

"I should like . . . to emphasise the importance of carrying a trained nurse on all large ocean-going passenger boats."

The need is so obvious that we can only wonder it has not long since been universally

adopted. It is unquestionable that good nursing is a great factor in the saving of life, not only in surgical cases as recorded above, but in cases of malaria, abscess of the liver, and other tropical diseases, for which patients are not unfrequently ordered home as their one chance of life, a chance which is considerably diminished if they do not have the most careful nursing care on the homeward voyage.

A HOME FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN.

A very real difficulty exists in regard to the suitable provision for the care of a class of the community who enter greatly handicapped on the race of life—namely, the infants of unmarried working girls whose former lives have been thoroughly respectable. The Home for Homeless Children at Fallow Corner, North Finchley, whose Hon. Matron, Miss B. Wright, and Hon. Secretary, Miss E. B. Kingsford, are both experienced nurses, is designed to meet this want, and in so doing serves a useful end.

Its main objects are to provide healthy surroundings, good food, careful attention, and—later—sound education for such children, and so to lay a stable foundation, whereby they may develop into healthy, useful members of the community, instead of being the stunted, ill-nourished specimens of humanity which only too often result from unscrupulous "baby-farming."

A scarcely less important aim is to bring a kindly influence to bear upon the mothers, and to ensure their getting that for which they—often with extreme difficulty—pay.

It is not always realised that a mother in these circumstances is compelled to entrust her child to the care of others in order to support herself and him. It is, as the report of this home points out, "obviously impossible for her simultaneously to tend her infant and earn an honest living." Unless provision is made for the child the only alternative, greatly to be deplored in the interests of mother, child, and community alike, is the workhouse for both. It is surely a good work to the State and to the individual child, homeless through no fault of its own, to provide a home where, without relieving the mother of her responsibility, it may be carefully brought up under wise, kindly, and hygienic care, and be saved on the one hand from the pauper taint, and on the other, from the baby farmer.

Visitors are invited to see the home from two to four o'clock on any week day except Wednesdays.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)