

### Annotations.

#### THE MASSACRE OF THE CHILDREN.

At the annual meeting of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association—a society which is doing excellent work—which was held last week in the Mayor's Parlour at the Manchester Town Hall, Major-General Sir F. Maurice made some startling remarks on the subject of national health. When he was in command of the garrison at Woolwich he had occasion to look into this subject. Every month for seven years he had to go up to the Herbert Hospital to sanction the discharge of men who had failed in health and were unfitted for soldiering. He was startled to find how many men had never had the physical capacity for army work. Again, in Manchester, of 11,000 men who offered themselves to the recruiting sergeants, 8,000 were rejected on this ground alone, and the number was further reduced on medical examination. The fact staggered him, and he had tried to find out the causes for this state of things. Improper feeding was one cause. He had known a six-months-old baby given cold cabbage for supper. Then there were children who could not take natural food, but wanted relishes. The "gin liver" in children under three years old was common, and he had heard of a boy in hospital who had a penny given him, and, when asked how he would spend it, asked for "just a ha'p'orth of gin." Children so treated in infancy by ignorant mothers could not grow up to be soldiers at eighteen. Something must be done to stop the massacre of the children of England, and in calling attention to this evil the Manchester Sanitary Association was doing excellent work. The question involved was not merely one of sanitation and health, but no less a one than whether we were or were not to retain our place amongst the nations. It was one which every statesman should put before party politics.

#### CLEAN MILK V. BOILED MILK.

Dr. Clement Dukes, F.R.C.P., Physician to Rugby School, and Senior Physician to Rugby Hospital, strongly advocates the use of clean instead of cooked milk as a food for infants and children. Milk is, he contends, deteriorated in nutritive value during the various processes of cooking, and is responsible, in consequence, for many cases of infantile scurvy. In a letter addressed to the *Lancet*, he quotes some startling statistics in support of his belief, which

are the result of the investigation of a commission appointed by the Medical Society of the County of Kings in America. In analysing the history of 379 cases, breast milk was accountable for ten cases, raw cow's milk for five, while pasteurised milk caused twenty cases, condensed sixty, sterilised one hundred and seven, and proprietary foods two hundred and fourteen.

The clinical results obtained by the use of certified clean milk have already been most encouraging. The essential process in obtaining a pure "new milk," after ensuring the health of the cows and the strictest cleanliness in the milking and its surroundings, is the rapid cooling of the milk to about 40° Fahr., at which temperature milk can be kept for twenty-four hours with very little bacterial growth, while at room temperature each bacterium multiplies about 435 times in the same period.

#### SAGACITY IN SNAILS.

M. Camille Spiess contributes a little anecdote to the *Revue Scientifique*, which proves that snails not only have intelligence, but also recognise social duties. It appears that a Swiss snail-breeder, of L'Isle, in the canton of Vaud, kept 50,000 snails in an enclosure surrounded by a wall some 8 ft. high, and surmounted by a chevaux-de-frise of small spikes, so arranged as to check the escape of the snails by pricking their feet and forcing a retreat. But the snails escaped in spite of such precautions, and careful observation revealed that the manner of their escape was to join their forces and make a bridge of shells, whereby, one at a time, their fellows could get over the forbidding spikes with impunity. How this was contrived, whether there was a self-sacrificing snail that stayed behind, or whether the top of the wall was a favourite basking place, and some of the snails were quick to take advantage of the situation and climb out over the backs of their fellows—these are matters that the spectators could not, of course, decide.

We quote the above as an interesting illustration of the value of co-operation, as proved even by snails. If creatures so low down in the scale of creation can achieve effective organisation by this method, surely it is not too much to hope that nurses will realise the futility of holding aloof one from another, and, by unity in essentials, will make common cause against the perils which beset them in their present disorganised condition.

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