

Annotations.

"LITTLE MARY."

One of the evils which this country has most to fear is the self-indulgence of its leisured classes. What to eat, what to drink, and wherewithal to be clothed, are, to many of these, matters of supreme moment, and no expenditure is too great to gratify desire in these directions. Nor does the evil stop here, for signs are not wanting that the middle classes, which hitherto have produced men and women whose simple thrifty lives have made for national prosperity, are being swept into the vortex, and that they, too, desire luxury and show, rather than plain, wholesome modes of living and simple culture. Mr. Barrie, therefore, is to be congratulated on attacking our national failing of over-eating in his latest play, "Little Mary," and we hope the lesson may be taken to heart. The evils of poverty are great, but those of luxury are even greater, and it is to the latter we trace the downfall of the great Empires of the past. Let us then, as a nation, take warning in time, and amend our ways before it is too late. Take an average day of the fashionable world, and consider the meals disposed of. A large breakfast, often demolished luxuriously in bed; luncheon consisting of five or more highly-seasoned courses, washed down with wine; afternoon tea at which hot cakes, sandwiches, liqueurs, &c., are thoroughly appreciated; a dinner of many courses—more wine, more liqueurs, and, of course, coffee; and last, but not least, grilled bones and grog at dawn of day. The waste involved in such a daily *menu* is not its worst feature. It creates in the rising generation requirements which few men can meet, and, consequently, when marriage takes place, debt and unhappiness often result. Further, no ordinary digestion can stand the strain put upon it by the daily consumption of such a bill of fare, and ill-health and dyspepsia consequently result. Poor long-suffering "Little Mary"!

THE SUPPRESSION OF JUVENILE SMOKING.

We are glad to note that the New Zealand Juvenile Smoking Suppression Bill imposes a penalty of £10 for supplying tobacco to boys under seventeen years of age. Further, any youths under this age caught in the act of smoking will be fined 5s. for the first offence and 10s. for the second. It is time that our own Legislature turned its attention to domestic matters, and, certainly, legislation as to smok-

ing, following on the lines laid down by New Zealand, is urgently needed. The sight of small boys of nine and ten, and even younger, smoking cigarettes in the public streets is all too common. Whatever may be said for the habit of smoking by adults, it is unquestionably injurious to growing boys, and is no doubt accountable in part for the national physical deterioration which is causing so much concern at the present day.

In this connection we cannot refrain from commenting on the statement recently made in the Press, that, with the object of inducing boys to attend the Sunday-school connected with a church near Wellington, Somerset, the rewards given to the lads for regular attendance, and presented in the course of the service, are cases of cigarettes! It is lamentable that anyone entrusted with the care of a parish should show himself so lamentably deficient in common sense. Most sensible persons will be of opinion that it is far better the boys should remain away from the school than that they should be induced to attend it by a bribe which will have the effect of establishing a bad habit and of injuring their physical health.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHILDHOOD.

It has been well said, "Those who have seen the sufferings of men have seen nothing, they should see the sufferings of women; those who have seen the sufferings of women have seen nothing, they should see the sufferings of little children." So there is no class of hospital which appeals more to the sympathy of the public than those which care for sick children, and institutions of this class within easy reach of the West-end usually have no lack either of visitors or support. Far away in the East the Children's Hospital at Shadwell opens its doors to the sick children of this quarter, where, as a rule, even in health, there is little sunshine in the lives which should be so happy, and which in sickness are pitiable indeed. The hospital is worthy of all support, and we hope that the appeal of the management for new annual subscriptions and donations may meet with a liberal response. New wards, including a whooping-cough ward, are wanted, also a casualty department, and new nursing and domestic accommodation, so that, in addition to the ordinary expenditure, £18,000 is needed. Only those who have to deal with the cases know the gravity of the responsibility in turning away patients seriously ill, for lack of accommodation.

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