

Annotations.

CONDEMNATION OF SHOPPING-DAY SCHEME

Representative traders have been speaking plainly about this most undignified method of gathering in funds for the King's Hospital Fund. The trade associations are strongly opposed to interference, and complain that the whole scheme has been launched without any consultation with the trades by a committee upon which they have no representative. So far we sympathise with them.

It is quite wonderful, however, how oblivious these great traders can be of the personal claims of others; for instance, we note in the *Westminster Gazette* that, in explaining why Messrs. Marshall and Snelgrove had declined to join the movement, Mr. Marshall, sen., observed that he had been himself on the Visiting Committee of the Hospital Fund for many years, but the present scheme he regarded as wrong in principle and a great mistake.

That means that Mr. Marshall, sen., has been called upon to inspect all the departments of certain London hospitals. It would be interesting to know where he acquired the expert experience fitting him to report on the nursing and domestic departments of these charities, and if he considers the principle right that a duty, which necessitates such expert professional knowledge as only a trained nurse can possess, should be performed by a man necessarily totally ignorant of such matters? Had there been but a sprinkling of women on the Council of the King's Fund, with their knowledge of domestic affairs, such an absurd and unbusinesslike suggestion as this shopping scheme would have at once been nipped in the bud.

ALCOHOL, INSANITY, AND CRIME.

Careful investigations into the etiological factors which result in the filling of gaols and asylums have proved to be of great interest and importance, especially as regards inebriety. In a recent issue of the *New York Medical Record*, Dr. Drew stated that there were 154 cases committed to the Massachusetts State Asylum for Insane Criminals during the past two years, and of these only eleven—or 7 per cent.—claimed never to have used alcohol as a beverage. Of these eleven cases, three were epileptics and two were well-marked cases of imbecility. Ninety per cent. of the cases considered themselves hard drinkers, the majority having been drunk many times. Dr. Drew has been led to the belief that the offspring of sound, temperate

parents are less likely to suffer from alcoholic insanity, though heavy drinkers, than the second generation, who may not drink half as much. Pronounced alcoholism in the parents always means examples of mental disease and weak-mindedness in the children, provided the alcoholic tendency is not acquired somewhat late in life. An inebriate father is certainly a handicap, an inebriate mother is a greater misfortune, but the child whose father and mother are both intemperate is almost certainly doomed from its birth. It has been proved by the most eminent modern investigators that even a moderate quantity of alcohol in the circulation will cause marked changes in the cortical neurons of the brain. Changes in the nucleus, granular bodies, and protoplasm may be actually seen. Because these cells are the material basis of man's moral sense and conscience, the physical representatives of his aspirations, his likes, his fears, and his will-power, their injury seems to be of far greater importance, than the question of the food-value of alcohol or the effect of alcohol on the stomach and liver. It is a law of Nature that the most highly-organised tissues suffer first and most from toxic agents in the blood; so it is the moral or ethical sense which suffers first and most, and is often the only manifest evidence, in the first generation, of the toxic effects of alcohol.

SPIRITUAL HOSPITALS.

At the annual meeting of the Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, held at the Holborn Restaurant, the Chairman said he believed that public opinion was ripe for the first step—the abolition of the hanging of women. History disproved the popular idea that hanging prevented murder. The substitute for capital punishment was, he believed, that the clergy must recognise that crime was a spiritual disease, and that it was their duty to restore the criminal to health. The Church should provide spiritual hospitals in which the spiritually diseased man could be detained until he was cured.

It must not, however, be overlooked that as the value of preventive medicine and surgery in regard to ordinary disease is increasingly evident, so also in relation to the spiritual condition it is incomparably easier to maintain it in a sound condition than to restore the spiritually unsound to health when once disease has them in its grip.

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