

## Annotations.

### THE PROTECTION OF WAGE-EARNING CHILDREN.

Miss N. Adler, Honorary Secretary of the Committee on Wage-earning Children, has distributed copies of the report of the Committee on the Employment of Children Act, 1903, consisting of a statement of the chief provisions of the measure and suggestions as to the form of by-laws required to secure the effective protection of juvenile workers. The Committee point out that the Act consists (1) of statutory restrictions which render a certain amount of protection absolute and universal, and (2) of local by-laws, to be framed by local authorities, to regulate the employment of children in their administrative areas. Thus street trading by children under eleven years is absolutely forbidden under the Act, while local authorities may make by-laws with respect to such trading by persons under the age of sixteen, and the report of the Committee shows clearly the extent to which such by-laws may go. By-laws may also be made to regulate every other form of employment of children and to prohibit any occupation deemed undesirable. Here the report again clearly explains the provisions which may be laid down in these by-laws under the Act, and in similar fashion it deals with the whole Act in regard to such points as the Employment of Children in Theatres, Special Powers for Home Industries, and Offences and Penalties. The report should prove most useful to members of town councils, urban district councils, and county councils, all of which have power to administer the Act.

### A DYSPEPTIC CLUB.

A Dyspeptic Club has, it appears, recently been formed in Jersey City, which aims, as an American contemporary wittily puts it, at creating "a new department of the interior." The particulars of the qualifications for membership are not stated, but it is to be hoped that they will include reform in the main sins of omission in mastication, and of commission in bolting various foods. It is said that each member must make quarterly written reports of experiences, and, no doubt, there will be much comparison of notes, and details of hopes deferred and hearts—if not "Little Marys"—made sick. The only way to arrive at facts concerning indigestion will be by careful and (perhaps literally) painstaking experiment. If

need be, the old-time theories must be combated. Pie and pain, buckwheat and bloating, sausage and suffering, pickle and pang, cabbage and colic, ham and heart-burn must all exhibit their proper relations and, if experiments are continued long enough, they probably will. Unfortunately, no man who possesses what may be called a highly-developed indigestive sense can hope to be brilliantly witty in his reports, or, what is more important, voluntarily truthful. No member should be trusted to give absolutely impartial testimony unless he can certify that he was free from cramp, hyperacidity, headache, or borborygmia when his report was written. Gastralgia apparently affects—reflexly, no doubt—the higher moral sense of truth, and colic warps sound judgment concerning the ordinary relations between cause and effect.

### A WISE DECISION.

At the last meeting of the Tolworth Hospital Board, Surbiton, the Clerk reported that, at the Cuddington Infectious Hospital, a woman chargeable to the Board, who was sufficiently recovered to be sent out, insisted upon having her child discharged with her, or upon remaining in the hospital until the child was in a condition to be discharged. Eventually the Clerk arranged that as the child was not fit to be discharged the mother should remain, and the Board confirmed his action. We congratulate the Board on their humane decision. In many instances the entire separation of the children of the working classes from their parents during an infectious illness is a great hardship, although when there are no proper means of isolation such separation is doubtless necessary in the interests of the community.

Speaking as a mother, we have no hesitation in saying we should ourselves absolutely decline to be completely separated from a young child during a serious illness, and, where the mother is willing to undergo the necessary isolation, we think hospital authorities are acting wisely to relax their rules so as to allow her free access to her sick child. When we consider how dependent children of the middle classes are upon their mothers and nurses—and the tie is even closer in the case of the working classes—we must realise the wisdom of this proceeding from the physical as well as from the humane point of view.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)