

Annotations.

AN IMPOSSIBLE JUSTIFICATION.

The Home Secretary, who last week received at the Home Office a deputation who contended that experiments on living animals are unnecessary, useless, cruel, and demoralising, replied that he could be no party to abolishing vivisection, which he regarded as an important aid to medical and surgical science, but he would continue to take the utmost care that licences for such experiments were only granted to suitable persons on proper, justifiable public grounds, and that such experiments were carried out under very strict conditions for the avoidance of any needless suffering. The Act would be administered in the most humane and scientific manner.

We have no doubt that vivisectionists and those who protest against experiments on living animals may each act from a sense of duty, but it is well not to attempt impossible justification. No Act which empowers human beings to cause physical suffering to any living thing can by any means whatever be humanely administered. Vivisection may be for the benefit of scientific knowledge, and thus ultimately benefit man, and its advocates should have the courage to take their stand on a scientific basis pure and simple.

Personally we have never known a human being whose life on earth we could desire to alleviate or prolong at the cost of one convulsion of animal agony, but we love the dumb animals universally. It is to be hoped that the love of mankind is the primary impulse which impels the vivisectionist and makes it possible for him to pursue his horrible work. Any lower inspiration is inexcusable and demoralising.

WOMEN'S FREE TRADE UNION.

Simultaneously with the formation of the Free Trade Union there has been organised a similar society for women under the title of the Women's Free Trade Union. The organisation intends to work with all other similar bodies in bringing information on the subject of tariffs under the notice of women. Mrs. Herbert Gladstone will preside over the Committee, Mrs. Bamford Slack acting as honorary secretary, and Mrs. L. Vernon Harcourt as hon. treasurer. The Committee includes Lady Aberdeen, Mrs. James Bryce, Mrs. Sydney Buxton, the Hon. Mrs. Henry Gladstone, Mrs. Lloyd-George, Mrs. Broadley Reid, Mrs. Alfred Spender, and Mrs. Freeman Thomas.

THE SOCIAL ENGINEER.

There was a time when indiscriminate charity was considered the expression of a generous nature. Now we are inclined to believe that thoughtless alms-giving results from laziness, as it is easier to give money to the worthless beggar than to give personal service, time, and thought to helping the unfortunate to help themselves. Nothing pauperises a people like indiscriminate charity, but it is easy, and a salve to the conscience of the selfish.

In the United States there is a flourishing society called the American Institute of Social Service, which has just sent its librarian, Mrs. Cranston, to Europe to gather information on the system of co-operative production and distribution, which is considered to be much further advanced in Europe, especially in France, than in the western hemisphere.

Mrs. Cranston intends to investigate the condition of working girls, and particularly the "living-in" system which is in operation in the large mercantile establishments of London and Paris. This means that the firms in question provide homes for their employees, in contradistinction to the American system, where the girls lead independent lives outside of working hours.

Mrs. Cranston has done a great deal of work of this kind, and has travelled all over the United States and Europe in the interest of sociological investigations. She is called a "social engineer," and as such is a pioneer in a new profession for women. The social engineer is a person who initiates and supervises all sorts of movements that will improve the condition of the wage earner, and to that end he must make a comparative study of the social and industrial conditions of the world. His knowledge must be based upon actual experience, not merely upon books. Large industrial establishments are coming to see that it is to their advantage to better the condition of their employees, and in order to do this they must have the assistance of the man or woman who knows. This man or woman appears as the social engineer.

Most social engineers are men, but the feminine engineer is considered very necessary by the Institute of Social Service. Women and children are closely associated with most sociological problems, and enterprises relating to their welfare can best be "engineered" by women. It is to be regretted that recent legislation in this country ignores this fact.

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