

Annotation.

A DOMESTIC QUESTION.

The desirability for placing the knowledge of women at the disposal of our legislators was apparent in the House of Commons last week when Mr. Claude Hay drew the attention of the Home Secretary to the cases of two girls under remand at Holloway Gaol for suspected stealing, one case was subsequently summarily dismissed, and in the other the accused was released from the charge on a surety of 20s. being given for her good behaviour. Mr. Claude Hay inquired whether meanwhile both had had their hair cut short by the prison authorities, and, if so, whether it was the custom so to treat young female prisoners under remand.

Mr. Akers Douglas replied that the hair was cut in accordance with the prison rules, which requires prisoners under remand to have their hair cut when this is necessary on account of dirt or vermin. The hair of prisoners on remand was only cut when it was actually verminous and milder methods were impracticable. Mr. Claude Hay then inquired whether the hair of these women was cut before they were admitted to inspection by the medical officer. Mr. Akers Douglas could give no information on this point, but promised to make inquiries. Mr. T. G. Bowles inquired whether the prison authorities in such cases could not have the hair washed. Once more Mr. Akers Douglas was nonplussed, but promised to make further inquiries, and said any information he could get would be at the disposal of hon. members. Mr. Claude Hay asked when the information would be available, he being anxious that it should be received before the end of the Session. The Home Secretary promised there should be no delay. He would furnish the information as soon as he obtained it.

Had there been a woman amongst the members present, she would probably have been able to furnish the requisite information without delay. Certainly a trained nurse could explain the relative efficacy of turpentine, paraffin, and caps soaked in carbolic lotion, long before the end of the Session. If it is necessary for domestic affairs of this nature to be solemnly discussed by our Imperial Parliament, the need for a feminine element in the counsels of the nation becomes increasingly apparent.

Medical Matters.

PRURITUS ANI.



This is a disease, says Mr. C. Leaf, F.R.C.S., in the *Medical Times*, characterised by an intolerable itching of the anus. It is met with more commonly in men than in women, and may prove somewhat intractable to treatment. Whether it is correct to speak of pruritus ani as a disease in itself may well be open to question, for there is no doubt that in the majority of cases some local or general condition can be found which sufficiently accounts for the itching. On the other hand, there are a certain number of cases where a most careful examination fails to reveal any condition to which the pruritus can reasonably be ascribed. In the former case we must regard the pruritus as a *symptom* of a disease, in the latter we must regard it as *idiopathic*. In the former case, we must treat the local or general disease; in the latter, our treatment must run on more or less empirical lines.

The following are the *local* and *general* conditions usually found associated with pruritus:—

Local.

1. Disease of the colon, rectum or anus, especially fissure, ulcer, chronic ulceration, polypus, piles, prolapse of mucous membrane, fistula, condylomata, malignant growths.
2. Skin affections of ano-gluteal regions, erythema, eczema, tinea circinata caused by the triophyton.
3. Threadworms.
4. Diseases of neighbouring organs—uterus, ovaries, bladder, prostate, &c.
5. Uncleanliness.

General.

1. Irregularities in diet. Consumption of shellfish, lobster, or salmon. Drinking tea, coffee, cocoa, or beer.
2. Constipation. Negligence in attending to Nature's call.
3. Gout, diabetes, Bright's disease, rheumatism, syphilis.
4. Overwork.
5. Irritable or neurotic temperament.

Diagnosis.—On account of the intense itching round the anus of which patients always complain, there can be no difficulty in making a correct diagnosis. Some patients find they can pass the day in comparative comfort, but when once in bed the itching commences and soon becomes so intolerable that they get little or no sleep; others find that the itching persists in the day as well as in the night. In the majority of cases the symptom

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