

are desirable, but which do not require surgical treatment or constant medical supervision.

Miss Holloway, Lady Superintendent of the Victoria Nursing Institution, Walsall, presided last week in the Assembly Rooms of the Walsall Town Hall at a meeting of nurses and teachers convened by the local branches of the National British Women's Temperance Association. The principal speakers were Miss Gertrude Southall, a School Manager, and Dr. Furneaux Jordan, of Birmingham. In her opening remarks, Miss Holloway said that one of the saddest sights was to see young women going into public houses. District nurses well knew the results in the homes when the women drank. Miss Southall, as a school manager, welcomed the excellent system recently instituted of medical inspection in schools, and said what was now required was temperance teaching as a regular class subject. Dr. Furneaux Jordan, speaking both as a medical man and as a magistrate, expressed his belief in the uselessness of the prison system in dealing with inebriates. He thought that as soon as there was sure evidence of the drink habit the victim should be shut up in an inebriate home for three years. Alcohol was a drug, and should only be used as such. He said further that if half the money spent on drink were spent on coal, milk, and clothing, there would be no ragged, shivering children. It was not fair on the country to give a bad start to the units, and the State should have the right to prevent the women drinking.

Why stop at the women since, theoretically at least, the fathers are the wage earners who maintain the family?

#### FREE MEALS FOR OUT-PATIENTS.

Everyone who has worked in the out-patient departments of hospitals knows that a large number of the patients who attend them need not only medical treatment, but food, the lack of which is often responsible in the first instance for their illnesses.

To meet this need the Governors of Westminster Hospital, S.W., have recently, by the liberality of Lady Campbell Clarke, established the "Lady Campbell Clarke Fund," the object of which is to provide food for such necessitous cases as in the opinion of the visiting staff may require it. The meals are to be given in the hospital, but arrangements will be made to enable patients to take away milk and other nourishment for children, and those who may require it frequently.

## The Danger of Ignorance.

Ignorance is widespread, and in some cases incurable, hence, perhaps, some of us get disheartened in our struggle against it, a struggle rendered doubly difficult by the positive pride of possession with which many regard it. How often one hears people actually boasting of their utter ignorance of the marvellous mechanism of which God has put them in charge, and yet saddened or possibly amused, we pass on, forgetting that this type of parent persists determinedly in denying physical knowledge to growing boys and girls. That things are better than they used to be is undeniable, elementary hygiene and physiology are taught in many schools, but when speaking lately to an Association of Teachers in Secondary Schools, I was told they were not allowed to speak of intestinal troubles to younger, or of the functions of womanhood to elder girls, not because the head mistresses objected, but because parents would not tolerate it. Surely, this being so, it is time some very determined effort were made, to approach first the head mistresses, and through them the parents of the scholars. Twenty years' experience of work among the poor, has taught me that this prejudice is dying, but dying hard. The old story of the protest made against Maria learning about her inside, because "it is rude," is familiar to most of us, and a very similar remark was made to me, when visiting parents to obtain their sanction for some lectures on Womanhood to their girls; one of them replied, "I never was one to talk about indecent things, but if you like to, please do!" I found on this round of visits that not one mother in forty made any enquiry among the children, or had any knowledge as to the action of their bowels, and only one had ever spoken to her daughters about menstruation. They were left to find out! Put to sleep together; sent to Mrs. A., who could speak plain! etc., etc. My desire for kind and explicit information was regarded as a foolish fad. In a nursing paper it is wholly unnecessary to dwell on the danger of this. Constipation becomes a chronic condition, diarrhoea is well advanced, the gravest risks to delicate organs, are run because children do not like to speak to their mothers, and mothers exercise no physical supervision. This is, I think, a curious fact, and closely allied to the feeling of the women that physiological knowledge is rude and indecent, whilst subjects impossible to mention are freely discussed. Is it not true that a very determined effort should be made

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