

it was not among the unlearned that we meet with what Dr. Saleeby calls "imitation mothers, no longer mammalia, who should be ashamed to look a tabby cat in the face."

In the discussion that followed, Mrs. Nott Bower remarked that Miss Fortey had forgotten the fact that a pail of water was always ready for the kittens. Miss Fortey went on to say that if the Mental Deficiency Bill was passed, a man morally weak who had wronged a girl mentally weak would be debarred from making the only reparation in his power. In the name of womanhood she protested against such a state of things.

Mrs. Nott Bower said that Miss Fortey pointed out the fundamental right of parenthood, but it was to be at other people's expense. She deeply deprecated the suggestion that reparation should be made to the feeble-minded girl by marriage. It would make matters ten times worse, and do harm to every class of the community. There was no cure for the harm that had already taken place. She stated that 50 per cent. of fallen women were feeble minded.

The Rev. R. S. Mitcheson, drew attention to the relation that disease had to feeble-mindedness in lowering the vitality, and said we should attack the cause by preventing the spread of syphilis and consumption, in checking drink, and the providing of better housing for the working classes.

Mr. J. Stone, Canterbury, said that if eugenics were pushed to excess we should have to decide whether it were not better to be born a rogue than a fool.

Mrs. Harley pressed for the detention of men who went about destroying young girls, as our streets and villages will never be safe while they are at large, for, she says, "they must be mentally diseased."

On the second day of the Conference the subjects of the papers were "The Training and Treatment of Poor Law Children" (1), by Mr. J. M. Rendel, *Guardian*, Kensington, and (2) Miss Henry, Newbury; and (3) "Vagrancy," by Sir W. Chance, Bart.

Mr. Rendel advocated the claims of the school system, either in barrack form, or in the cottage home school.

Miss Henry showed the advantages of the boarding-out system in the homes of respectable working people. She said that Poor Law schools, cottage homes, and workhouse wards are unnatural homes, and makeshifts at the best. They are other names for a workhouse. She urged the necessity of leaving children with their mothers wherever possible. No better training can possibly be found for a child than in its own home, even if the mother be indifferent. Children in barrack schools lose all independence of character. They think the whole world is the same. What can they know of housekeeping, where meat is bought by contract, tea by the chest, flour by the sack? Well may we paraphrase, "Sirs, ye are mad." Can anyone conceive even remotely that this

approaches real life, the life for which these children are supposed to be preparing.

Mr. Percival, Tynemouth, said that the paper read by Mr. Rendel in support of barrack schools was almost amazing in 1913. It was a Poor Law Rip Van Winkle, and as though a prehistoric beast had put its head into the window. It was as though someone had suggested stage coaches instead of motor buses. There followed much more interesting discussion on this subject. Sir William Chance discussed the possible causes of the rise and fall in the number of vagrants, and the methods of treatment.

The proceedings terminated with votes of thanks to the chairmen and speakers.

A full report of these very interesting papers and discussions, price 1s., will be published by Mr. W. G. Lewis, 100, South Hill Park, Hampstead.

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## VENEREAL DISEASES AND THE INSURANCE ACT.

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The Public Health Department of the City of New York has requested every medical man practising in the confines of the city to report every case of venereal disease seen by him during 1913, omitting the name and address, but stating the age and sex of the patient. Clinics have been established to which patients can be sent free of charge for the purpose of having a precise diagnosis made and the Wassermann and other tests applied free of cost.

Commenting on this the *British Medical Journal* says:—"The arrangements for the precise diagnosis of venereal diseases are certainly calculated to promote its more accurate and enduring treatment, and some step of the kind is certain to be found necessary in connexion with the National Insurance Act. Venereal diseases are among those which medical men on the panels will have to treat, and undoubtedly they will not infrequently require diagnostic assistance. Laboratory diagnosis in this connexion will, indeed, be one of those many side sources of heavy expenditure for which Mr. Lloyd George is not known so far to have made provision, though he has made an undefined reference to the need for the employment of modern means of exact diagnosis. An additional point worth noting is that the records of their work that medical men on the panels will have to keep, will, so far as the insured classes are concerned, automatically supply returns of a kind equivalent to those now being sought by the New York authorities, though possibly the interests of individuals will not be so fully safeguarded."

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The Oxo Company have just issued an extremely attractive poster, entitled "The Doctor and the Child." The success of the publication is due to Mr. Joseph Simpson.

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