

## THE INVALID KITCHENS OF LONDON.

One can hardly conceive of a more beneficent work than that which is carried on by the Invalid Kitchens of London. To quote from their annual report, their work is to give assistance to women recovering from childbirth, convalescents from hospitals and dispensaries, phthisical cases pending admission, and other acute cases nursed in their own homes. On the face of it in a large and crowded area of a poor London district, this undertaking stands for hard work both on its financial and practical side.

The kitchen in Scovell Road, S.E., is the one that has been longest established, and it was there by the kindness of the organising secretary that we were allowed to see the "wheels go round." We arrived at twelve o'clock noon at the same moment as the first-comers for dinners. Already in the roomy cheerful kitchen were seated two children discussing boiled rabbit, potatoes, cabbage and carrots, and it was by observing them that the value of the work was borne in upon one. They were children, of course, of the sickly type, with little appetite, and the lady in charge, who was evidently quite at home with her guests, told us that some of the children for a time or two have to be persuaded to eat the good fare, but little by little their appetites improve. She attributes this partly to parents' habits of allowing their children to share in whatever they themselves have to eat, and a small thing of two or three years old preferred cheese to the good wholesome dinner provided.

"Billy," a frail boy of about six, was, on entering, anxiously questioned as to whether he could eat rabbit. Such kindly questioners! evidently anxious that the poor little chap should have something that he could fancy. Later came in a poor woman to join the dinner table. It was considered advisable that she should eat her food in the safety of the kitchen, it being by no means certain that her husband would allow her the full benefit of it at home.

But the majority of the recipients consumed off the premises, and presented their basin tickets and pennies through a small window. The former were liberally filled and passed out again with a kindly enquiry for the invalid at home.

The diets vary according to the nature of the illness, and include jelly, custard pudding, beef-tea, boiled fish, chicken, mutton, rabbit and vegetables. Appetising diets of boiled chicken were being served out to special cases on the day of our visit. Cases are recommended by hospital almoners, district nurses, doctors, clergy, health visitors, &c.

Maternity cases recommended, are supplied with dinners for a month after delivery. As yet this branch has not taken up pre-natal work, though we are informed that this is done at the Finsbury centre. We much hope the work will be extended in this direction at Southwark.

Soldiers' and sailors' families are also dealt with, in these cases the S.S.A. supplying the cost of the

food. Last but not least, "pussy," who finds him or herself debilitated from short commons, meets with such generous treatment with pieces that he makes this excellent charity known to his friends, with the result that from time to time they have to be thinned out in the least painful manner possible.

Such a charity as this should receive generous support from the public. The charge to the person receiving is but one penny, and with food of all kinds at the present prices one can readily imagine that a large sum has to be gathered for this object. The committee is most representative, and includes a large proportion of practical social workers. H. H.

## NEW EMPLOYMENTS FOR WOMEN.

The programme of the special meeting of the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, held at the Y.M.C.A. Hall, Tottenham Court Road, under the presidency of Mrs. Creighton revealed the fact that there are a number of occupations now open to women, which, until a short time ago were considered the exclusive privilege of the other sex. They are working on the land, in railway employment, with the result that that in many instances railway carriages are cleaner than ever before, as omnibus and tram conductors and as taxi-cab drivers, and in all these positions are doing their work well. As clerks and secretaries they are not only doing their own work but replacing men, and the same may be said of the women teachers. In munition work they have come to stay, and they are learning to do skilled mechanical work. Lastly, their services are in demand in military hospitals, as cooks, clerks, &c., in departments of which the other sex have hitherto had an uncontested monopoly.

## MUNITION WORKERS MUST BE CARED FOR.

Munition Workers are beginning to feel the strain of overwork, and according to the Memoranda issued by the Health of Munition Workers' Committee: "It is certain that unless our industrial life is to be guided in the future by the application of physiological science to the details of its management it cannot hope to maintain its position hereafter among some of its foreign rivals."

Among specific diseases from which the workers suffer are those produced by the vapour of trinitro-toluol (high explosive), which produces drowsiness, headache, eczema, and finally jaundice and death.

Tetryl, another explosive, is less harmful. Tetra-chlor-ethane (varnish for aeroplanes) was found to be a powerful anæsthetic which might be fatal. This has been superseded by a less harmful substitute.

Workers are warned to be healthy and temperate. Milk and cocoa must be taken before beginning work.

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