

THE PUBLIC WELL-BEING—(continued).

time rather than continue their education at the expense of their nervous health. Very great care is required, however, not to carry this to the length of a foolish fetish. What we welcome most in this lecture is the frank way in which Dr. Russell called attention to the real danger that lurks in the rapid growth of the so-called psycho-analyst, for if it is necessary for a man to have expert knowledge to treat the body, how much more so to treat that delicate machine the mind?

The Universities and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons have now instituted a diploma of psychological medicine, but, beyond this, Dr. Russell considers that the Govern-

ment ought to set up an inquiry into the operations of the psycho-analysts, with the object of weeding out the charlatans. That this is a matter of urgent importance must be apparent not only to members of the medical profession, but to others who are aware of the pernicious influence which the new cult is spreading among the upper and middle classes. We know, by evidence that accumulates every day from various directions, that what is euphemistically or ignorantly described as psycho-analysis threatens soon to become more generally vicious in its effect of false sexual excitations than some of the most modern manifestations of the spiritualism mania. The time to stop it is now.

The Ministry of Health Bill.

MANY of those who were foremost in pushing the Ministry of Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to its doom are beginning to realise, on a closer study of that badly framed but important measure of reform, that the wholesale destruction was the outcome of ignorance, and that it is essential that in one shape or another a large number of its provisions shall in the public interest again be presented to Parliament. It is even being discovered in unexpected quarters that it actually contains proposals that would have effected several large-scale economies. The County Councils Association, while getting in the usual dig in the ribs at the expense of the Ministry, that is to say, "without in any way desiring to convey approval of hasty legislation or to minimise the very proper objections taken on that ground to the Bill as a whole," makes grudgingly enough a number of admissions, "in the interests of fairness," in a somewhat patronising letter which its Council addresses to the Department.

Here are some of the acknowledged instances of "provisions of much importance in the interests of economical local administration." Clause 6 would enable local authorities to secure on advances and expenses made and recoverable by them under certain existing Acts a rate of interest corresponding with the market rate of the present day, whereas they are now able to secure such rate of interest only as was usual in pre-war times. "This would involve a direct saving to the rates of any such authority." Clause 7, empowering a local authority

to supply water beyond its own district or an adjoining one, was intended and adapted to prevent the far greater expense of launching new water undertakings. Clause 11 enables existing officials to be made use of as inspectors of food instead of necessitating the appointment of new officials, a provision "both economical and, it would appear, anti-bureaucratic." Clause 14 enables sanitary authorities to be saved the expense of providing separate buildings for *post-mortem* examinations. Clause 15, sub-clause (3), would enable local authorities to use unapplied balances of loans raised before the war at a low rate of interest (which, as the law now stands, would have to be applied to the reduction of debt) for purposes which otherwise would involve raising or borrowing new money at the far higher rate of interest now current. Clause 19 enables local authorities to lend premises, if they choose, to Government Departments, and so to obviate the totally unnecessary hiring or other provision of premises by Government Departments or local authorities.

These are but a few of the host of subsidiary provisions of great practical value in the discarded Bill. That it will have to be reintroduced either as one or more measures is obvious. We sincerely hope, in the process of mutilation which it will have to suffer, whether as one big Bill or as many little ones, in order to meet the numerous criticisms, just and unjust, lavished upon it, that these useful if unspectacular provisions will be saved from the rubbish-heap.

More about Flogging.**WHERE OPINION IS MISINFORMED.**

A MEETING of head masters and mistresses, specially called to discuss the question of corporal punishment, has carried on the interest in the article in a recent issue. The general sense of the meeting seemed to be that corporal punishment should be retained, while a line of cleavage almost amusing in its sharpness broke out between the heads of the public schools, who advocated flogging on the body, and the heads of the elementary schools, who were shocked at this and wished to continue to cane on the hand. They cannot both

be right, unless it be argued that at a certain age a boy (and a girl, one might ask, though this delicate subject was not mentioned) graduates by process of time from the class which ought to be caned on the hand to the class which ought to be caned on the body.

With the too common attitude which classes all who object to corporal punishment as "sloppy sentimentalists" and those who advocate it as "inhuman brutes," we have nothing to do. The question cannot be discussed apart from sentiment,

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and it cannot be discussed profitably on the assumption that all those who advocate one view of it do so without good cause and motive. But it is, as a matter of fact, usually discussed without attention to two points of vital importance. One is the connection between flogging and sexual emotion. Dean Inge, for instance, has spoken of the "wholeness" of flogging, but Mr. Shaw declares that the desire to practise flogging is a real and mischievous disease. There is a connection between flogging and sexual emotion which may affect both the operator and his victim, and the forcible overcoming of the sufferer's sense of shame which some advocates of flogging regard as in itself useful has a dangerous possibility of breaking down other restraints due to shame. To those acquainted with an unpleasant side of a painful subject it is well known that flogging and submitting to being flogged are in fact a recognised method of commercial vice. It would be monstrous to deduce from this that even the strongest advocates of flogging are abnormally minded, or that sexual corruption is of necessity connected with flogging; but the light thrown by these facts on the nature of flogging and the use of corporal punishment as a means of education suggest that the whole subject demands not only clear thinking and right feeling, but a certain amount of exact knowledge in those who propose to put forward opinions on it.

The second point on which opinion is generally no less misinformed is the question of the efficacy of flogging. If flogging were proved to have the efficiency asserted by its advocates, that could not decide the question. The whole story of progress is the record of our capacity to abandon barbaric and out-of-date methods, because the time for them is past. Many savage methods would work to-day, but we have outgrown them, and for the ordinary man the question of their efficiency does not arise. Mr. Henry S. Salt, who was an Eton master, has

gathered evidence to show that the notion of the efficiency of flogging which has indeed converted many opponents has no real basis. He quotes cases of criminals not only convicted again of the offence for which they were flogged, but flogged again within a short time. He points out that the argument that flogging is a deterrent is almost destroyed by the mere fact that some criminals ask to be flogged rather than be sent to gaol.

The outbreak of garrotting during the 'sixties of last century has been asserted again and again to have been put down by the lash, but the outbreak had been suppressed by the ordinary criminal law before the Flogging Bill could be got through Parliament; and two Home Secretaries, Mr. Asquith and Lord Ridley, have declared that the evil had been mastered before the Flogging Bill became law. As for flogging in our Dominions abroad, Sir Sidney Olivier, when Acting-Governor of Jamaica, said: "It is clear that the increased resort by magistrates to flogging in the case of second offenders is not checking it (prædial larceny) at the present time, and though floggings were being awarded nearly four times as frequently in the latter months of the year the tide was still rising, and only the return of plenty will check it."

The last clause is significant because of its general implication. Flogging is bad because it is an attempted short-cut. It seems a simple and effective remedy. As a matter of fact, it merely enables men to believe that evils are simple which, being complex, need subtle treatment. It sounds much more definite to have flogged a child than to have argued with him, and it is this specious simplicity which is the cause of the real popularity of flogging, but is, as a matter of fact, its strongest condemnation. There are other and better ways to achieve all the results even falsely claimed for flogging if men will take the trouble to employ them, and possess sufficient imagination.

A Clinic for Mothers.

A NEW type of clinic for mothers which has just been founded in London by Mr. Roe and his wife, Miss Marie Stopes, D.Sc., is intended to carry into practice the principles governing motherhood advocated in one of Dr. Stopes's popular books on the subject of maternity. A nurse will be in attendance every day, and once a week a woman doctor will attend to give medical advice. "Our object," said Dr. Stopes to a newspaper representative, "is to give working-class mothers the latest scientific knowledge of motherhood, in order to reduce the death-rate among young children and to increase the survival rate. At present there is an appalling ignorance among mothers as to the best means of contributing to the population the greatest number of healthy, happy children. Owing to that ignorance thousands of mothers are reduced to a state of misery and poverty, and married life to them has become a mockery. In far too many cases weak, sickly

children follow each other, frequently year after year, and the result is seen in a heavy death-rate, the shortening of the mother's life, and the wastage of millions of pounds by the State and municipalities on asylums, hospitals, homes, and workhouses for dealing with the unfit." It is true that an appalling amount of ignorance on the part of mothers with regard to the dangers and responsibilities of motherhood still exists, but doctors and others whose work lies among the poorer classes know that there has been a great change in recent years, thanks to the spread of education on such matters, the wider publicity given to the subject in the newspapers and press generally, and more especially owing to the establishment of infants' welfare centres in all parts of the country. There are certain considerations, however, affecting the large and important subject of "birth control" which need fuller discussion than can now be given. These we hope to examine more fully in a forthcoming issue of THE HOSPITAL.