

summer and in that admirable letter that most of the doctors, including members of the College of Surgeons and the College of Physicians, sent to the Press, grave statements have been made on this point. It is said that there are annually 200,000 fresh cases of venereal disease in London. That gives you a rough idea of the extraordinary malignity and widespread character of the effects of sexual vice.

There are other effects besides these, which it is difficult to measure, but which a few figures may help us to understand. According to the statistics of an American society, which shows that 80 per cent. of the diseases of women, or more than three-quarters are the result of infection, and the result of venereal disease. You may ask why I quote American statistics. For this reason: that we have no body of people engaged in a scientific investigation of this matter in our own country. It is time we had. A very large percentage of children infected die before birth, and those who finally survive have organic defects which may be transmitted to the third generation. Then with regard to blindness, that terrible infant blindness. It is said that 90 per cent. of infant blindness is caused by this terrible germ of gonorrhoea. I am not going to harp on that any more, but it teaches us a very great deal. What, I ask, is the moral of these articles, and what is the duty of those of us who are trying to do good in the world? What ought we to do in the face of these things, which, according to the "Standard," must not be talked of and should be dealt with only by the medical profession? We have a duty to our children and to our friends. And that is the burden, as it seems to me, of Miss Pankhurst's second article, about which I wish to speak to you this afternoon. It is in the issue of October 10. She takes her objectors to task, and says:

"It has been objected that the articles are not suitable to be read by young boys and girls. This might be true if the question of sex could be withheld from their attention, but it is not, and it cannot be so withheld, and

what happens is that girls, and especially boys, learn half-truths, and this half-knowledge it is which is so dangerous. Let us take first the case of the young girl. People who think her too young to learn the truth about sexual disease still think she is old enough to be sought in marriage by men, to marry, and as it may happen, to be infected unknowingly with a disease which, within a short space of her wedding day, will bring her to the operating table or may doom her to a life of invalidism. A girl who is not old enough to learn the truth about sexual disease is certainly not old enough to be exposed to the risk of contracting it in marriage."

Then she says something with regard to the working classes:

"The young daughters of the working classes, and such girls are the majority, have not, owing to the circumstances of their parents, the protection which is accorded to the daughters of the more prosperous classes."

Now if any clergymen are here this afternoon who have worked, as I have, among the poor in great cities—Birmingham and elsewhere—they will support me in what I say here: that the most terrible fact that a working parson has to face is not intemperance or that men don't go to church, but it is in all these big industrial centres, and may be elsewhere, the shocking, the appalling immorality between girls and boys, and that is due, as Miss Pankhurst says, to the fact that they are not educated on the subject. Let me remind you, supporting what Miss Pankhurst has written on this subject, of the fact that there was recently a Commission appointed to consider the question of divorce, and the Commissioners, though divided on certain points, were all united on this point: that marriages should be null and void in the case of venereal disease. It was recommended by the Commission that the Court should have jurisdiction to annul marriages where one of the parties was infected by this disease and had concealed the fact. Well, now, supposing that a marriage can be brought to an end, declared null and