

The Smoke Nuisance.



HE question of smoke abatement is one which calls for deep consideration on the part of both the public at large and those who cause the nuisance. Up to some ten years ago, little attention was paid to this great public evil, but since that time the economic man, the health inspector, the lover of beauty both in art and nature, and our legal authorities, have joined forces to find a remedy.

Is a definition of the smoke nuisance necessary when the effects of it are so apparent to us all? The evils seen in our great industrial centres are sufficient proof that enormous destruction is being done by the soot coming from the burning of bituminous coal. And yet do we consider that this plague, as it may be termed, is carrying on its work of ruin in all parts of the world, although not so evident in the towns and country as in our great cities?

Pittsburgh, "The Smoky City," has made certain important investigations, finding out the nature, extent and precise cause of the smoke nuisance, and also the remedies which could be applied to it. Other American cities have followed this example and can now furnish us with details on every phase of the subject. Has Canada been neglectful in attempting to abolish that which causes so much annoyance to the public? The cities, it is true, may have neglected it, but to-day the newspapers are urging on the movement, and they find strong support in having such a progressive body with them as the Commission of Conservation.

Now let us consider the chemical analysis of soot. It is composed of carbon, which, being simply lamp black, has a great covering power; of tar, containing carbolic acid and having a clinging tendency; of acids, sulphurous, sulphuric, sulphuretted hydrogen and hydro-chloric acid; of ash, which is only dust or dirt; of ammonia and of arsenic. The proportion in which we find these elements of soot, varies to a great extent, depending on the kind of coal burnt and on many other conditions.

It is an easy matter then to see why all our beautiful stone buildings have a grimy and miserable look about them. Our best building stones, which are limestones, marble or sandstone, have