

match making, fustian-cutting, the manufacture of mineral acids of earthenware, glass and metals, of percussion-caps, cartridges, paper, staining of prints, bleaching and dyeing, &c., is to a certain extent controlled. The first-named Acts, as also the Alkali Act, are designed to shield the public at large from the risk of an exposure to hurtful and poisonous substances, whilst the others are directed more especially to the prevention of injury to the health of those engaged in them, and to the non-employment of those who are physically unfit to be exposed to such unwholesome avocations. The protection of the public health by the regulation of offensive trades, such as those of blood, bone, tripe and soap-boiling, and tallow-melting, is relegated to the Public Health Act of 1875, under which power is also given to compel the consumption of smoke in certain cases.

The existence of all these legal enactments shows conclusively that the principle of the regulation of trades has been deemed by the Legislature to be sound, wholesome and expedient.

Legislation has proceeded on the assumption that, if a trade be so managed as to be injurious to the health of those engaged in it, or to the public generally, or in such a manner as to be a nuisance, *alias* an excessive annoyance or danger to the public, the best practicable means of preventing the evil shall be adopted. The several Rivers Pollution Bills have been drawn with this self-evident desideratum steadily in view. The Rivers Pollution Bill that will sooner or later succeed in running the gauntlets of the Lords and Commons will undoubtedly be thus framed,\* and the Air Pollution Bill, which, I fear, is in the very far distance, must be supported on this basis, if ever it is to be a reality. The liberty-loving people of this free country would never be able to submit to such interference with, and control over, their modes of carrying on business for less important considerations than those of national health and wealth.

Admitting, then, the facts (1) that, in the interests of the

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\* Since writing the above, the Act of 1876 has, by the consent of all parties, been allowed to pass with a view to a settlement of the question. It insists on the adoption of "the best practicable and available means" for counteracting the evils with which it is supposed to war.