

In practice I am obliged to read day by day and ever with more certain repetition, the lesson that whenever a person, however moderate he may suppose himself to be, comes to the conclusion that to him alcohol is a necessity, he is in at least the first stage of alcoholic disease. The declaration of the sense of necessity is, to use a medical term, diagnostic of alcoholism. The sense of a necessity for alcohol is the first symptom of alcoholic disease.—*Sir B. W. Richardson.*

So small a quantity of alcohol as four fluid drachms, or half a fluid ounce, is sufficient to disturb the eye for correct vision, the muscles of the hand for the detection of weight, and the sensory tip of the finger for the sense of touch.—*Dr. J. J. Rudge.*

Alcohol circulating in the blood interferes with proper oxidation; alcohol diminishes nervous power and activity; alcohol shortens the average duration of life; alcohol produces disease and hinders recovery.—*Dr. J. J. Rudge.*

Alcoholic expenditure in sickness is becoming smaller. In the London Fever Hospital in 1863 the consumption of alcohol was £3 5s per bed, whereas in 1888 it was only 15s per bed.—*Medical Pioneer.*

Book Notices.

A BOOK FOR TO-DAY.

By A. W.

“STORY OF THE PLANTS.” *

By GRANT ALLEN.

How to teach our children vital truths has become a question which is pressing for an answer with greater insistence as its far-reaching importance comes home to us. We are beginning to understand that laws govern the universe, and that disobedience to these laws is visited by a penalty that is inevitable. That as a man sows he shall reap, holds true in the moral as well as in the physical world. How necessary, then, to inculcate in our children the truth that order—not blind chance—rules the world. Who of us shall not stand condemned when reviewing the answers to questions posed by young enquiring minds? And the lies resorted to at these times have produced an impression on the plastic character of the child which time emphasises rather than effaces. Nature's methods are not to be mentioned, for degradation ensues in the consideration thereof! What libel, what cruel calumny is this on her!—so perfect in conception, so marvellous in her methods, so God-betraying in her attributes! When but a ray from her glorious light strikes our dull vision, we stand enthralled, recognising in the very glimpse of truth we thus obtain how blind and deaf we are.

The writer of “The Story of the Plants” has supplied the need for scientific teaching, whereby true morality may be imparted. In simple, yet charming, language he has sketched the life and growth of plants, their history, and development. The lessons are so clearly taught that their application to our own life's mysteries is in the reach of all. Mothers can have no difficulty in answering the question, Whence are we? propounded by the deepest thinkers as by little children, after studying this little book.

The plan and purpose of the book is set forth in all simplicity by the author in his preface. “I have,” he says, “freely admitted the main results of the latest investigations, accepting throughout the evolutionary theory, and making the study of plants a first introduction to the great modern principles of heredity, variation, natural selection,

and adaptation to environment. Hence, I have wasted comparatively little space on mere structural detail, and have dwelt as much as possible on those more interesting features in the inter-relation of the plant and animal worlds which have vivified for us of late years the dry bones of the old technical botany.”

Women's Meetings.

CANTERBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.

At the ordinary monthly meeting of the Canterbury Women's Institute, correspondence was received from the Auckland Women's Political League, Auckland Liberal League, Gisborne Women's Political League, Springfield Institute, Progressive Liberal Association, and the Editress of the *Sydney Women's Voice*. A donation from a friend, towards the funds of the Institute, was gratefully received. Major Steward's Elective Executive Bill was read and discussed. The following resolution was unanimously passed.—“That the Canterbury Women's Institute cordially endorses the Elective Executive Bill. It is of opinion that any measure which will forward the abolition of party Government and remove from our members the reproach of ‘dumb dogs’ (witness the no-confidence debate) is to be welcomed.” The Auckland Women's Political League forwarded propositions for the consideration of the Institute, urging that “all persons who have served a term of imprisonment, all persons who have been twice convicted in the Magistrate's Court, involving imprisonment, should be disfranchised for three years after release.” Also, “All persons who are maintained by the State or any benevolent institution.” The proposals met with the strongest disfavour. In the first case, it was considered a glaring injustice to brand as criminals those who have already worked out their punishment. Such stood in need of moral support rather than of public reprobation, and the Institute held that prisoners had been treated too much as a worthless and hopeless element of the community. With regard to disfranchising those maintained by the State, the endorsing of such a proposal was held to be illogical on the part of a society which strongly supported old age pensions. It was pointed out that it would be indeed ungenerous on the part of women, the latest enfranchised, to make the disfranchisement of unfortunates one of their first objects. The following resolution was unanimously passed:—“The Canterbury Women's Institute emphatically dissents from the proposals of the Auckland Women's Political League to disfranchise for three years persons who have served a term of imprisonment, and, permanently, those who are maintained by the State, as it considers such proposals entirely anti-socialistic in tendency.”

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE, ANNAT.

The monthly meeting was held in the Annat schoolroom on Oct. 27. Subjects for discussion, Criminal Treatment and Prison Reform. Papers were read by two of the members. A resolution was passed to the effect that—This meeting considers the present system of Criminal treatment very unsatisfactory, and would recommend the classifying of prisoners and the establishment of a State farm, where prisoners for a first offence could be sent with a view to reclaiming them.

One new member was elected. The subject for discussion at the next meeting will be Bible-reading in Schools.

W.C.T.U., CHRISTCHURCH BRANCH.

At the November monthly meeting correspondence was read from the Auckland Anglican Synod, and also from the Dunedin Presbyterian Synod, relative to resolutions passed

* To be had of Simpson & Williams. Price 1s 6d.