ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC ABATTOIRS.

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(ASSOCIATE.)

THE advantages of public abattoirs as compared with private slaughter-houses are so apparent and numerous, that it is difficult to understand what arguments can be advanced in favour of the latter.

When the Public Health Act, 1875, was passed, the power of granting licenses and making by-laws for the regulation of slaughter-houses was conferred upon the local sanitary authorities, and from that time to the present a marked improvement has been effected; but, unfortunately, many of the older legacies are still with us.

The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, specifies that licenses granted by any authority after the adoption of this Act for the use and occupation of places as slaughter-houses shall be in force for such time only (not being less than 12 months) as the local authority may think fit to specify in such license. It also provides that upon change of occupation written notice must be given, and any person failing to comply within one month is liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds.

Had this Act been retrospective, our duties would have been considerably lighter and the towns we serve in a much better sanitary condition, for many of the unsuitable structures now registered would either have been remodelled or the license refused when the time for renewal came round.

In the town that I represent we have three striking illustrations of the advantages of this Act. Licenses in congested parts of the town were transferred to suitable centres where the buildings are of a very superior character, and, as the licenses have to be renewed annually, we rarely have any fault to find.

The Public Health Act, 1897 (Scotland) goes a step further than ours, and requires that all private slaughter-houses *shall* be licensed annually. This has proved of the greatest advantage in Scotland, and we wonder why its excellent provisions were not also conferred upon England.

Another advantage that Scotland possesses is the Burgh Police Act, 1822, which specifies that when the commissioners (local authorities) have provided a public slaughter-house, no other place within the burgh may be used for slaughtering.

Now let us consider what advantage the public would derive by compelling all meat intended for human consumption to be prepared in public abattoirs. These abattoirs are, as a rule, lofty, well-ventilated, substantial buildings, kept scrupulously clean, and fitted up with all the modern appliances. They are provided for the benefit of the public without regard to profit, it being a rare occurrence to find a municipal abattoir that is self-supporting.

The animals brought to the abattoir are examined both before and after slaughtering, and are prepared in a manner best calculated to minimise the evils that are inseparable from the process, however careful the butcher may be; and it confines the nuisance and foul emanations to one place, instead of allowing them to be spread over different parts of the town as at present.