

Annotations.

HOSPITAL SHIPS.

At the Thirteenth International Congress of Medicine just held in Paris, a section was devoted to "State and Military Medicine and Surgery," and some valuable papers were read. Those dealing with the etiology and prophylaxis of typhoid fever and dysentery in armies in the field are of special interest to British people at the present time. In dealing with the care of the wounded in naval warfare, Dr. Fontan, a French naval *médecin en chef*, urged that it was quite time that civilized nations should add to their fleets of war a hospital ship flying the Red Cross. Dr. Burot, also a French naval *médecin en chef*, who served in the expedition to Madagascar in 1895 read a paper on the use of hospital ships in which he stated the conclusions he had formed on this subject as follows:—1. Any ship destined for use as a hospital ship should be specially fitted for that purpose. 2. It was absolutely certain that in very malarious countries, situated under the torrid zone it was much better when it was possible to treat the sick and wounded on a hospital ship rather than on land. 3. For a hospital ship to render the greatest amount of service it must be a hospital ship and nothing else. 4. In the case of a war lasting for a long time it would be as well to provide at the base of operations a floating hospital large enough to put up all the sick and wounded of the expeditionary column, and at the same time to organise a fleet of quick-steaming transports, specially fitted up so as to carry the wounded back to their own country. 5. A floating hospital should be able to hold at least 500 patients. Ventilation should be carefully looked after, and if this could not be done by natural means electric fans should be employed. Distilled water alone should be used, but if the apparatus was not extensive enough to give a constant supply, filtration might be employed instead. The question of ice-making on board ships had not yet been finally settled, but the apparatus which gave the best results was that which worked by compressed air. 6. The most serious inconvenience on board the hospital ship occurred in the presence of infection. It was almost impossible to obtain complete isolation on board a ship, and in view of the possible occurrence of infection it would be as well to fit out, at some little distance from the hospital ship, a smaller vessel which could serve as an isolation ward.

SCIENTIFIC EMBALMING.

Professor Renouard, who is now on a visit to London, strongly advocates the custom of embalming the dead in the interests of the public health. In this respect, Australia, Canada, and America are far before us. In America, indeed, public opinion has been educated and convinced, and there are undertakers who are bacteriologists and sanitarians who practice embalming, and in whose skilled hands the bodies of the departed are so treated that even from such distances as from South Africa they might be brought home looking practically as they looked in life, for the last farewell of friends, and for burial in English soil. The practice of embalming is a very ancient one, and who shall say that we have improved upon it? The sanitary disposal of the dead is indeed a matter which is urgently forcing itself upon public attention. Cremation of course may be resorted to, but many people strongly object to the practice. Embalming is not open to the same objections, and may well be considered as an alternative.

THE HEAT WAVE.

At last the heat wave which has been prophesied, longed for, and disbelieved in is with us, and the cab horses have once more donned their bonnets, and *Tit-bits* has had a happy inspiration, and announces that as long as the heat wave lasts it will give away sun bonnets to cabbies for nothing. As a *quid pro quo* is as a rule expected in this world for benefits received, we may expect to see the attractions of this paper proclaimed from the streamers decorating the bonnets so bestowed. But at least the horses are glad of the kindly protection afforded, and if we may believe a contemporary whinny their gratitude as they pass the office of *Tit-bits* in Southampton Street. For the general public there is consolation in the "two-penny tube," and indeed it is a cause for gratitude that it should have been opened just now. Instead of gasping in the heat, and inhaling the fumes of sulphur in the underground, we descend by a comfortable lift to the cool clean tube, and take our seats in the well appointed carriages, where everyone, big and little, has his fair share of room. One man, one chair, is the rule, and one which no doubt will be much appreciated by all whose proportions are not abnormal. Let us hope that the heat wave will hold out till the end of August. The holiday makers had more than their share of bad weather during the first week.

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