

### Annotations.

#### HOSPITAL SHIPS FOR THE NAVY.

The *Maine*, which, maintained by the efforts of a committee of American ladies, did such good service as a hospital ship in South Africa and China a few years since, was subsequently, as our readers are aware, taken over by the Lords of the Admiralty and used in connection with the Mediterranean Squadron for the conveyance of sick officers and seamen to Haslar Hospital. The experiment has proved so successful that the Admiralty has decided to build other hospital ships, and as soon as the first is ready she will take the place of the *Maine* with the Mediterranean Squadron, and the *Maine* will proceed once more to Chinese waters for three years' service on the station. Meanwhile she is now at Southampton, and when thoroughly overhauled will sail for Lagos for service with the combined fleets during the manœuvres. The need and value of specially designed hospital ships to accompany fleets in time of war have often been pointed out in this journal. It is satisfactory that the Lords of the Admiralty have now grasped the necessity for their provision. Although in any naval war provision will have to be made for rendering first aid to the wounded on the fighting ships, in same way that dressing stations and field hospitals render first aid on land, it is beyond dispute that the wounded should as soon as possible be conveyed to the base, which, in the case of a naval action, should be the hospital ship. Fighting ships are not, and in the nature of things cannot be, constructed with a view to the best care of the wounded, yet the nation will be unanimous in the belief that nothing less than the best is the right of its valiant defenders stricken down in its service.

#### THE MIDWIVES' ACT.

At the recent annual meeting of the British Medical Association at Swansea, the Midwives' Act of 1902 was exhaustively discussed. Dr. Ward Cousins thought the provision for carrying out the Act by the help of local bodies a helpful and practical method. He also pointed out that, as the Act principally involves the interests of women, it was very desirable that each committee appointed by a county or borough council should secure the services of at least two women who are recognised workers and conversant with the needs of the locality. As educated midwives will carry out sanitary precautions and teach personal cleanliness they

will have a wide and wholesome influence in the houses of the poor. While certain that the Midwives' Act of 1902 is far from perfect, and that experience will show the need of many modifications, Dr. Cousins is hopeful that benefits will result from the introduction of educated midwives controlled in their practice. The certified midwife of the future must, he said, be distinguished from the lying-in nurse attending natural labour under the direction of a medical man. Surely the essential difference between the two is that the certified midwife is authorised to attend cases of natural labour on her own responsibility. The duties of the nurse, on the other hand, who works under the direction of a medical practitioner, are not confined to natural labour. Indeed, the more complicated the case the greater the necessity will there be for skilled nursing attendance both when the doctor is present as well as in his absence. In abnormal and unhealthy conditions the trained nurse is the natural supplement of medical treatment.

#### THE DANGER OF SEA-SICKNESS.

A good deal has been said of late of the necessity for passenger ships calling at tropical ports to carry a trained nurse, and no doubt the day will come when on board all the great steamships the "ship's nurse" will be as usual a member of the *personnel* as the "ship's doctor." The public has within the last week had sad demonstration that not only on the ocean liners, but on the smaller steamers plying nearer home, the services of trained nurses would be valuable. We are apt to regard sea-sickness as a minor and rather as a ludicrous ailment, and do not always appreciate the fact that when it passes certain limits it is a malady in which there is an element of danger. Last week a steamer had a rough crossing between Douglas (Isle of Man) and Dublin, and when within about eighteen miles from port a passenger was found in a state of collapse from sea-sickness, and she suddenly expired. Again, the sudden death of a passenger on Douglas Pier on landing after a rough passage is attributed, at least in part, to sea-sickness. The wife of the deceased was with him, but missed him on the steamer. When she got ashore she saw a crowd which she joined, only to find that it was gathered round her husband's dead body. Surely these sad deaths must have the effect of stimulating the steamship companies to afford to their passengers the benefit of the care of trained nurses.

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