

have several advantages; it would secure an increased variety of experience for the nurse-pupils of general hospitals; it would enable the special hospitals to secure a nursing staff well drilled in the general principles underlying all nursing work, and accustomed to the discipline of a large training-school, and it would decrease the output of partially-trained nurses, all of which results would be unquestionably advantageous.

Annotations.

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE.

The work of the London School of Tropical Medicine, which was founded in 1899 on the invitation of Mr. Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, to the Seamen's Hospital Society to afford instruction in tropical medicine to medical officers in the Colonial Service, and which was established at London Docks at the branch establishment of the Seamen's Hospital, has grown rapidly in importance. As an evidence of the useful work it has accomplished we may mention that the Governments of the Crown Colonies and of India have recognised the value of the work done for them by a pecuniary grant of £1,000 per annum for five years in aid of teaching and research in protozoology and helminthology, or in other words, in the investigation of the life conditions of the numerous tropical parasites by which diseases are caused. The principal object of the School is to extend the knowledge of the forms and causes of tropical disease, and with this end in view, and owing to the generosity of private individuals, expeditions have been sent to Central Africa, the West Indies, the Straits, and other places in the tropics where disease is rife, with the result that valuable discoveries have been made.

At the docks, where the hospital is situated, seamen are constantly arriving in port suffering from disease contracted in tropical climates, and with the practical experience here gained, as well as with the knowledge acquired in its laboratories and class-rooms, 500 medical practitioners have gone out efficiently equipped to combat tropical diseases in distant lands, instead of having to gain their experience on arrival there. The cost of construction and equipment of the necessary buildings has been £30,000, £6,000 of which is still owing to the Committee of the Seamen's Hospital. It is hoped at the dinner to be held at the Hotel Cecil on May 10th, under the presidency

of Mr. Chamberlain, not only may the debt be extinguished, but an endowment may be provided which would enable the School to become affiliated to the London University.

PREMATURE BURIAL.

From time to time some uneasiness is occasioned in the public mind by the publication of well-authenticated cases of premature burial, and, though such cases are undoubtedly rare, the horror of such a situation is such that every step should unquestionably be taken to ensure, as far as may be, that such an occurrence is impossible. Certainly the verification of the alleged death by a medical practitioner should in every case be required by the State as a necessary preliminary to burial. In connection with the above subject a new monthly periodical has made its appearance, entitled *Burial Reformer*, issued by the London Association for the Prevention of Premature Burial, which will be devoted to enlightening the public mind as to the reality, causes, and consequences of trance, and other forms of suspended animation. It advocates the necessity for a more efficient method of death verification and certification as well as the reform of the present burial system, and says: "It is the opinion of the highest medical authorities that the only sure sign of death is putrefactive decomposition, and this fact should be taken into account in any legislation which is devised to remedy the existing evils. Not only should every medical man, before giving a death certificate, be compelled to examine the presumed dead, but burial should not be allowed to take place, except in certain cases, such as fatal mutilative accidents, until putrefactive decomposition has commenced. In the light of established facts, hasty burials are a source of great danger to the living, and it is obviously necessary that provision should be made for the establishment by local authorities of 'waiting mortuaries,' where those, at all events, who have not the accommodation at home can convey their supposed dead relatives, there to be kept until the fact of death has been conclusively ascertained."

The crowded conditions under which the poor live are undoubtedly an incentive to early burial. We should like to see a mortuary provided in every parish where the surroundings are such as to make them desirable resting places for the dead until mother earth receives them.

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