

lized State, and their sufferings were prodigious. The Empress did what she could by the gift of surgical appliances, but these were useless without system. At this moment an appeal was made to the Japanese nobility for contributions for help in the work. Baron A. von Seebold had prepared a report on the systems employed by Germany and Austria, and Senators Ogin and Sano formed a society on this model. The response to the appeal was generous. Senator Sano proceeded at once to the seat of war, and the commander-in-chief gave him every facility, and allowed the agents of the society rations, beds, and means of transport. Of the original statute the most noteworthy provided for absolute neutrality, the wearing of a distinctive badge, impartiality in attention to the wounded, and subordination to the chief of the military surgical staff. Delegates, mostly prefects or other considerable men, were appointed in the principal towns. Prince Komatsu was the president of the association. There were many difficulties to overcome, mainly the absolute novelty of the idea in Japan, and the necessity for haste. But they were overcome, thanks to the enthusiastic support of the public, and the new society did great service in mitigating the sufferings of the war.

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The close of the war offered a period of more deliberation, but not less enthusiasm. The society was popularized by a new explanatory appeal. A sufficient stock of surgical instruments and other necessary objects was prepared. The original statutes were found insufficient and the constitution of the society more than once remodelled. One of them ordains that the smallest contribution shall be thankfully received. Another settles the organisation. There is an administrative bureau, an elective committee of twenty-five, and three annual meetings of all members. The latest international developments we have already told. It remains to surmise—of course there is no trustworthy news of the society any more than of anything else in the war—that it is doing its work in the field. Prince KOMATSU is still president, with Senators OGIN and SANO, the real founders, for vice-presidents, and the Empress continues to take a most lively interest in the growing society. It is a type of Young Japan.

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WE are asked to mention, in this column, that in consequence of the re-building of the premises which are at present occupied by this Journal, it has become necessary to transfer its Offices elsewhere. Consequently, on September 29th, the address of the business department of the NURSING RECORD will be 11, Adam Street, Strand, London, and where, as hitherto, any Nurses will be always welcomed if they desire any information or assistance it may be in the power of the Manager to give.

## Medical Matters.

### DIPHTHERIA.



The discussion of this subject which took place at the International Congress of Hygiene, this month, was—next perhaps to the discussion upon Cholera, upon which we commented last week—one of the most important and most interesting in which the Congress engaged. It was clearly shown in Doctor Seaton's valuable report, that while the death rate in England and Wales had gradually decreased during the last twelve years, from 22.6 to 17.8 per thousand; and while, during the same period, the death rate from zymotic diseases has decreased from 5.4 to 2.4, and that from typhoid fever from 0.37 to 0.17; the mortality from diphtheria has actually and steadily increased. For example, in the same twelve years, that is to say, from 1881 to 1892, it has increased in England and Wales from 144 per million to 192, and in London alone, from 213 to 377 per million. Still more important figures were quoted by the American Committee, from which it appeared that while, in 1880, in the rural districts of America, the proportion of deaths from diphtheria was 83 per thousand, and in the cities, 57 per thousand; in 1890, the proportion had fallen to 50 for the towns, and 49 for the country. Contrasting these figures as given in the summaries of the discussion, and presuming that they are accurate, it would appear that the mortality from diphtheria is immensely higher in the United States than it is in this country, and also that, while the American mortality has been reduced enormously during the last ten years, the death-rate in this country has been distinctly increased. But both countries show that diphtheria, which used to chiefly infest country districts, is now becoming more especially a town disease, and that it is almost indisputable that the crowding together in schools of large numbers of children is a most potent factor in the dissemination, and indeed in the causation, of the disease. The main lesson which was impressed upon their audience by all who spoke upon this subject was the great necessity of skilled investigation being immediately undertaken, whenever an epidemic of throat affections was present, in the shape of bacteriological examination of the mucus from the throats of children who had been exposed to infection, together with the immediate isolation and disinfection of all those who showed any signs of being affected. One curious and very practical point was mentioned in the discussion, which has already been proved by the experience of many observers to be true. It has been found that the

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