

Annotations.

CREMATION AND POISON.

The practice of cremation after death is one which has many advocates. From a sanitary point of view its simplicity commends it to those who revolt from the horrors of imperishable coffins and leaden shells, and realise the deleterious influences on the health of the living of the ever-increasing number of churchyards and cemeteries in our midst. But an objection which has always been brought forward by the opponents of cremation was that made by Mr. Justice Grantham in the Chapman trial, when he said that had cremation been the law of the land the crimes of which the prisoner has been convicted would not have been brought home to him. There has always been a certain amount of apprehension that cremation would lead to an increase of crime by facilitating escape from its consequences.

Sir Henry Thompson, the President of the Cremation Society since its formation in 1874, holds, on the other hand, that the very worst thing a poisoner could do would be to come to the Society to dispose of the body of his victim. Under the safeguards imposed it would be almost impossible for a poisoned body to be cremated without the presence of poison being detected. Neither is any case presented for cremation without a number of searching questions being asked, and in the event of ground for doubt the body is examined. Lastly, a certificate from a medical practitioner is required "that there are no circumstances connected with the death which could, in his opinion, make exhumation of the body hereafter necessary." This statement will serve to allay the apprehension that cremation is likely to prevent the discovery of crime.

Another objection which has sometimes been raised to cremation is that it is "unchristian." Why? It is surely as easy for those who hold the resurrection of the body as an article of faith to believe that particles dissolved by fire can again be reunited, as that a corrupt mass, "eaten of worms," shall again form a living organism.

AN INTERNATIONAL SANATORIUM.

The fact that the Queen has given her patronage to a Davos Sanatorium will no doubt increase the repute of Davos Platz as a health resort in cases of pulmonary consumption. A word of warning from some English doctors,

therefore, is timely. They assert that at present the interests of invalids are neglected for the pleasures of the sportsman; that if patients are to obtain its full benefit, hotels must give place to sanatoria; also that patients who stay in hotels frequently give more attention to pleasure than to health, in some cases with fatal result; yet Davos is undoubtedly the best place known for the treatment of tuberculosis, and should be regarded as a huge international sanatorium, and managed as such.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that invalids in this exhilarating atmosphere are tempted to enjoy a "good time" for perhaps the last time in their lives. At the same time, the paramount importance of living according to rule under medical advice is obviously an essential feature of successful residence. Climate may do much for the invalid, but he cannot afford to ignore treatment as a factor in his recovery.

A WEST INDIAN LEPER ISLAND.

It is stated by the Havana correspondent of the *Daily Mail* that the Cuban Government is understood to have received proposals from a German scientific association which is anxious to acquire the Isle of Pines for use as an international leper colony. As a condition to the transfer of the island the association guarantees the care of all Cubans affected with elephantiasis and kindred diseases, thus relieving the Government of all expense in connection with them.

If this scheme is carried into effect, the famous lepers' island in the Pacific will no longer stand alone among the places of refuge where that most unfortunate creature under the sky, the leper, may receive due care, and may live at least in a faint ray of hope that he may be cured of the loathsome disease hitherto deemed incurable. If we remember rightly, the great benefactors of the lepers' island in the South Sea—Father Damian, who lived and died for his charges, and Dr. Lutz, who acted for some years as their physician—were Germans. Through the ministrations of these two men the sufferings of these outcasts from human society were made at least comparatively bearable. These leper islands promise to do for the South what the leper hospitals in the North of Europe are doing for the sufferers in the Arctic regions, where the disease is, strangely enough, as frequent as in the Tropics.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)