

Annotations.

A WISE DECISION.

The Metropolitan Asylums Board have not allowed the lesson of the Colney Hatch disaster to pass unheeded. It has already been decided to demolish two of the eight wooden huts at the Northern Hospital, and the replacing of the remaining six with permanent buildings is under the consideration of the Board. The Board has also sanctioned the pulling down of wood structures at the North-Eastern Hospital. This hospital was erected in the stress of the scarlet fever epidemic in 1892, so it is time that, if its need as a permanent hospital has been proved, the wooden huts should be replaced by a brick structure. There remain the Fountain Hospital (which is constructed of corrugated iron and wood) and the wooden buildings at the North-Western Hospital to be considered.

The Hospitals Committee have stated in their report, submitted to the Board last Saturday, that they do not recommend the further demolition of temporary existing structures. They suggest instead that, as soon as the circumstances of the patients at the Fountain Hospital and in the temporary buildings at the North-Western Hospital permit, these buildings shall be cleared, and be henceforth used only in cases of emergency, being kept cleaned and aired so that they may be ready for use at short notice. A suggestion naturally arising from this report is that the existing permanent accommodation shall be utilised to the fullest extent. The Asylums Board have adopted the report of the Hospitals Committee, and their action in so doing will be universally approved.

RAILWAY HOSPITALS.

Their Imperial Majesties of Germany paid a visit one morning recently to the Potsdamer Station at Berlin to inspect a hospital train. These trains are kept ready furnished in case of war, in order to bring the wounded home as soon as possible. The one inspected by their Majesties consisted of thirty-eight carriages, capable of holding with ease 300 wounded. The kitchen car, the dispensary, and the operation car claimed their Majesties' interest in particular, and the attendant doctors were called upon to explain many things minutely. Nearly an hour was spent by the Emperor and Empress in going over the train.

Along the western and south-western trunk lines of the United States, where public hospital

accommodation is only to be found at widely separated intervals, the railway companies have established a regular system of permanent hospitals. Other railways possess hospital and relief services, and in many of the buildings belonging to the Railway Young Men's Christian Association rooms have been equipped for the treatment of injured railway servants. In the Eastern States, permanent railway hospitals are not so much a necessity as in more outlying regions, but hospital cars are now being used by the leading companies. Cars of this kind are divided into three compartments: an operating room, a small ward for the slightly injured, and a larger ward for those seriously injured. The operating room contains a well-appointed operating-table, sterilising apparatus, and an oxygen cylinder. As more than 3,000 persons are killed annually, and over 40,000 persons are injured every year on American railways, there can be no doubt that facilities of the kind mentioned are absolutely necessary. The numbers of killed and wounded on British railways are much smaller, partly because the total mileage is less, and partly because of the greater care exercised. Nevertheless, the average annual sacrifice is about 630 lives, and the number of persons injured averages nearly 6,000 per annum. It is therefore clear that ample need exists on all the chief railway lines for suitably-equipped hospital cars, which could be despatched at short notice to the scene of an accident, and which would be generally available for dealing promptly with the numerous cases of injury.

NURSES LIBRARIES.

There is probably nothing which conduces more to the happiness, the culture, and the well-being of any member of the community than access to a well-chosen library. This applies equally to nurses, and there should be in every hospital a library for the use of the nurses. It should have a professional as well as a general section, and while certain reference books should be provided by training-school authorities, such a library is best managed on the plan adopted at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where the nurses pay a small subscription, appoint a librarian, and select their own books. The subscription, which presses heavily on no one, enables new books to be added and old ones to be weeded out from time to time, and the library is certainly both pleasurable and profitable to the subscribers.

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