

Medical Matters.

TROPICAL DISEASES RESEARCH.

In April, 1905, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine despatched their second yellow fever expedition to Manaus, in Brazil, in charge of Dr. Wolferton Thomas and Dr. Anton Breuil. Both contracted the disease, the latter so severely that he had to be invalided home. Dr. Thomas, on his recovery, continued to carry on the work of the expedition for over three and a half years. This work included investigations of diseases prevalent in the Amazon River district. He has now arrived in England, and after a brief visit to Canada, his native country, and America, will return to Liverpool to prepare the report of the expedition. Dr. Thomas reports that the outlook is favourable for the eventual extermination of the disease.

In this connection it was interesting to receive a letter from the Matron of the Strangers' Hospital, Rio de Janeiro, who is on furlough, saying that it is the first time she has been in England in the winter for fifteen years, but, "as we have now no yellow fever," there is no reason for her to stay in Rio at this time of year. For many years the months from October onwards have been very busy ones in Rio, as they were the yellow fever season.

THE TREATMENT OF WOUNDED IN NAVAL WARFARE.

"The treatment of wounded in naval warfare has," says the *Lancet*, "been affected by the introduction of steam in a not altogether favourable manner. The bluejacket on a modern man-of-war gets the benefits of the progress in surgical science, but the circumstances in which first aid is given are worse than they were within the old wooden walls of England. Some space was available in the roomy three-decker, but in modern battleships, which are complicated masses of machinery packed with marvellous precision into the smallest conceivable space, the difficulty of finding even a temporary sheltered spot in which to render first-aid would be almost insuperable during an actual naval battle. This difficulty is one which should be met, for the sight of a deck strewn with wounded and dying men would damp the ardour of the bravest, while the throwing the dead at once overboard would powerfully affect the feelings of the seamen. In a modern man-of-war the question of where to place a dressing station must resolve itself into a search for the best protected spot according to the type of vessel—for all men-of-war are not alike—and the more usual varieties of casualty. Some cases will occur during every action which demand immediate attention, and these must be

attended to before they can even be removed. The medical officer must run risks, of course, in discharge of his duty, but it would be well that on every ship the most sheltered place for a dressing station were selected beforehand, so that not only can the work be done uninterruptedly but the wounded man may be out of the zone of fresh danger. As regards subsequent treatment of the wounded, no fleet of any size, we hope, will be permitted to go into action without an attendant hospital ship in the future. Probably it would be desirable that the hospital ship should receive as her proper charge only the minor cases, capable of returning to duty after a short treatment, while a regular ambulance service could be organised from among the fast cruisers of the mercantile marine, whose duty it would be to proceed at full speed with the more serious cases to the nearest friendly port, with which communication could be kept up by wireless telegraphy. To each of these hospital transports there should be attached ambulance boats specially fitted for removing the injured from their own ships. In sailing days, when ships often remained at sea for weeks, sometimes months, after an action, it was necessary to provide some space, however inconvenient and unsuitable, for the accommodation of the sick and wounded. Under the altered conditions of the present day removal at the earliest possible time is evidently the urgent indication. The only reason that could possibly be urged against our suggestions would be on the score of expense. If, however, the highest developments of modern science are to be utilised, regardless of cost, for purposes of destruction, but are to be denied to alleviate human suffering, the claim of the present day to any real progress in civilisation breaks down."

In connection with this suggestion, the provision of efficient nursing staffs for both hospital ships and ambulance boats is a matter of great importance. The inclusion in Lord Ampthill's Registration Bill, as it passed the House of Lords of the Sick Bay Stewards of the Royal Navy, in the scheme of the Bill, has occasioned severe criticism, but the organisation of the education of these useful public servants is, in our opinion, one of the most important pieces of work which it will be the duty of the General Council of Registration to undertake.

CONGRESS ON ALCOHOLISM.

It has been decided to give official support to the Congress on Alcoholism to be held in London from July 18th to July 24th, and invitations will be transmitted through his Majesty's diplomatic representatives abroad to the various Governments.

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