

and clean little hospitals have been built in recent years in many of the small cities and towns. We learn from all quarters that these places are as a rule managed in an admirable way.

RESPONSIBILITY OF HOSPITALS.

We learn from the lay press that Mr. Justice Grantham gave a remarkable decision in the law courts, London, England, recently, which amounts to a declaration that, on the ground of public policy, a hospital cannot be sued for damages. An action was brought by Dr. W. H. Hillyer, who claimed damages against the governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. He asserted that while an operation was being performed on him for sciatica in the hospital, his left arm was allowed to hang down, and coming into contact with the heating apparatus of the operating table, was severely burned, and also that his other arm was badly bruised by someone pressing against it.

His counsel, in addressing the court, said :—"It will shock the public to know that by gross negligence on the part of a great institution like St. Bartholomew's Hospital this man is paralyzed. He will never be able to practise as a physician again." After considerable evidence had been given in support of Dr. Hillyer's claim, Mr. Justice Grantham stopped the case with the declaration, "I hold there is no case to give to the jury. It would be a policy fatal to give to the country, and the injury done would be untold, if I allowed this case to go to the jury." Judgment was then given against Dr. Hillyer with costs.

A correspondent, in commenting on this, says :—"It is nice for the hospitals, but very bad for the patients," and asks the following questions: Is a patient under an anæsthetic perfectly helpless against any kind of negligence or carelessness in a hospital? Can the officials legally cremate him alive, or only scorch him enough to injure him for life?

The *Medical Press and Circular*, in commenting on this case, says :—"With all due deference to the judicial view, we venture to think that there are certain responsibilities con-