

Annotations.

THE HEALTH OF THE EMPRESS FREDERIC.

Much concern is felt as to the accounts of the health of the Empress Frederic, and recently considerable disquietude was caused by the announcement that the German Emperor and Empress had been, to their extreme regret, compelled to postpone the visits which they had arranged to pay as the condition of the Empress Frederic rendered it desirable that they should spend a few days near her Majesty. Later accounts are more reassuring, but, at the same time, the state of the Empress's health is causing her family much anxiety. A Nursing Sister from Cronberg is in attendance. The name of the Empress Frederic is connected with nursing on account of the interest she has taken in establishing and endowing the Victoria House at Berlin, and although the standard of training demanded is not in conformity with modern ideals in this country, as only one year's training is required, still it has done much, and no doubt will do more, to raise the standard of nursing in Germany, and it is noticeable also that no religious test is enforced. This is unusual in Germany, where a religious, as well as a nursing qualification, is, as a rule, required. At the time of the Franco-Prussian war the Empress was indefatigable in her efforts to ameliorate the suffering of the sick and wounded and was awarded by the Queen the Royal Red Cross for her services at that time.

NURSES FOR THE PLAGUE.

With regard to the necessity for being prepared, should cases of plague occur in this country, the *British Medical Journal* has shown itself persistently on the alert, and in its last issue has an interesting article dealing with this question. Our contemporary has always been averse to the admission of plague patients to the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board on the grounds (1) that these hospitals are barely sufficient at present to cope with the work demanded of them; and (2) as the infection of plague tenaciously clings to an infected house, plague hospitals should be temporary structures, which could be destroyed when no longer used for plague purposes. It is, however, understood that should cases of plague occur they will be cared for by the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

Further, our contemporary rightly points

out that there is no disease for which so many skilled nurses are required, and asks where they are to be obtained. Plague is a most deadly disease, but there is none in which skilled nursing can effect so much, and the supply of nurses must therefore be ample. The proportion of nurses to patients must be not less than one to every two, and the hours on duty in the twenty-four should in no case exceed eight. The nurses attending plague patients should, further as a precautionary measure, be treated with prophylactic fluid, and, as it will not do to wait until they are called upon to nurse cases they should be asked to volunteer now, and be protected at once.

While there is no reason for alarm, there is every reason for prudent foresight. Where are our plague hospitals, where are our plague nurses? The cholera roll drawn up by the Royal British Nurses' Association has, like most other useful schemes inaugurated when the nurses had some voice in the management of their own concerns, disappeared. Although there is no doubt that there would be no lack of nurses willing to place their services at the disposal of the authorities should occasion arise, the present is the time to organise and prepare, not when an outbreak is upon us.

It is instructive to note that the case of plague which occurred recently at Cardiff reached that port not by sea, but by railway. Who were the fellow passengers of this seaman during his journey by train, and have they been placed under observation? The sanitary authorities of Cardiff have dealt efficiently with this case, and there is no doubt that all our port authorities take every precaution, but, it must not be forgotten that cases may at any time occur in inland towns and villages, and that medical practitioners in country districts must be equally on the alert.

A case of bubonic plague is reported to have occurred in Stepney. The patient first went to the London Hospital, and afterwards saw a local private practitioner, who at once notified the medical officer for Limehouse that he suspected plague. This officer, Dr. Thomas, coinciding in the opinion, notified the Chief Medical Officer of the London County Council, and the patient was at once removed to one of the London County Council Refuges, where he is now being watched. The house from which the patient has been removed has been disinfected. The latest report is, however, that the case is not one of plague.

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