

### Annotations.

#### PRECAUTIONS AGAINST PLAGUE.

The Public Health Committee of the London County Council has asked the Council for authority to expend £50,000 if necessary, in providing isolation homes should plague break out in the Metropolis. It is estimated that the Council would eventually be recouped to the extent of £15,000, £3,000 of this sum being the probable amount to be received from the sale of the temporary structures, furniture and clothing. We can hardly believe that this statement represents the course which will be pursued by the London County Council in the event of an outbreak of plague. Presumably the temporary buildings which have housed suspected cases of plague, and from which true cases of the disease have been removed, will ultimately be burnt down with everything which they contain. To adopt any other course for the sake of saving £3,000 would be a short sighted policy indeed. We are glad that the London County Council is on the alert with regard to the plague, and that it is taking precautions before and not after an outbreak of the disease.

#### MR. BURDETT-COUTTS ON THE HOSPITAL COMMISSION.

Mr. Burdett-Coutts has addressed a second able letter to the press on the subject of the Report of the Hospitals Commission. Want of space prevents our dealing as fully as we could wish with it, but we quote the following passage from the letter, and think that the view therein expressed as to the employment of nurses in stationary field hospitals will commend itself to most persons of common sense:—"The commission supports strongly all my contentions in favour of female nursing, although it at first goes off on the old side-track. 'Of course they could not be employed in field hospitals or at the front.' No one ever suggested nurses for field hospitals while on the march; but when a field hospital moves up to a large town on the rail and is stationary there for two months it could have nurses just as well as a general hospital which is also in tents. At Bloemfontein No. 8 General, with its nurses, was further from the town than the stationary field hospitals, which had no nurses, and where men died for want of them. On the latter point the Report makes no references to what I believe to have been the direct result, widespread and fatal, of this shortage of nurses; it misses altogether the striking lesson taught

by the Volks Hospital at Bloemfontein. . . . The principle involved in this matter of nursing, as with the ambulances, tents, sanitary officers, and other more important defects has been that of an antiquated and obstructive prejudice against all internal improvement and self-correction. Defects of this class have absolutely nothing to do with the 'under-manning' of the Royal Army Medical Corps, to which the Report attributes most of the evil that has occurred. They can only be referred to an unintelligible blindness in the department to the progress of science and invention outside, which has humanised medical treatment in every community in the world, down to the very poorest, except the British Army."

#### MEUM ET TUUM.

At the last monthly meeting of the Cardiff Infirmary Committee the Report of the Instrument Committee was considered. This stated that the members were of opinion that there had been abuses of the privileges given to the honorary medical staff regarding the borrowing and loan of instruments, and also that drugs, medical appliances, and medical sundries had been utilized improperly. We do not know if the term "medical sundries" includes the services of the nurses of the institution, but we do know that in several institutions the medical staff have been known to "borrow" nurses as well as dressings and appliances for the operations which they perform in their private practice. It may safely be assumed that "borrowed" dressings belong to that class of loan which is not repaid, and the practice is one which should never be allowed. In the case of the Cardiff Infirmary articles taken for use in private practice are "drugs, splints, crutches, bed-rests, and other appliances." It is manifest that such a use of the property of the infirmary is not contemplated by those who subscribe their money to maintain it in a condition of efficiency, and that property provided for the institution, presumably because it is needed, should be reserved for its sole use. It would be interesting to know who pays for the re-setting of instruments, and the wear and tear of other appliances used in the private practice of the medical staff of the Cardiff Infirmary—the medical men who borrow them, or the institution which lends them. As the Medical Board of the Infirmary has expressed its opinion that in future no instruments should be lent, we hope that the practice will now cease.

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