

### Annotations.

#### OPERATION CASES IN ASYLUMS.

At a meeting of the Visiting Committee of the Portsmouth Board of Guardians an important question was recently brought forward by Miss McCox. A patient had been received into the Asylum suffering from an internal disease for which the medical staff had advised an operation. It was such a critical case that only a "skilful surgeon" could perform the operation, and, as the fee for his services would be £25; it was said that the Local Government Board would not sanction this expenditure. The result was that, though the patient was admitted on May 13th, nothing had been done on May 29th, when the Infirmary Committee met, and the case being brought before them it was unanimously agreed that the operation should be performed without delay, those present agreeing unanimously to defray the expenses out of their own pockets. Next day the patient died. Miss McCox said that while the operation might not have saved her life, it would have given her a chance, and would have afforded relief. She thought that the rules should be placed on such a footing that such a thing could not occur again. She also moved that the Clerk be requested to write to the Local Government Board, reporting the case under consideration, and inquiring if a patient placed in the Asylum by the Guardians required surgical treatment, of a nature which could not be given by the surgeons at the Asylum, who was to pay for this treatment. This was carried. It appears that the Board of Guardians subscribes £100 a year to the Portsmouth Hospital on condition that the authorities receive any cases sent there from the Asylum, but in the present instance the patient was too ill to be moved.

We can scarcely believe that no medical man is to be found at the Portsmouth Asylum competent to perform such operations as may be required from time to time. If not, the sooner one is appointed the better. The nursing, we confess, is a more difficult matter, as it is well recognised what an important part is played by good nursing in the results of critical operation cases. We have many times pointed out that the experience gained in asylums does not qualify women as skilled nurses of the sick—Sir James Crichton Browne and *hoc genus omne* notwithstanding. Nothing could point the moral to this contention better than the present case. Surely it is time that

the medical and nursing departments of asylums for the insane were so organized that patients should not be left to die for want of the necessary care.

#### "TRUE FOR ALL THAT."

At a complimentary dinner given to the Liverpool surgeons who have served at the front, Dr. Craig-Dun made some strong comments on the Army Medical Service. He says, in spite of every effort, he was sent out, with a Yeomanry regiment of 550 officers and men, without either a drug or a bandage. At Capetown no medical or surgical necessaries were available. The equipment eventually obtained, to judge from the age of the drugs, had been out in the Crimea. When his corps went into action they had seventy casualties, and the dressings gave out in forty-eight hours, and they had to tear up sheets commandeered from the Boer farmhouses. In one of the military hospitals at Kronstad the men had to lie in their mackintoshes, covered only with blankets and without either sheets or pyjamas. These things were wholly the fault of the system. He states that "the Army Medical Corps had done splendid work under the greatest possible difficulties. There was great bustle among the hospitals in South Africa when it was known that the Commission was coming out. He must say the Commission were considerate; they always gave a hospital forty-eight hours' notice. The impression left among medical men at the front was that the Commission was a roaring farce. But it was not. The Commission came home and whitewashed the whole thing, and quite rightly. It would have been a mistake for the public to have believed that everything Mr. Burdett-Coutts said was true, though it was true for all that. The Commission, however, issued a private report, which members of the House of Commons had read, and which showed that the Commission fully realised the state of affairs."

#### WOMEN DENTISTS.

A calling for which women seem specially suited is dentistry, and it is a mistake to suppose that a large amount of brute force is necessary for it. Japanese dentists use no forceps, but extract teeth with their clever oirental fingers. The most prominent woman dentist was Olga von Oertzen, equally well known in the old and new world, originally a nurse, who showed conspicuous gallantry under fire in the Franco-Prussian war.

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