

Annotations.

THE COMMISSION ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR.

The report of His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the military preparations and other matters connected with the war in South Africa has now been published, and the nation stands aghast at the state of unpreparedness revealed. When hostilities broke out we were short of men, of arms, of transport. The information supplied by the Intelligence Department was practically neglected; there was no general plan of campaign; and the generals sent out to command received no definite instructions.

In regard to the Army Medical Department it was asserted that it was hopelessly undermanned, that the supplies were antiquated, that the instruments were of patterns which are usually only found in museums, that the medicines were in bottles, instead of where possible in tabloid form, that they had been there possibly for twenty years, and that in the medical equipment tons of useless material were being dragged about which under no circumstances would have been used in South Africa, and so on.

Lord Roberts and Surgeon-General Sir William Watson considered that special sanitary experts should be attached to the army. In illustration of his contention, Lord Roberts said he found hospital tents pitched upon one of the chief sources of the water supply at Bloemfontein.

The unpreparedness in the nursing arrangements is now an old story. One outcome of the inadequacy of the preparation is the organisation of a Nursing Department at the War Office, with a Matron-in-Chief at its head, and this is the best augury that in future wars the nursing arrangements will be efficiently conducted.

LONDON'S LUNATICS.

In three or four years time another asylum, which will accommodate 2,000 patients, most of whom will be women, and which is now being built by the London County Council at Epsom, will be ready for occupation. It is to be known as "Long Grove," and is near the present Horton Asylum. It will cost about £500,000, the architect's fee alone being £10,000. A new feature in the design of the asylum is the number of villa residences for patients. By

this means better opportunities for classification are afforded, and the patients are placed in surroundings more approximating to the conditions of home life than is possible in a large institution. Then there is an isolation hospital for the reception of infectious cases and a convalescent home named Hope Villa, where recovered patients will stay for a time before leaving the asylum. Already the maintenance of its lunatics cost the metropolis £1,000 a day, and as soon as Long Grove is opened the London County Council will have to begin to build another asylum equally large.

A NURSES' MISSIONARY UNION.

At an meeting held in the Church Room of Holy Trinity Church, Hampstead, a Nurses' Missionary Union was recently founded. One of its distinctive features is that, as far as possible, it is to be worked by nurses as well as for nurses, and wherever practicable the meetings are to be held inside the hospitals. The means chiefly relied on for arousing interest in the work of the Union, and making it intelligent, is simple connected missionary study carried on by the nurses, themselves, rather than detached appeals from outside. The objects of the Union are "to unite—(a) as *members* all nurses who intend, if God permit, to become foreign missionaries when their training is complete; (b) as *associates* all nurses who desire to work and pray for the evangelisation of the world." Those who have studied the missionary question have felt that in trained nurses, and also in those still training, is an immense force for the evangelisation of the world. But the number of nurses to whom missionary work appeals is comparatively small, and is still further reduced, as not every nurse who offers her services comes up to the physical standard laid down by a medical board, or passes satisfactorily the tests imposed by missionary societies. Therefore, it is well that an association has been formed with the definite object of interesting nurses in missionary work, and of fitting themselves for it eventually by the acquisition of a knowledge of the facts and principles of missionary enterprise. The need of trained nurses in foreign missionary stations was amply demonstrated by the speakers at the inaugural meeting.

The Union has appointed a travelling secretary, Miss K. Miller. Further information can be obtained from the Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)