

### Annotations.

#### THE HOME COMING OF OUR HERO.

Lord Roberts' arrival in this country, to which every one is looking forward, is now announced for January 3rd. According to present arrangements he will be met at Paddington Station by the Prince and Princess of Wales, who, with the Commander-in-Chief, will proceed direct to St. Paul's Cathedral, where a Thanksgiving Service will be held for the success of British arms in South Africa.

When and wherever Lord Roberts may arrive, he may be sure of a right royal welcome not only from the heir to the Throne, but from the Nation whose honour he has upheld, and in whose heart he is enshrined.

#### HOMELESS AND DESTITUTE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

We are glad to learn that a Committee has been formed with the purpose of raising a fund to alleviate the sufferings of women and children, many formerly in affluent circumstances, who have been rendered homeless and destitute through the destruction of property during the military operations in South Africa. It is also hoped that something, however small, may be done to soften the bitter feeling which has been engendered, and to begin the work of reconciliation which is the one hope for the future of South Africa. The fund is called the "South African Women and Children's Distress Fund," and it is entirely benevolent in character, non-political, non-sectarian, and national. It is further laid down that the persons deputed by the Committee to distribute the Fund shall not run counter to the requirements of the local civil and military authorities.

Christmas is a time of peace and goodwill, and our own Christmas will surely be happier if we do what in us lies to mitigate the sorrows of the suffering women and children in South Africa. Whatever may be our politics, this is a work of mercy to which we may well lay our hands. Contributions may be sent to Lady Farrer, 3, Whitehall-court, Hon. Treasurer of the Fund, or to Mr. F. W. Lawrence, Mansfield House, Canning Town, Hon. Secretary.

#### A GILBERTIAN CORRESPONDENCE.

The controversy at the National Hospital, Queen-square, between the Secretary Director,

Mr. Rawlings, and the medical staff is bringing the institution into the area of the absurd. Here we have a hospital committee, through their Director, informing the world in general that Sir Ford North, an eminent legal gentleman, has consented to conduct an enquiry into the allegations made by the medical staff concerning the care, comfort, and treatment of the patients under the following headings—(a) The diet of the patients, (b) the condition, care, and treatment of the patients, and (c) the nursing of the hospital! Naturally the medical staff combine in their objection to this form of enquiry.

First, because it has been constituted simply and solely by one of the parties to this controversy—namely the board.

Secondly, because its scope is limited to the domestic condition of the hospital, and excludes the important topics of its constitution and management. For instance, it does not include the acts of a board which encourages the taking of money from out-patients; nor the bye-laws which permit the financial committee to have a quorum of one; nor the rules which exclude the honorary medical officers from all share in the management.

Thirdly, because this court of inquiry, which professes to deal with such medical matters as "the diet of the patients, the condition, care, and treatment of the patients, and the nursing of the patients," ought to include a medical as well as a legal authority.

With the claim of the Medical Staff for expert representation on any committee of inquiry dealing with the treatment of the patients we have every sympathy, but the fact that both the Committee of Management and the Medical Staff of the National Hospital, propose to investigate the Domestic and Nursing Departments without the skilled aid of a Trained Nurse and Superintendent of Nursing places both parties in a very crude and untenable position. We have had intimate knowledge of hospital management for nearly a quarter of a century, and we have yet to meet the man trained and fitted to act as Superintendent of Nursing, Ward Sister, or Housekeeper. It is this assumption of expert knowledge by men, and the non-realisation by them that nursing is now a highly specialised profession, requiring years of supervised instruction, which makes the whole correspondence between the officials of the National Hospital more or less Gilbertian.

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