

The Chronicle

Insurance & Finance.

R. WILSON SMITH,
Proprietor.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881
PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

JOHN T. P. KNIGHT,
Editor.

VOL. XX. No. 27.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 6, 1900.

SINGLE COPY - - .10
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - \$2.00

Another War Plague.

In the early stages of the South African war, when we became accustomed, but not reconciled, to reverses, the mobility of the Boers was not so vexatious and harassing as the daily opinions of the arm-chair critics, the home generals, on the conduct of the campaign by the British. Then followed another scourge—the “plague of women,” described by the eminent surgeon, Dr. Treves, as worse than the flies. In the train of the women travelled a small army of literary men, and wealthy members of Parliament. The former were in search of material for books of the war, and the latter looking for any signs of weakness in War Office arrangements which would enable them to pose in parliament and attack the government.

It seems that Mr. William L. Ashmead Bartlett Burdett-Coutts stumbled upon evidence tending to illustrate the impossibility of making absolutely perfect provision for the sick and wounded of such a huge flying column as that which accompanied Lord Roberts to Bloemfontein and Pretoria. Instead of keeping his mouth shut, and finding comfort in the knowledge of the splendid efforts made by the people of the united British Empire to care for the sick and wounded, the husband of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, upon his return to England, proceeds to harrow up the feelings of the relatives and friends of soldiers in South Africa with gruesome stories of their sufferings.

No one supposes that any sick or wounded soldier has been wilfully neglected. Yet, Mr. Bartlett plays the part of a “shilling shocker,” at the close of the campaign, so that he may get himself talked about. It seems a pity that he had not found his way to the front, instead of hanging about like a camp follower, and engaging in a search for sources of the misery and extreme wretchedness of the wounded, the mangled, and the slain.

War, even in the best state of an army, with all the alleviations of courtesy and honour, with all the

correctives of morality and religion, is a great evil, and the woe and anguish and despair of those who suffer may well be shielded from the contemplation of their loved ones. It is, indeed, a pity that Mr. Bartlett did not keep to himself his “damning details” of what he has seen in South Africa. His story will only increase the

“Weeping by the hearth”
in many an English home.

Lloyds Lose.

Some weeks ago we told the tale of the seizure by the Boers of \$1,500,000 in gold bars belonging to certain mining companies. The gold was insured for one-third of its value at Lloyds, and the owners sued that ancient body for the amount. A decision has been rendered by which the underwriters are held responsible for the full amount of the insurance, \$500,000.

Now, we do not know whether an expedition has yet been organized by Lloyds for the recovery of the bullion. It is, however, certain that, if any such scheme is in contemplation, there are men now in South Africa who would undertake the capture of Oom Paul and his ill-gotten gains for a liberal commission. How would it do to approach his foreign mercenaries with some such proposal?

Taxation Extraordinary.

The amount of state and local taxation paid by the Royal Insurance Company in the United States during the year 1899 is sufficiently startling to make one understand the frequent outcry against the burdens imposed upon insurance companies. The recent report of the Royal shows no less a sum than \$135,000 to have been paid by this corporation for the privilege of transacting business with our neighbors. However, this indirect special tax, falling as it indirectly does upon policyholders, may some day lead to the abolition of the present oppressive system of state supervision of insurance.