

Platt (J. H.)

Obstacles to a national  
quarantine \_\_\_\_\_





**OBSTACLES TO A NATIONAL QUARANTINE.**

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*To the Editor of* THE MEDICAL NEWS,

SIR: I have read with interest your leader in the issue of December 24th, on National Quarantine, and I would like the privilege of a word in reply. The advantages of a National quarantine have of late been fully and ably stated and seem to be generally conceded.

In regard to the objections you raise, you admit that, with the exception of the alleged Constitutional obstacle, "no one of them is very strong by itself, and each one can be overcome if taken singly." Therefore they can be disregarded. As for the Constitutional question, as you say, every one admits that Congress can establish and control quarantines against foreign countries; but, if I understand you aright, the trouble you anticipate is that the State might refuse to abandon its own quarantine system, and that the State and National quarantines might conflict. If you will pardon me for saying so, I believe this objection to be wholly imaginary, for two reasons.

First, because if an efficient National quarantine were to be established, the local quarantines would doubtless pass into "innocuous desuetude," or out of existence altogether, because they would have no function to perform. If, on the other hand, the National quarantine should at any time prove to be inefficient, it could do no harm to have it supplemented by the local organization. I fail to see how a local quarantine can make the authority of the United States "practically *nil*."



It certainly could not admit any person or thing which the United States authorities had excluded, and if it stopped those which the National quarantine had passed, it would appear to be only an additional precaution, or, at the worst, an unnecessary one. That the double quarantine would present such an obstacle to commerce as to materially impede it is a contingency not very likely to arise, as it is not probable that a State will take measures to destroy the commerce of its own ports. The New York Chamber of Commerce is probably as much interested in this question as any body of citizens, and it has emphatically declared itself for National quarantine.

Secondly, it is a well-known principle of Constitutional law that where authority is granted, all powers are by implication granted which are necessary to enforce that authority; hence, if Congress has the power to establish National quarantine, and local quarantine should prove to be an obstacle in its way, Congress has implied power to annihilate, if necessary, the latter.

Respectfully yours,

J. H. PLATT.

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Isaac Hull Platt



