

stand; but in reference to treatment of the many cases of ulceration of legs, Dr. Dolan appears to us to speak rather too confidently when he states that "under efficient nursing these cases are quickly cured." If by this he means permanently cured, we congratulate him on his success; we regret we cannot speak so satisfactorily as to the result of treatment of these cases elsewhere. The matter of stimulants is well expressed. Dr. Dolan's excellent words are: "The medical officer should exercise vigilance on this question, but his hands should not be in any way tied." There will be few, we apprehend, who care to dispute this. We commend the views of Dr. Dolan to all those who take any interest or are in any way engaged in the management of union hospitals, either as paid officials or as legally appointed supervisors. He has evidently given great consideration to what he admits is a difficult question, and has expressed his own opinion in reference to it in very temperate and appropriate terms.

THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE AND PUBLIC OPINION.

IN continuation of extracts from influential sections of the public press, which we gave in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of October 30th, on the army medical question, we reproduce some further comments.

The *Liverpool Daily Post* says: "The statement of grievances indicates the essential reforms. There are, first and greatest, the grant of army rank and military titles in a consolidated army medical corps; fair amount of ordinary and study leave; recognition and rewarding of professional merit; and reconsideration of the possibility of connecting medical officers with regiments for a term of years."

The *Dublin Daily Express* speaks very strongly; the army medical question is one that appeals "to hundreds of the best educated and most energetic young men of Ireland;" and, "to hundreds of parents who are anxiously groaning with the eternal question, What to do with our boys." After alluding to the admirable address of Sir William Thomson, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, it goes on to say: "It is neither the danger of the occupation nor the badness of the pay that keeps our young surgeons from entering the Army Medical Service. It is the false pride of a prejudiced class; the hereditary contempt of young cadets, who have been taught no better; the educated scorn of older men who ought to know very much better; and the weakness or blindness of those military authorities which permit, if they do not encourage, an iniquitous system of ignoble jealousy and puerile exclusiveness.....In view of such facts as these, it is not surprising that the members of the Army Medical Service are discontented with their present lot, and that the service has been practically boycotted by the rising, medical generation."

The *Newcastle Leader* observes: "The young surgeon of character and ability does not offer himself as a candidate. The medical man with a proper sense of self-respect declines to submit to the conditions of service which prevail in the army. At every turn he is subject to slights from the combatant officers, who use one-sided regulations for the purpose of maintaining an absurd system of caste.....The policy which treats him as a non-combatant is ridiculous.....The authorities would do well to listen to those whose position entitles them to speak for medical men, and to endeavour to remove admitted evils."

The *United Service Gazette* declares: "There can be no doubt that the most pressing reform needed, as we have before and times out of number stated, is the formation of a consolidated Army Medical Corps, with army rank and titles, to place the medical officers in a position of equality with all other officers—a reasonable enough demand.....The status of the army surgeon can never be definite without the corps. We find in the American and Italian armies proper combatant titles; for example, Colonel So-and-so—Surgeon —, and have never yet been informed that this titular system interfered with professional ability or professional services, or has caused a wish for general command."

We alluded in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of November 9th to the powerful article in the *Times*. It states: "The army surgeons are prohibited by the rules of the service from

pleading their own cause in any effectual manner. But what they are unable to do has been done for them, on the part of their profession, by a subcommittee of the British Medical Association, which has gone very fully into the subject, and has put forth a temperate and well-reasoned manifesto explaining the causes of the present discontent and the reforms by which it might be removed." It goes on to say that "the reason for army rank and military titles is not, as asserted by many of their opponents, that they wish to act as military officers rather than as doctors, but simply that the possession of military rank and military authority is essential to the proper performance of their duties.....The actual rank, which is the first thing asked for, and without which it does not seem likely that the service will ever again become attractive, would at once remove the social difficulty, and as it would undoubtedly lead to the easy filling of the existing vacancies, it would also remove the grievances arising from the undermanned condition of the department.....The question is one which must soon become urgent, if, as is expected, Parliament should soon be called upon to consider proposals for a considerable augmentation of the army." Finally, the leading journal declares, the War Office must either concede the demands made or show good cause for rejecting them, or "be prepared to remove the existing discontent by reforms or alterations of its own devising."

Referring to the article in the *Times*, the *World* writes: "'Printing House Square' has espoused the cause of the army doctor, and has done it in a way which will be generally approved. It is fully time that the public were told the truth about the mismanagement of the War Office. The treatment meted out to the doctor of late years has been a disgrace to us as a civilised people, and the present condition of affairs must end. It can only end in one way. The medical profession is esteemed everywhere, and the tone adopted by some in authority with regard to the officers of the Army Medical Staff is not to be defended. Naturally the army doctor complains when he is told that he is not a soldier, but a civilian hanger-on."

These extracts go to show that public opinion on army medical reform has vastly extended and matured, and it will be a very perilous matter for the War Office to ignore it.

LONDON WATER SUPPLY.

ON November 22nd the Royal Commission appointed to inquire and report on the condition of the London water supply, held its first sitting in the Moses Room of the House of Lords. It will be remembered that the Commission was appointed last session to investigate the following points: (1) Whether, having regard to financial considerations and to present and prospective requirements as regards water supply in the districts within the limits of supply of the metropolitan water companies, it is desirable in the interests of the ratepayers and water consumers in those districts that the undertakings of the water companies should be acquired and managed either (a) by one authority, or (b) by several authorities; and, if so, what should be such authority or authorities; to what extent physical severance of the works and other property and sources of supply of the several companies, and the division thereof between different local authorities within the limits of supply, are practicable and desirable; and what are the legal powers necessary to give effect to any such arrangements. (2) If the undertakings are not so acquired, whether additional powers of control should be exercised by local or other authorities; and, if so, what those powers should be. (3) Whether it is practicable to connect any two or more of the different systems of supply now administered by the eight metropolitan companies; and, if so, by whom, and in what proportion, should the cost of connecting them be borne, and what are the legal powers necessary to give effect to any such arrangement.

The first witness called was Mr. H. L. Cripps, the parliamentary agent of the London County Council. In the course of his evidence, given in response to questions by the Chairman, Lord Llandaff, Mr. Cripps said that the views of the London County Council as to the purchase of the existing undertakings were expressed in the Bills of 1895 and 1897. The latest decision of the Council upon the point was that the