

THE R.A.M.C. AND ITS EQUIPMENT.

SIR,—I have had experience of the army medical officers in one campaign and I have further had the opportunity of seeing them at work at Netley on many occasions. Although—as in civil practice—all may not be highly-skilled operators, still there are plenty of such and first-class surgeons amongst them. There are also many of them who have more experience of bullet wounds and military surgery than perhaps any civilian surgeon alive. Viewed in the light of experience I consider the field equipment of the R.A.M.C. is in some respects faulty, especially ambulance waggons and beds. I once travelled two hundred miles in an ambulance waggon such as was pictured in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL recently, and though a hard and healthy man, neither sick nor wounded, I never suffered so much in my life. The beds are not fit for sick and wounded men; they are too much of the barrack room type.

These things are not the fault of the department, but are due to the parsimony of the Government; for instance, out of £10,000,000 granted for the war £50,000 were allocated for the care of the sick and wounded!—I am, etc.,

GEORGE STOKER,
Chief of No. 1 Transport Ambulance, Turko-Russian
War; Stafford House Surgeon, Turko-Russian
War; Commissioner South African Aid
Committee, Zulu War.

Mayfair, W.

* * Mr. Stoker is probably mistaken as to the pattern of the waggon. The equipment with the army corps and cavalry division is of the new 1898 pattern, and that in which he suffered must have been of the old pattern.

OCEAN VOYAGES IN PULMONARY PHTHISIS.

SIR,—I have often observed the remarkable benefit that many patients with tuberculous phthisis obtain from a sea voyage.

Only lately Dr. Rushbrooke of Stamford Hill and I were congratulating a patient on the well-marked evidence of arrest in his disease that followed a trip to the Mediterranean. This patient had a well-marked crepitant *râle* at his left apex when he left England. On his return this was replaced by a weak breath sound. His appetite was excellent, and, though the weather in the Bay of Biscay was so rough that he and a few more passed much of their time lashed on the upper deck, he returned home to all appearance cured of his disease.

The constant inhalation of the salt spray during a gale must certainly be very hostile to the development of tubercle bacilli in the lung. None of these could be found in the sputa of our patient on his return from his sea trip, though they were evident in small number when he set out.

Not long ago I had a call from a friend who, being decidedly phthisical, went to Melbourne and back in a sailing ship with most satisfactory results, though it seems a real cure cannot yet be claimed in this case. In my own experience I have never seen any climatic change work such really curative results in phthisis as the voyage to Australia and back in a sailing ship. Feeding on these ships is very much better than it was years ago, and in many other respects the comfort of the passengers is studied.

It would be very interesting to observe more extensively the effect of a long sea voyage in a well-found sailing ship on cases of tuberculosis. The ship ought to carry a doctor whose heart would be in the work and who would exercise authority over the patients in seeing that they did not drink too much whisky, and that they had supplied to them good food well cooked.

In selecting cases it would be well to reject all who were far advanced in disease of the lungs, and to take as far as possible those of a cheerful and hopeful temperament.—I am, etc.,

JOHN C. THOROWGOOD, M.D., F.R.C.P.
Welbeck Street, W., Nov. 4th.

THE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.

SIR,—In reply to the letter of the President of the Council with reference to mine upon this subject, I have to say that I was quite aware of By-law 12. It does not apply to the notice

of motion I gave which was ruled out of order. In sending in my motion I had before my mind Article 25, which is as follows:

“The business of the Association shall be managed by the Council, and the respective constitutions, duties, powers, and modes of procedure of the Council shall be determined on from time to time by the Association in general meeting.”

Of course everyone knows that no by-law can override the Articles of Association, and my contention is that whilst By-law 12 gives the Council discretion to engage and pay the Editor, Article 25 secures to the general meeting (which is after all the highest authority of the Association) the absolute right to review and control the Council's exercise of that discretion.

The best form of motion to found a discussion upon what has been done is surely a motion requiring it to be altered. My motion required the Council, who alone could do so, to alter what it had done. As the Editor's salary is an item in the expenditure of the Association on its JOURNAL, to rule that the payment of this item “is entirely in the hands of the Council,” and to rule on that ground that my motion was out of order is therefore to rule that the members have no right to discuss in general meeting the expenditure of the Association upon its JOURNAL. This would make By-law 12 override Article 25, and it was in effect for doing this that the general meeting adopted Mr. Horsley's motion with its strictures on the action of the Council.

I desire again to say that this is in no sense a personal attack upon the Editor, as the motion had for its primary object the raising of another issue regarding omissions from the JOURNAL of certain questions relating to medical reform, and for which omissions the Council have since assumed the responsibility.—I am, etc.,

Sydenham, Nov. 6th.

F. LORIMER HART.

THE IRISH DISPENSARY DOCTOR'S POSITION UNDER THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

SIR,—With reference to a “North of Ireland Dispensary Doctor's” letter in the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of October 14th, I would like to know have the guardians paid his substitute yet, even though the Local Government Board sanctioned £3 3s. per week? and, if not, by what means will he get the £3 3s., provided the guardians will only pay £2 2s. per week?

I also am a dispensary doctor, and applied to my Board of Guardians for my annual holiday in the beginning of August last, nominating a doctor who had done duty for me on previous occasions, but he resided a short distance outside my district, his fee being £3 3s. per week. The guardians replied sanctioning my leave, but that the remuneration would be £2 2s. per week for my substitute; in a few days I had a letter from the Local Government Board sanctioning my leave provided the *locum tenens* resided in the district.

I then wrote to the guardians, stating that “I was unable to procure a substitute for £2 2s. per week, and I would feel obliged if they would procure a substitute for the dispensary.” They advertised for a *locum tenens* at £2 2s., and sent notices to the medical papers. One paper inserted the announcement, but your JOURNAL refused to do so. I need hardly say that the guardians had no applicant for the position. I then procured the services of a medical man from Dublin, sending in his application to the guardians, his remuneration being £3 3s. per week. They replied that they would not sanction my leave. As I received this notice my *locum tenens* arrived, and I found I was in a fix, it being an expensive amusement bringing a man all the way from Dublin, so I wrote to the Local Government Board stating that the guardians would not sanction my leave owing to my *locum tenens* requiring £3 3s. per week as remuneration. To this letter they replied sanctioning my leave. In the meantime I had written to the guardians stating “that it would be most inconvenient to postpone my holiday any longer as the doctor had arrived, and that I was prepared to pay the extra guinea per week provided the guardians and the Local Government Board would not sanction the £3 3s. per week.”

Now I would wish to know who will pay the £3 3s. per week, as the guardians are determined not to pay more than the £2 2s., and the Local Government Board have sanctioned the