

The vital forces acting at the deutero-genetic centre are less easily analysed than those which may be believed to produce gastrulation. Assheton's style was vigorous, but constantly recalls the fact that he was a man whose enthusiasm and originality were blended with the most unfailing courtesy. This posthumous volume is well illustrated, and contains a bibliography of all the published work of its author.

AN OLD YPRES SURGEON.

OF Ypres it may now almost be said *etiam periere ruinae*. Yet but lately it was a prosperous city full of interest for antiquarians and lovers of art. In the fourteenth century there was no country more advanced than Flanders in civilization and none in which arts and industries were in a more flourishing state. How successfully surgery was cultivated is shown by a treatise written by Maître Jehan Yperman who was born at Ypres in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The records of the city show that he was granted a subsidy out of the public funds to enable him to study surgery. For that purpose he went to Paris, where he worked under the famous surgeon Lanfranchi, driven by stress of politics from Milan. In 1303 or 1304 he returned to Ypres and was immediately appointed surgeon to the Belle Hospital. In 1325, when the citizens of Bruges went to war with the Count of Flanders, Yperman was appointed surgeon to the Ypres contingent. The manuscript of his work, of which there are only two copies in existence—one of them in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge—is written in old Flemish and is illustrated by very rough drawings, mostly of needles, knives, forceps, chisels for operations on bones, and other instruments. In laying down rules for the stitching of wounds he shows himself familiar with the practice of secondary suture after freshening the edges. He has much to say about the stoppage of bleeding. Among the methods indicated are compression and the action of cold and heat; when these fail recourse must be had to ligature or torsion of the bleeding vessel. Trephining is described in detail; Yperman preferred the gouge, but also used the chisel and mallet. He recommends that when hernia cerebri occurs, a small plate of lead or thin wood should be placed over the opening in the skull after reduction of the hernia. A long chapter is devoted to sinuses of the limbs, which are said to be due to the presence of fragments of necrosed bone; the clinical course and the operative treatment are clearly described. Of wounds of the intestine, he says that their gravity differs according as it is the large or small gut that is injured. If it is the small intestine the wound is mortal, for the escape of pus and faeces into the abdomen inevitably produces complications. In a wound of the large intestine, on the other hand, there is hope of recovery. If the wound is long it should be stitched, the sutures being left hanging out. Care should be taken to reduce the herniated intestine, and stress is laid on the necessity for keeping the abdominal wound open till the sutures come away. If any loops of intestine escape and there be any difficulty in reducing them the wound should be enlarged; "but," says our author, "do not forget to keep the intestine warm with hot wine." Yperman's work throughout bears the stamp of independent observation. He based his teaching on experience, and in this respect this forgotten treatise is far in advance of the majority of medical writings of a much later date. The modern reader can scarcely fail to be struck by the clinical insight, good sense, and practical wisdom of the old Flemish surgeon. Like Mondeville, Clowes, and the old surgical writers generally, he was fierce in his denunciation of the unqualified or "lay" practitioner. In regard to fees he held that the rich should be made to pay well, while the poor should be treated as friends. The date of Yperman's death is unknown, but there is no mention of his name in the archives of Ypres after 1329.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIER.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GUY STEPHEN, R.A.M.C., has contributed to the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* for November an article entitled, "The Via Dolorosa of the Soldier," which is not only of great interest to every one to-day but will become a document of historical value. It describes how the R.A.M.C. has been expanded and its methods adapted to meet the special conditions of the war in France and Flanders; these conditions will probably never recur in the same form in future wars, but they must have a permanent influence on military medicine. We will not follow him through the various sections of his article, for most of what he has to say is already familiar to our readers, much of it through his own contributions to our pages. But we may direct particular attention to his observations on the casualty clearing station, which he describes as in some respects one of the most notable developments of the war. In such an institution the wounded soldier finds himself in surroundings which are in fact, if his wound be at all serious, precisely those of a hospital in peace time in all but external appearances. There are skilled surgeons, each, whatever his particular work may be, carefully chosen for it; skilled nurses, operation rooms with all the usual annexes, and beds in the wards, whether these be tents, huts, or civil buildings transformed for the purpose. The administrative work of such a unit calls for the highest capacity, and there is no other unit which makes so strong an appeal to the visitor whose interest is chiefly in clinical matters. As Colonel Stephen says, nothing "better brings home both the pitiful and splendid sides of this war than the sight of a casualty clearing station on a fairly rainless day an hour or two after the arrival of a convoy." In his concluding paragraphs he pays a tribute to the general body of civilian practitioners and the readiness it showed from the very beginning to join the army in France. It is an essential component of the organization, for without it the Royal Army Medical Corps could not have been brought up to the necessary strength in officers, and it is an effective component "because the medical men concerned bring to the work the professional experience of civil life, coupled in many instances with the moral assistance of great reputations, and in almost all cases with a readiness to fall in with the spirit of the original corps itself and perform the duties assigned to them conscientiously and without question." Finally, that the success has been so great is largely due to the fact that the members of the original Royal Army Medical Corps early recognized the greatness of the task before them, and that it could not be performed with efficiency unless they set aside a thousand inherited military scruples and preconceptions.

Medical Notes in Parliament.

The Board of Pensions Bill.

At the beginning of the Committee stage of the Board of Pensions Bill in the House of Commons on November 27th Mr. Hogge, on behalf of a number of members, moved the first of a series of amendments designed to have the effect of unifying the whole pensions administration. The amendment was resisted by the Government, but a discussion, which lasted about two hours, showed that the general sense of the House was in favour of unification. Eventually Mr. Henderson accepted the amendment, and undertook to bring up a series of amendments to meet the wishes of the House.

The amendments put down by Mr. Henderson on behalf of the Government change the scope of the bill in many material respects.

Clause 1. The amendments propose to constitute in place of a Board of Pensions, a Ministry of Pensions, with a single

Minister, to be advised by the Parliamentary Secretary of the Admiralty, the Financial Secretary of the War Office, and the Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board.

Under Clause 2 there would be transferred to the Minister of Pensions (a) the duties of the Admiralty with respect to pensions and grants; (b) those of the Chelsea Commissioners with respect to the grant and administration of disability pensions other than in-pensions; (c) the powers and duties of the Army Council and the War Secretary with respect to pensions and grants, including those to nurses, other than service pensions; (d) the powers and duties of the Statutory Pensions Committee, except the power to supplement pensions and grants out of funds not derived from moneys provided by Parliament.

Amendments to Clause 4 provide that the powers and duties of the Statutory Pensions Committee shall be exercised under the control and in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of Pensions.

A new Clause 5 reserves the powers and duties of local pensions committees.

Food.

Bread.—Mr. Partington asked, on November 22nd, whether national bread in France contained maize flour and rice flour, and, if so, in what proportions. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade replied that wheaten flour now used in making bread in France was required to contain not less than 80 per cent. of the weight of the wheat. The admixture of flour other than wheat flour was not compulsory in France, but was permitted on condition that bread made from such mixed flours was sold under a name accurately describing its nature. In reply to a question on November 23rd Mr. Pretyman said that no authority had been given by the Board of Trade for the quarter of wheaten bread to be made partly of maize meal, and a suggestion by Captain Bathurst that maize meal did not blend satisfactorily with wheat flour and was less palatable than either oatmeal or barley meal would be borne in mind. In reply to Mr. Glanville he said that the *Gazette* price of British wheat was in the third week of July, 1914, 3 s.; in the year ending July 31st, 1915, 48s. 1d.; in the year ending July 31st, 1916, 52s. 6d.; and for the period from August 1st to November 18th, 1916, 60s. 11d. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture said, in reply to a question by Mr. Carew, that the feeding of any millable wheat to pigs, or the using of it for any purpose other than human food was strongly to be deprecated, and steps might have to be taken to prevent it. On the same day, in reply to questions as to new bread, Mr. Pretyman said that considerable economy could be effected by not consuming bread until twenty-four hours after it was baked, and he hoped that the publicity given to this opinion would tend to diffuse the knowledge of the fact amongst consumers. The question whether the sale of new bread could be prohibited had been considered, but was found to be impracticable, mainly owing to the lack of storage accommodation in bakeries.

Rice.—The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture stated, on November 23rd, that the policy of forbidding the polishing of rice, by which the most nutritive portion of the grain was removed, was under consideration.

War.

Disabled Soldiers.—Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck asked, on November 23rd, whether the Secretary of State for War had come to a decision whether or not the army authorities would assume responsibility for the complete restoration to health of the disabled soldier. Mr. Brooks asked whether any scheme was being considered whereby soldiers discharged from the army as unfit for further military service would be trained in suitable civil employment and retained with the colours at their regular rates of pay during such period of training. In a written reply to these two questions, Mr. Lloyd George stated as follows: "A scheme has been prepared, and has now been submitted to the different authorities concerned for their remarks. When these remarks have been received, I hope to be in a position to make a further statement."

Hospital Stoppages.—Mr. W. Thorne, on November 21st, asked whether the Government was considering the advisability of paying a soldier when he was in a hospital through no fault of his own the full rate of soldier's pay, and whether, while a soldier was being treated in a hospital 7d. a day was stopped from his pay. Mr. Forster recalled that on an earlier day he had informed Mr. Hogge that deduction was made only when

men were in hospital in circumstances which in the discretion of the commanding officer were held to justify the deduction. He now said that a full stoppage was never made except when a man had to go into hospital through his own fault. There was no stoppage if the man was in hospital in consequence of wounds or disease incurred through service. If a man was admitted to hospital for other causes, but through no fault of his own, it rested with the commanding officer to make a stoppage or not. Except where a man went into hospital in consequence of disease incurred through his own fault a stoppage was not made. Mr. M. Barlow asked, on November 23rd, whether in the case of soldiers sent to certain hospitals half pay was deducted, and whether in view of the fact that soldiers were usually insured persons such deductions would be made good out of insurance funds. Mr. Forster said that the soldier was not entitled to any hospital treatment from National Insurance funds during service with the colours, and did not pay any contribution in respect of such benefit.

Frostbite: Compensation.—The Secretary to the War Office stated in a written reply on November 16th that it had been decided that in the case of officers incapacitated by frostbite, as well as other cases of injury arising from some special risk due to war conditions, and where reasonable precautions were not neglected by the officers, the cases might be treated for compensation purposes as though they had occurred in action.

Ration Allowance.—Mr. Goldstone asked, on November 23rd, whether in view of the increased prices of food the ration allowance at home stations, which had been reduced to 1s. 7d. a day, would be increased. Mr. Forster, while declining to admit that increased prices generally applied equally to the soldier and the civilian, said that the rate of ration allowance was under consideration.

Fees for Medical Examination of Recruits.—On November 28th Mr. Cowan asked a question as to the fees paid for the medical examination of recruits, which were at the rate of 2s. 6d. each for the first sixteen recruits, with a limit of £2 for any one day, resulting in some cases in Scotland in an average rate of less than 6d. a recruit; and whether, considering the inadequacy of the rates actually paid in Scotland for the professional services rendered, the payment would now be authorized to such Scottish doctors of such sums as might be necessary to place them upon an equal footing with their colleagues in the Eastern Command. The Financial Secretary to the War Office said that £2 was considered a fair maximum for a full day's work in the medical examination of recruits. Authority had been given to exceed this maximum in certain exceptional cases in which a rate per head was promised without imitation as to total, but it was not considered that a similar arrangement in other cases could be justified. Mr. Cowan asked whether this was fair treatment of medical men, who in some cases were not told until their work was done what the conditions of remuneration would be, but Mr. Forster said that he was unable to come to any other conclusion than that he had stated. Mr. Hogge then asked whether any of the money paid to doctors for passing into the army men who were medically unfit had been recovered. Mr. Forster replied that, speaking from memory, he thought that a certain amount had been recovered, and offered to obtain particulars.

Grants for Military Patients in Civil Hospitals.—In the House of Lords, on November 28th, in reply to Lord Devonport, who called attention to the inadequacy of the grant for military patients in civil hospitals, the Earl of Derby said that in regard to the 3s. grant to the auxiliary departments new arrangements were being made with the Joint Committee of the Red Cross and the Order of St. John under which a grant of 6d. a day would be made under certain conditions for every unoccupied bed. Much had been done to improve the administration, and there had been an actual decrease in the cost per bed during the last six months, notwithstanding the rise in prices, and without any decrease in the efficiency of the hospitals. It was considered that the new grant would place the hospitals on a satisfactory footing.

Amalgamation of Poor Law Unions in Ireland.—In reply to a question by Mr. Hugh Law, on November 23rd, Mr. Duke said that the Local Government Board in Ireland was most desirous of giving effect to schemes of amalgamation, or schemes for the closing of workhouses and the transfer of the inmates to adjoining workhouses. He understood that at the instance of the Donegal board of guardians arrangements were being made for the holding of a county conference, and it was true that in the Duffanagh Union there were as many union officials as inmates of the workhouse.

THE late Dr. Magnan, a former president of the Paris Académie de Médecine, has left to that body a sum of £1,000 to found a triennial prize to be awarded to the author of the best work on a psychiatric subject.

THE Italian Minister of War recently invited medical women to offer themselves for military service. Graduates of more than five years' standing are to have the rank of sublieutenant; those of more than fifteen years' standing that of captain. Signora Filomena Corvini is the first woman who has received a commission. She has been appointed to the 9th Army Corps for service at the front.