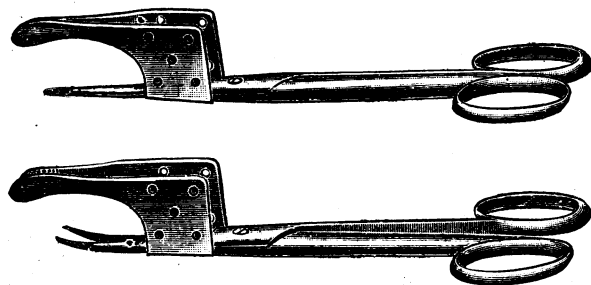


on the spectator, as witness his sketches of the Somme, where the sense of distance and the ideas of remoteness and desolation carry to the eye of the mind a picture the truth of which those who have looked across the country itself will be the first to acclaim. No other pictures we have seen, whether of artist or photographer, approach these in conveying to those who have stopped at home a true impression of the places in which their sons have been fighting, the burrows and billets in which they have dwelt, and the towns and villages through which they have marched. The letterpress is just full enough to recall the times and circumstances in which the drawings were made. The September number shows the artist in his most varied form. The fourteen drawings in France give us, in addition to impressionist sketches of the armies, three finished drawings of undamaged France—one of the exquisite doorway of a house built for one of Napoleon's generals, one of the quaintly beautiful square in Hesdin, and another of Rollencourt village with its church and surrounding trees and the wide landscape beyond. The other seven drawings in this number are of the sea, the last being a vivid picture of the bridge of a merchant ship. A character sketch of each man could be written from it, and the whole is flooded with the light that fills the "high and lofty" bridge house by day. The October number contains drawings more in the line of work which first brought Mr. Bone reputation. They are all concerned with ship building, and include several drawings of standard ships in various stages; one, a shipyard seen from a big crane, and another, entitled "the seven cranes," show the artist of machinery at his best. The same publishers have issued the first part of another periodical, *Generals of the British Army*. It contains twelve portraits done from life, mostly in France, by Mr. FRANCIS DODD. They have the effect of coloured pastels and are admirably reproduced. They are not smooth and flattering, but give the man as he is, with a strong impression of the mind and character behind the outward showing. The first, of Sir Douglas Haig, is not only an extraordinarily good likeness, but in the expression of the face and the whole attitude and pose of the alert figure tells the qualities which have brought him to the great place he holds. The last portrait is of General Smuts, standing full face, looking very straight to his front. Each portrait is accompanied by a short biography. It may be interesting to note the nationality and age of the eight generals here portrayed who have commanded armies. Two, including the Field Marshal, are of Scottish birth, and both are aged 56; four are of English family, aged 53, 55, 56, and 60; of the two others, both aged 47, one belongs to an Irish and the other to a South African family. The portraits of Sir Douglas Haig and General Smuts have also been reproduced on a larger scale for framing, as well as portraits of Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty, which appear to belong to another series we have not seen.

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL APPLIANCES.

Combined Scissors, Forceps, and Sponge-holder.

W. B. AINGER, F.R.C.S., Captain R.A.M.C.(T.F.), writes: A glance at the accompanying sketch will at once make clear the utility of this instrument, which combines in itself the functions of scissors, forceps, and sponge-holder. When the scissor action is required the instrument is grasped as



one would an ordinary pair of scissors, with the hand pronated. When the forceps or sponge-holder action is required all that is needed is to supinate the hand completely. The instrument is designed to obviate the necessity for constantly washing the hands, steeping them in lotions, etc., and all the ritual, so often imperfectly carried out, which goes to the performance of the simplest dressing. The instrument should be kept in a jar with the blades immersed in strong lysol and the handles

exposed. Before use the blades should be rinsed in some weaker solution and then, on completion of the dressing, once more rinsed before returning to the jar. The instrument has been made for me by Mr. Alfred E. Dean, Leigh Place, Brook Street, Holborn, E.C.1.

THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

We gave in the JOURNAL of August 18th an account of the general character of the report¹ presented by the Departmental Committee on the welfare of the blind, appointed in May, 1914, and mentioned its principal recommendations. The matter, however, is of so much importance, and possesses so much interest for the medical profession that it appears desirable to give a more extended notice of the scope of the inquiry.

The Number of the Blind.

The report of the Committee states that according to the census of 1911 there were 33,965 persons (males and females in nearly equal proportions) returned as totally blind. Of these 2,184 were under the age of 15 years. The census returns specified 8,693 as "occupied," including children of 10 and upwards. Figures obtained by the Committee from institutions indicate that approximately 3,000 blind persons are occupied in workshops and institutions. It endeavoured to collate statistics as to the capable blind who were unoccupied; the data is incomplete, but a conservative estimate points to there being not less than 3,000 blind persons capable of training and employment, but unoccupied. In July, 1914, there were 12,015 persons in receipt of outdoor poor relief. Of these, 2,809 were returned as capable of training and employment. The evidence before the Committee from Poor Law returns and the figures furnished by certain organizations indicates that there are probably not less than 10,000 incapable blind persons in the United Kingdom.

A comparison of the census returns of 1901 and 1911 indicates that though the total number of blind has increased, the proportion of blind to the population has diminished, except in Ireland. The exception is explained by Dr. Coey Bigger, of the Local Government Board for Ireland, as probably due to the effects of emigration leaving a residuum of blind persons out of proportion to the rest of the population.

Age Incidence and Causes of Blindness.

The data on age incidence are meagre. The returns of the census indicate that the three main causes of blindness (the last is the heaviest) are: (1) Accidents; (2) congenital and infantile diseases; (3) cataract, optic neuritis, or other eye trouble.

Comment is made on the part played by ophthalmia neonatorum in the production of infantile blindness. It is held to account for 10 per cent. of the total of blindness at all ages. Some evidence was taken on the measures in vogue for the prevention of the disease and for the better securing of the full effects of these measures. That a very high standard can and should be obtained is manifest, and it is equally clear that there is room for improvement in not a few parts of the country. Prompt notification of the disease is needed, and efficient nursing for "the treatment of a child with ophthalmia neonatorum means treatment nearly all day and a good part of the night." It is essential that hospital accommodation should be provided for the child (and if necessary for the mother also) in a certain number of cases. The disease is more prevalent in squalid homes, where efficient treatment cannot be secured, than in those where better conditions prevail. Comment is made on the large number of cases of blindness due to interstitial keratitis consequent on inherited syphilis. The report quotes the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases as coming to the conclusion (par. 102) "that over 50 per cent. of all blindness was due to venereal diseases." This is a misquotation; the words of the report of the Royal Commission are: "The figures laid before us by Mr. Bishop Harman show that more than half of all cases of blindness amongst children are the result of venereal disease in the parents."

Under the heading of "Occupational Blindness" attention

¹ H.M. Stationery Office, London, 1917. (Cd. 8655.) To be purchased through any bookseller, price 9d. net.