school for boys and girls ranging in age from 6 to 15 years. This industrial training of children of this age has met with much success, and it has been observed that marked improvement is apparent between these ages. The girls devote a good deal of their time to needlework, and even the boys show a feeling in the beautiful embroidery they produce.

The boys are employed outdoors, and in weaving and basketry. Some excellent results have been obtained from the work done in the pathological laboratory, and Dr. H. E. is engaged in carrying out a series of Wassermann tests.

HOSPITAL FINANCE.

The hospitals throughout the country are suffering from lack of funds, and many of them have been obliged to close some of their wards, and it is possible that some of them may have to close altogether.

Correspondence.

THE FUTURE OF THE LISTER INSTITUTE.

Sir,—Now that the vote of the members of the Lister Institute has been taken, and has resulted adversely to the scheme put forward by the Governing body, it may be allowed to say that the controversy to which attention has already been drawn at different times in your columns.

That the proposal embodies advantages of the highest order is no news; it would enable the Institute to obtain command of clinical material, a want that has been felt and acknowledged almost from its foundation; and it would, moreover, enable the Institute to co-operate systematically in researches of profound practical importance.

At the meeting held on November 18th it was fairly well shown that no direct interference from official sources would be attempted or permitted. But allowing this, there still remains the inexcusable objection that the standard and measure of the value of the work carried out, if not solely a utilitarian one at the outset, would almost inevitably become so in the course of time. It is difficult to see how it could be otherwise in a Department receiving public money for the purpose of direct public benefit.

No one would, of course, maintain that utilitarian science is beneath any other form in dignity. It is only when the utilitarian end is viewed as the sole one and in a pursuit that the true scientific ideal becomes obscured.

The fundamental fallacy underlying an exclusively utilitarian aim, even from the utilitarian side itself, lies in the postulated possibility of foreseeing what discovery may or may not prove useful. No degree of utilitarian sagacity would have led, for instance, to the discovery of radium, the therapeutic value of which is hardly at present calculable.

Were the Lister Institute to amalgamate on the particular scheme devised, it is in this direction that it would suffer: its present freedom of research (though not, of course, absolute) would become first restricted, and then, perhaps, extinguished.

To the Medical Research scheme itself the same objection would hardly apply; it might legitimately limit its activities to the utilitarian problems without holding the utilitarian error.

But is there no means of compromise; of profiting by the advantages of amalgamation, whilst escaping from its dangers?

The unique position of the Institute gives it a perfect right, if it thought fit, to require that under any scheme of amalgamation it should reserve an autonomous department, absolutely irresponsible to the Medical Research Committee or Governmental control. There need be no difficulty in the Institute retaining a portion of its fine list of recruits, adequate for such a purpose, and a proportionate amount of its funds, together with its present governing body and scientific staff.

By the scheme of the Governing body the present members of the list of recruits would be allocated to different sections of the new Institution, and could carry out work, as approved by the Medical Research Committee. But there is no reason why the existing staff should not be placed, in addition, upon, and constitute the entire staff of an autonomous department that it will, before so great an opportunity passes, put an amended scheme before the Members that will ensure more general acceptance.—I am, etc.,

S. G. SHATTOCK,
Professor in Morbid Anatomy in the University of London.

OPERATIONS OF EXPEDIENCY ON RECRUITS.

Sir,—Mr. C. J. Bond is to be congratulated on having drawn attention to a very necessary piece of surgical work, and the Leicester Royal Infirmary on having undertaken it. A month ago the managers of the Western Infirmary of Glasgow intimated to the recruiting stations in Glasgow that they were prepared to admit as urgent cases recruits bringing a note from the examining medical officer to the effect that apart from the remediable affection for which operative treatment was sought they were fit for enlistment. The necessary funds are provided independently of the infirmary's ordinary financial resources.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Bond's letter will have the effect of starting similar arrangements in all our general hospitals. Were such arrangements made and published, there can be little doubt that, as Mr. Bond says, considerable additions would be made to the army.—I am, etc.,

JAS. H. NICOL.

November 23rd.
Surgeon, Western Infirmary, Glasgow.

THE TREATMENT OF WOUNDS IN THE PRESENT WAR.

Sir,—In view of the controversy that is now taking place as to the value of pure carbolic acid as an application to wounds, my own experience seems to be worth recording.

Some years ago I contracted septic poisoning of the thumb in the course of attending a case of tracheotomy. The poison gained an entrance under the nail, and resulted in a very painful spreading ulceration with constitutional symptoms. I consulted Sir Watson Cheyne, and he told me that within fifteen minutes, under an anaesthetic, removed the nail, and applied pure carbolic acid freely to the entire raw surface. The wound healed rapidly, and the nail grew again with very little distortion.

This surely is an irrefutable proof of the value of pure carbolic acid. I trust that Sir Watson Cheyne's remarks on the treatment of wounds in war will have the fullest possible publicity.—I am, etc.,

C. M. ANDERSON, M.D.

London, S.W., Nov. 20th.

Sir,—After reading Sir Watson Cheyne's masterly address, and the discussion upon this subject at the Medical Society of London on November 16th, as reported in the British Medical Journal of November 21st, there should be little need for further question of the urgent indication for prompt and thorough disinfection of all wounds in war, at the earliest moment after their infliction—but certainly within the first twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

If I may be permitted a short reference to the letters in your correspondence columns of November 21st—I am sorry Sir Victor Horsley construes a sincere compliment of mine into irrelevant banter. I regret that a surgeon of his standing, whilst strongly depreciating the use of such a valuable antiseptic as phenol, should extol such feeble antiseptic agents as alcohol and petrol. I would again ask, Has he tried these things upon himself, and what conclusion has he come to (1) against the proper use of pure carbolic acid, and (2) in favour of alcohol and petrol? Both as regards painfulness of application and efficiency as an antiseptic, there is not the slightest doubt carbolic acid is to be greatly preferred. The pain of a carbolic application is a matter of a few moments, and is quickly succeeded by an anaesthetic effect