

"The Irish Hospital, the Portland Hospital, and the Langman Hospital, would do no discredit to any of our large towns. The field equipment of the Irish Hospital is infinitely superior to that of any of our field hospitals.

DISCIPLINE AND CLEANLINESS.

"I am convinced, again, that a more stringent supervision of the hospital orderlies is needed. They lack discipline, in some cases they lack cleanliness. I am told that the strict attention to the state of instruments, which is an essential of civil hospital economy, is rarely, is ever, exacted in military hospitals.

"In these days of antiseptic and aseptic treatment of wounds no standard of cleanliness can be too high or too rigid. The presence of military hospitals in or near towns during the enteric season is a danger to the health of the general population.

"Infectious matter is not burned as it should be; though efforts, and successful efforts, to burn it in the towns have lately been made. Competent attention to the sanitation of the camps is urgently required, especially in the case of large camps. In a word, prevention is better than cure; and the average camp commandant is a dear, nice man, with praiseworthy notions about discipline, and an utter dislike of the important subject of sanitation.

WHERE THE HOSPITAL SYSTEM HAS BROKEN DOWN.

"I think that where our hospital system has broken down the failure must be attributed—(1) to the unreadiness of the Royal Army Medical Corps, which only parallels the unreadiness of the rest of the Service; (2) to unusual circumstances; (3) to the urgent necessity of getting stores and remounts to the front in order that the re-equipment of the Army might be carried out—a matter of more moment in war than the comfort of the sick.

"But—to return to the second reason for failure—the hospital system must have broken down at Bloemfontein.

THE SECRET.

"Nobody on earth could have anticipated the unexampled energy of the enteric microbe at Paardeberg; nobody could have anticipated the subsequent epidemic at Bloemfontein. And these failures will be repeated in every great war, owing to sudden epidemics, unless we get a Kitchener or a Ward at the head of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

"There is the secret. Kitchener's transport system has worked like a mechanical miracle. Ward's mastery of the details of supply is the

talk and admiration of the Army, and the officers of the Army Service Corps are held in as much veneration by the troops as if they had been 'speckled angels.' And the reason is that by different methods both Lord Kitchener and Colonel Ward know how to get out of a man all the work that is in the man.

"They have no use for unintelligent or self-satisfied mediocrity, the old woman in uniform will never serve them long. I have seen whole garrisons jump to attention and take their work with a rush at the hint of 'K of K's' expected arrival.

"I know scores of officers who would black Colonel Ward's boots if he wanted them blacked, and regard the task as a pleasure, as one more means of showing devotion to a chief whose trust in them is so implicit that they dare not in honour to themselves come short of it.

"You don't find that sort of energy in the Royal Army Medical Corps, except in the men under Colonel Galloway.

POWERS OF ORGANISATION.

"But I would never dream (I'll be slated for this) of putting a medical man at the head of the Royal Army Medical Corps, unless he had developed a talent for organization most unusual in medical men.

"The average medical man who becomes an Army doctor is not trained in organisation. In fact, he is a person of moderate ability, who is playing for social status or a safe pension. Under present conditions the fact of his being in the corps at all is against him, and he is not likely to cultivate or improve what faculty of organisation he has by pottering at clerk's work. You don't allow the consultants to run a civil hospital; though you take their advice, the executive work is done by boards and secretaries.

"We cannot be troubled with boards and secretaries in the Army, therefore the work of direction and organisation should be done by military men with a leaning that way, while the doctors are confined to their proper task of looking after the sick and wounded.

MILITARY CONTROL IN EXECUTIVE MATTERS.

"I suppose one may hammer on the necessity of this military control in executive matters till the seven sisters of Ephesus awake and never induce the War Office to depart from that ancient way which is the worst and which it loves so well. But I am convinced that root and branch reorganisation, even though the hands of a non-medical organiser be heavy, is the proper cure for the Royal Army Medical Corps' failure to rise to the degree of efficiency which other

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)