

## Annotations.

## A NEW ORDER OF MERIT.

An announcement is made by the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* that the Queen has now almost completed the scheme for a Women's Order of Merit, appointment to which will be made only on the nomination of the Queen herself. We hope a further announcement will shortly be made. Virtue, it is true, is its own reward, but it is good news that women may hope for some small share of the honours which have hitherto been almost exclusively bestowed on the other sex.

## LORD ROBERTS AT ST. GEORGE'S.

The authorities of St. George's Hospital Medical School were fortunate in inducing Earl Roberts, K.G., to distribute prizes to the successful students of the year. The ceremony took place in the board-room of the hospital, which was crowded, amongst those present being seventeen doctors, members of the School, who had served in South Africa.

The ceremony of distribution being accomplished, Lord Roberts said he hoped those present would remember that he was a soldier, not a *savant*, but soldiers were greatly indebted to the work of the medical profession, who learnt and taught the healing of the sick, the care of the wounded, the alleviation of pain and suffering, and the maintenance of health in camp and quarters. He then went on to contrast the conditions in the Crimean War with those of the late campaign in South Africa, as they affected the sick and wounded. In the Crimea the French had, in twenty months, over 23,000 cases of scurvy, and in our own Army, on the last day of February, 1855, out of a main strength of 30,919, there were 13,608 in hospital. Three-fourths of the admissions to hospital were zymotic, and, in a sense, preventable.

In the recent campaign, during 2½ years, 400,000 men were sent out to South Africa, the average number in the field for some time being 250,000. The total deaths from sickness were 13,750, and 66,500 men were invalided home. The figures showed a greatly improved condition, and this improvement was due to the progress of medical science, supplemented by the personal devotion of medical men and trained nurses.

If he could not address his audience in scientific terms, said Lord Roberts, he could express his admiration for the achievements of their profession, and with it that of the Army he had the honour to command.

## Medical Matters.

## DISINFECTION OF THE HANDS BY ALCOHOL.

Schaeffer (*La Tribune Médicale*), after experimenting with the various methods of hand disinfection which have been employed up to the present time, has arrived at the following conclusions:—The best results are obtained from washing the hands with hot water, and then with alcohol. Next in value is the method of Miculicz, with tincture of soap. Antiseptics do not destroy, to a sufficient degree, the germs on the hands. Soap with marble dust (Schleich's method) gives results no better than washing the hands with plain hot water and soap. Schaeffer advises washing the hands first with very hot water and green soap, scrubbing the hands vigorously with a brush for five minutes. The nails are then to be cleaned and the hands rubbed with a sterilised compress. Finally, brushing the hands for three or five minutes in absolute alcohol. It is a good plan after that to place the hands in a solution of corrosive sublimate.

## RHEUMATISM IN CHILDREN.

In a paper read before a branch meeting of the B.M.A. (*Clin. Journal*), Dr. Gossage gives an account of the special features of this disease in children, showing its varied character, its less striking symptoms, and the greater difficulty in its recognition. There is often but little fever except that due to complications such as pericarditis or pneumonia, no great joint pain, and nearly always a complete absence of the profuse sweating of adults. The mildness of these symptoms adds to the danger of the complaint, as it leads to many patients being untreated till irreparable damage is done. The earlier the age at which the rheumatic attack occurs the more likely is the heart to be affected. It is not only the valves of the heart that may be implicated; the endocardium, pericardium, and mesocardium may all be affected. Of these, of course, the endocardium is most frequently attacked, but not infrequently a child's heart may fail quite early during an attack of rheumatism. These cases frequently end fatally; they occur with high fever, often delirium, considerable dyspnoea and orthopnoea, and prostration, the heart's action is rapid and excited, the cardiac dullness increased, with pericardial friction and an endocardial murmur. There is often some pleurisy or consolidation of the lung. It is surprising how rapidly dilatation of the heart

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