

Colonel Mayo Robson mentioned the following methods of wound treatment now being employed, some of which have several modifications :—

- (1) Asepsis.
- (2) The Treatment of Septic Wounds on General Principles, *i.e.*, free incision, removal of foreign bodies, thorough irrigation with or without antiseptics and free drainage.
- (3) Antisepsis as introduced by Lister, and its modifications :—(a) The use of alcohol alone, no water or watery solution coming near the wound ; (b) The use of various more or less poisonous antiseptics, such as carbolic acid, perchloride of mercury, biniodide of mercury, iodine, permanganate of potash, eusol, flavine, brilliant green, peroxide of hydrogen, iodoform, &c. ; (c) the Carrell-Dakin treatment—the continuous use of a solution of hypochlorite of soda ; (d) Antiseptic Pastes—B.I.P. treatment, introduced by Dr. Rutherford Morrison, or its modification by the use of another paste introduced by Captain Hay.
- (4) Physiological treatment introduced by Sir Almroth Wright, who uses a hypertonic salt solution. Arising out of the latter, but distinct from it, the salt pack, introduced by Colonel Gray.
- (5) Surgical treatment, by complete excision of the wound, including all parts contaminated by the foreign body.
- (6) Bacteriological treatment introduced by Dr. Donaldson and Major J. Leonard Joyce—the introduction of a beneficent organism to kill the malignant germs.

Colonel Mayo Robson then described in detail the germ theory, the technique of aseptic surgery, and the reasons why strong, poisonous antiseptics are not only unnecessary but injurious in daily work, also the reasons why (except in thoracic injuries of the heart and lungs) it is not employed in war wounds, and lastly the very interesting methods employed at the Reading War Hospital, *i.e.*, the introduction into the wounds—after thorough irrigation and preparation—of organisms non-pathogenic to animals, with the best results.

The speaker claimed that in the present war the medical services and the nursing service have both "made good," and, in conclusion, addressing the nurses, said : "The work of your service is beyond all praise. I have seen many of you in the thick of the work, when the wounded were coming straight from the battle-field, and where the sad sights were enough to blanch the stoutest hearts, never flinching, but steadily pursuing your beneficent duties as if you were assisting in the theatre of your parent hospitals. Not a few of your colleagues have given their lives to the cause—some killed by the shells of the enemy, others have died from disease contracted when on duty, others have been drowned when serving on hospital ships, and also one at least has suffered martyrdom, but still your numbers increase and still more are wanted.

"I feel sure your patriotism is no less than your

enthusiasm for your work, and I know that while your country calls you will respond as freely as ever."

DISCUSSION.

MISS BEATRICE KENT said she had been deeply interested in Colonel Mayo Robson's most enlightening lecture. She contrasted the methods employed by the surgeons of the present day, in the treatment of wounds, with those in vogue in the 16th century, when Ambrose Paré and other surgeons poured boiling oil into newly-made wounds in order to cauterize them.

Colonel Mayo Robson said that he believed Ambrose Paré found the method described by Miss Kent was the routine treatment in his day but he subsequently introduced the use of balsams and alcohol. It must be remembered that though the boiling oil treatment was heroic it did destroy the germs. Surgeons were learning every day from the war. For himself he was as keen a student now as ever. To be otherwise would be most disastrous.

MISS BREAY enquired as to the technique employed in the introduction of beneficent germs into a wound.

Colonel Mayo Robson replied that a pure culture was obtained of the germs isolated by Dr. Donaldson and enclosed in a tube. These tubes could be obtained from the Reading War Hospital. After the wound had been cleansed the method was simply to break the pipette and to pepper the wound with the beneficent germs.

MISS EDLA R. WORTABET spoke of the treatment of wounds with iodine. She had observed that the iodine burnt them outside while inside they were often very septic.

Colonel Mayo Robson agreed with this observation when the iodine was applied by an unskilled hand, and said that at the War Office the question of this practice had been referred to a committee of consultants. At first a little flask of iodine formed a component part of every soldier's outfit, now only some cyanide gauze was issued. Iodine was useful in ordinary operative work when skilfully applied.

Miss Dowbiggin, R.R.C., in moving a cordial vote of thanks to Colonel Mayo Robson, said that he had given a most inspiring and instructive lecture. His experience covered a wide field, including that of consulting surgeon in the Southern Command. Long before the war he was known and honoured as a surgeon in the north. He had added lustre to the fame of British surgery, and had taken the sacred fire from the altars of his northern school and carried it far and wide.

She recalled with pride that during her training she had worked in Colonel Mayo Robson's operating theatre at Leeds, and how much she had learnt from him there. There might be conflicting opinions amongst surgeons, but the true nurse was the handmaid of medicine, and carried out the directions given her with exactness. The Conference was fortunate in securing Colonel Mayo Robson as a lecturer, and she offered him its warm

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)