

nurses, the great army of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, welfare workers, munition workers, motor ambulance drivers are all needed in increasing numbers, and the value of the service which they may render is to be gauged by that which patriotic women have already accomplished. So far by their work behind the lines and in support of our armies they have done much to save the situation. Let each one make even greater effort.

### AN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE IN THE TREATMENT OF GAS GANGRENE.

Writing in the *British Medical Journal*, Temporary Colonel H. M. W. Gray, C.B., Consultant Surgeon, British Expeditionary Force, says:—"I wish to urge the wide recognition and application of a principle which I believe is essential for the successful prevention and eradication of gas gangrene in war wounds met with in France. My reason for doing so is that I have not seen it definitely mentioned in any writings in the public press. I have recommended it for the past two and a half years, and it becomes daily more evident that the principle is correct.

"The causative bacilli of gas gangrene will not develop in tissues which are provided with a vigorous circulation of healthy blood. They thrive best when the circulation is entirely stopped—for example, in a person dead of gas gangrene or in a limb of a living person where the main vessels have been severed. Long application of a tourniquet often allows the infection to obtain a firm hold. Feebleness of circulation in the wounded part, whether from a general cause, such as shock, or from a local cause, such as tension from effused material or pressure of foreign bodies, favours its development. As Major-General Cuthbert Wallace and others have pointed out, these bacilli grow most luxuriantly in devitalized muscle. The injured muscle or group of muscles is deprived, in part or in whole, of its normal blood supply according to whether the missile severs the main nutrient vessels or merely causes isolation of lacerated portions. Pressure in the neighbouring parts, whether caused by effused material in the wound, by inflammatory reaction, or by external constriction, interferes still further with the circulation, and forms a most important arc of the ever-widening vicious circle of spreading inflammation.

"From purely clinical observations, then, the principle has been evolved, and it is this:

Whether one undertakes preventive, pre-inflammatory operation, or curative operation after the gangrene has developed, success and safety are assured only when the wounded parts are excised until *definite* bleeding of the cut surface is seen. The bleeding must be definite; it need not be free. In pre-inflammatory operations the use of a tourniquet during operation may be permissible; it is not advisable unless the patient is exsanguinate. In cases where gangrene is already well marked, it should not be used. Care must be taken that in excising parts at the later stages of the operation the blood supply of tissues left behind at an earlier part of the operation is not interfered with; therefore, as a rule, proximal parts should be excised before distal parts. It is usually easy to decide, when this principle is kept in view, how much should be excised.

"Surgeons who base their work on this principle have more success, and fewer secondary operations than those who do not follow it.

"On the successful application of the principle I have enunciated depends the justification of the practice of excision and primary suture of wounds—a procedure which I carried out with gratifying results as far back as November, 1914."

### THE HEALTH OF THE ARMY.

A new Defence of the Realm Regulation (40 C), which, it is announced, has been made to protect His Majesty's Forces from the danger of venereal disease, is as follows:—

No woman who is suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form shall have sexual intercourse with any member of His Majesty's Forces or solicit or invite any member of His Majesty's Forces to have sexual intercourse with her.

If any woman acts in contravention of this regulation she shall be guilty of a summary offence against these regulations.

A woman charged with an offence under this regulation shall, if she so requires, be remanded for a period (not less than a week) for the purpose of such medical examination as may be requisite for ascertaining whether she is suffering from such a disease as aforesaid.

The defendant shall be informed of her right to be remanded as aforesaid, and that she may be examined by her own doctor or by the medical officer of the prison.

In this regulation the expression, "venereal disease," means syphilis, gonorrhoea, or soft chancre.

A demand that infected men who communicate venereal disease to women shall also be subject to punishment must follow, if it is to be stamped out and humanity protected.

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