

Surgeon Charles C. Macmillan of the *Terrible* has been landed in Natal for service on shore.

The suggestion that retired officers who are able to do so should provide accommodation for invalided soldiers of their old regiments has, we understand, received the approval of the Commander-in-Chief.

The Portland Field Hospital, which has been fitted out by private enterprise for service in the field, consists of a complete hospital unit. The staff includes one military and four civilian medical officers. Mr. Anthony Bowlby, F.R.C.S. Eng., is the senior surgeon, and he will be assisted by Dr. Howard H. Tooth, F.R.C.P. Lond., as physician, Mr. Outhbert S. Wallace, F.R.C.S. Eng., and Dr. J. E. G. Calverley. The commanding officer is Major Charles R. Kilkelly, R.A.M.C.

In THE LANCET of Nov. 25th, at page 1467, will be found a letter from Dr. P. M. Braidwood, calling attention to the necessity for a specially organised and instructed Naval Ambulance Association analogous to the St. John Ambulance Association, and in the *Times* of Dec. 12th there is a letter from Mr. S. Osborn, F.R.C.S. Eng., asking whether one or more hospital ships should not be kept permanently in commission. The idea is one which should receive earnest attention, and the delay which has occurred and is occurring in the dispatch of private hospital ships emphasises the urgent need of the provision for which Dr. Braidwood and Mr. Osborn plead.

#### THE ROYAL NAVY LIST DIARY AND NAVAL HANDBOOK.

The third year's issue of the Royal Navy List Diary and Naval Handbook just issued is a useful and almost indispensable adjunct to users of Lean's Royal Navy List. The diary portion is arranged to give a whole page to a day and is furnished with a separate index, monthly cash account, space for memoranda, letter register, schedule for recording all ports visited, and complete schedules for the recording of all drills and operations when in commission, and the making up of all the necessary returns for the Admiralty. In the letter-press accompanying the diary will be found a calendar of notable naval events (it is gratifying to notice that one of the notable events for Sept. 6th is the gallantry of Surgeon Maillard, V.C., in Crete, 1898), an obituary for the year, with a full record of the war and meritorious services of deceased officers, and a detailed list of the benevolent funds and institutions in connexion with the Royal Navy. Another new feature in the 1900 edition is an interesting table giving the colours of the medal ribbons of the various British war medals, orders, and decorations granted to the Royal Navy during the nineteenth century. Among the original articles is one on the Naval Progress of the Year by Mr. L. Carr Laughton, one of the editors of the "History of the Royal Navy." There are also original descriptive articles on the Tides and on Terrestrial Magnetism, with tables of the secular, yearly, and diurnal variations and the magnetic elements, &c.

#### MEDICAL STAFF FOR SOUTH AFRICA.

The following officers of the Army Medical Corps accompany the New South Wales contingent for service in the South African War: Colonel Williams, P.M.O., in command; Captain R. E. Roth, Half-Bearer Company; Captain A. E. Perkins, Half-Bearer Company; Lieutenant T. M. Martin, Half-Bearer Company; Captain T. H. Fiaschi, Field Hospital; Captain T. A. Green, Field Hospital; and Lieutenant C. A. Edwards, Field Hospital. Dr. F. H. Quaife has presented the corps with a complete Roentgen ray apparatus for field practice.

The committee of the Leicestershire Convalescent Home, which is situated in the Charnwood Forest district near Loughborough, has placed the Home at the disposal of the War Office for four months for wounded soldiers returning from the war in South Africa and has offered to discharge the cost of their maintenance. 30 patients can be accommodated.

The *Times* announces that the Secretary of State for War has approved of the period of leave out of India granted to executive officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps on medical certificate during a tour of service being allowed to count towards the completion of such tour up to a maximum of 12 months.

A *Times* telegram announces the arrival of Sir W. MacCormac, K.C.V.O., and Mr. Treves and a large ambulance staff at Frere camp.

Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel H. R. Myers, V.D., 19th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers, has just retired on age limit.

## Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

### VACCINATION CONTROVERSIES.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I observe that public debates on the vaccination question, in which members of the medical profession are taking part, are again becoming common as the winter season advances. May I again ask the favour of being allowed to remind any persons who propose to take a part in this important educational work that the Jenner Society can give useful assistance in it and that it will be glad to do so if applied to?

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

FRANCIS T. BOND, M.D. Lond.,  
Honorary Secretary, Jenner Society.

Gloucester, Dec. 12th, 1899.

\* \* We believe that the cause of medicine will be well served if medical men will meet certain anti-vaccinationists on the open platform. We have published in THE LANCET of Oct. 21st, 1899, p. 1141, a list of the works which give in a handy shape the information which the public ought to know, and, as will be seen, a majority of the works can be obtained from the Jenner Society.—ED. L.

### SOME POINTS IN LIFE ASSURANCE EXAMINATIONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—For some years it has been my lot to examine many candidates for life assurance offices. The forms from the different companies of detailed queries which the physician has to answer vary but little. It is possible that even these queries with careful examiners are not strictly necessary, but if they be then I beg to submit two questions which should be added to the list: 1. What is the temperature of the candidate? 2. Has the candidate suffered from ear discharge and, if so, has the trouble completely cleared up?

The following cases which have lately occurred in my practice will illustrate:—A, aged 21 years, was submitted to examination. Every detailed question I could answer satisfactorily. The pulse was 84, nothing unusual in a candidate undergoing examination. I took the temperature, as I make it a rule to do so. It was 99.4° F. I postponed the case for a week, when in the right supra-scapular region I heard a single soft crepitation in the middle of forced inspiration. The case turned out to be one of incipient phthisis, which I must have passed over but for the use of the thermometer. I am certain the crepitation was not to be heard at the first interview. B, aged 29 years, came for examination. Here also all the printed questions could be satisfactorily answered. The pulse was 92 and the temperature was 99.6°. The candidate said he felt perfectly well. I asked him to call the next day, when the temperature was 102°. I examined him carefully and found perforation of the right tympanic membrane with purulent discharge. I heard from his medical man that he died 10 days after from cerebral abscess. C, aged 28 years, consulted me for ear trouble. He had perforation with purulent discharge. The temperature was 99.2°. By chance he was sent to me a few days later by a life insurance office for examination. I said, "Of course, I shall be unable to make a satisfactory report with your ear trouble not cured." He replied that he would not be examined until the discharge had stopped. I never saw him again, but I happened to hear later that he passed a life insurance examination the next morning. Whether this was the case or not was no concern of mine.

I could quote other cases, but I think these are sufficient to show that if the pulse-rate, which varies so much in health, has to be recorded so exactly, then certainly the temperature, which varies so little in health, should never be omitted in any examination for life insurance. It has been truly said that a man with perforated tympanic membrane is always in danger, and I think many will allow that a question regarding this would also not be superfluous.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

FRANCIS TAYLOR SIMSON.

Craven House, Northumberland-avenue, W.C., Dec. 1st, 1899.