

therefore be dangerous. Filters not being always trustworthy he recommended boiling the water. The lecturer did not conclude without a warning against the careless use of preserved foods.

THE ARMY JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

The proposal to issue a new military journal under War Office auspices, which has been set forth by direction of the Army Council in a special Army Order, has given rise to a good deal of comment but the idea strikes us as being a good one and well worthy of trial. Other nations—France and Germany, for example—possess official journals of the kind. The design of the publication is a bold and broad one—namely, to deal with subjects of a professional and scientific nature, to encourage the study of military science and history, and to circulate information likely to promote a knowledge of the principles of imperial defence amongst all ranks and all arms of the military forces of the Crown. Whilst upon this subject we may say that the numbers of the *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* for March and April show that the journal is growing in scientific and general interest.

THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST.

Press reports state that many of the Japanese troops in Korea are suffering from symptoms resembling those of beri-beri. This disease has long been known to exist along the south-eastern coasts of Asia and in Japan. In THE LANCET of May 2nd, 1896, p. 1238, we gave some account of an outbreak which occurred in the year 1894 in the Fiji Islands, all the patients being Japanese labourers of whom about 300 were imported for the purpose of working on sugar plantations. The Japanese known to be attacked were 268 in number, of whom 65 died, and in February, 1895, the whole of the survivors were sent back to Japan. The disease was entirely confined to these immigrants, not spreading either to the native Fijians or to the imported Indian labourers. The medical officers of the Japanese army will no doubt do everything that may be possible to arrest the disease in the present circumstances.

THE ROYAL NAVY LIST.

The April issue of the "Royal Navy List," which is published by Messrs. Witherby and Co., 326, High Holborn, London, W.C., contains appointments, promotions, retirements, and such like details bearing date as late as March 26th and in the admirable "Current History of the Royal Navy," a comparatively new feature of the List, we notice that there is a reference to the lamentable accident to the submarine A 1. The war and meritorious services of officers of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Royal Naval Reserve are arranged in a manner which admits of easy reference, not a small matter when it is remembered that the names of some 10,000 officers are dealt with. The book is full of information on all matters connected with our first line of defence.

MILITARY MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE.

While the Army Medical Service may not be disposed to regard with any favour the position recommended to be assigned to it in future by Lord Esher's Reconstruction Committee the proposal to attach an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who will travel when necessary, to the section of the Director of Military Operations which deals with intelligence will be recognised by all as a necessary and valuable recommendation.

DEATHS IN THE SERVICES.

Surgeon-Colonel George Cochét Chesnaye, I M.S. (retired), at his residence at Bournemouth in his 67th year. He entered the service in 1859.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.—A treatise by Dr. R. R. Rentoul, entitled "Trachoma (Granular Conjunctivitis)" has just been issued by Messrs. Cornish and Sons, Lord-street, Liverpool.

THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.—The fifteenth conversazione of this association will be held at the Portman Rooms, Baker-street, London, W., on Tuesday, April 26th, at 8 P.M. Princess Christian has signified her intention to be present. The band of the Grenadier Guards will play a selection of music. Tickets—members, 2s.; nurses (non-members), 2s. 6d.; guests, 5s.—can be obtained from the secretary, 10, Orchard-street, London, W.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

THE USE OF HOT BOTTLES AFTER SURGICAL OPERATIONS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I should like to call attention to a matter in connexion with the nursing of surgical cases which is of the highest importance. In directions to nurses, especially in laparotomies, a great point is made after the operation of packing the patient with hot bottles. No statement of the temperature of the hot water in the bottles is vouchsafed and in the absence of such grave risks are run. Bottles filled with water practically at the boiling point are placed in close contiguity to a semi-conscious patient and even the ordinary covering of a blanket may not suffice to protect the skin. The danger has been very forcibly brought home to me lately and inquiries amongst professional friends have resulted in my hearing of 17 cases of burns which have recently occurred from the practice. I thus feel sure that surgeons ought to be a great deal more explicit in their instructions regarding this detail of the treatment of their patients. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Oxford, April 18th, 1904.

H. P. SYMONDS.

THE "N" RAYS AS A PROOF OF DEATH.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—With reference to Dr. John Munro's letter suggesting that the absence of "n" rays might be used as a proof of death, allow me to point out that it seems advisable at present to draw a distinction between the rays under investigation by Blondlot and those discovered by Charpentier. The former are of interest to the physicist, being generated by the sun, Nernst electric lamps, steel under tension, &c.; while the latter, proceeding from living muscle and nerve under strain, are of physiological importance. I have experimented with muscle rays only and it is because their objective existence has lately been the subject of entirely negative experiments at Glasgow and elsewhere that I am asking you kindly to afford me space for this letter.

In order that the existence of muscle rays may be made evident in the most convincing manner the following conditions must be present:—1. A powerful generator of the rays. Presumably this will be a muscular man or animal. 2. A fluorescent screen the luminosity of which will increase and die away rapidly, so that the connexion between cause and effect can be easily noted. 3. A good receiver—i.e., vision naturally capable of detecting a small change of luminosity—used under conditions which render it as sensitive as possible. The common cause of bewildering results is the natural tendency of everyone to involuntarily open the eyes wider when expecting to see an increase which may not be forthcoming and therefore to interpolate false answers amongst real ones. I have by practice acquired some expertness in observation and shall be most pleased to give a demonstration of the objective existence of the rays to anyone who has failed in his experiments. I will ask him to bring up his hand and stretch the muscles of the wrist at uncertain intervals in a completely dark room behind a cardboard screen, made of two large sheets each one-sixteenth of an inch thick and separated by three-sixteenths of an inch air space. On the face of this the luminous disc will be fixed, and by observing it from a few feet in front I will undertake to tell him when he brings his hand up. If convinced there is no delusion about the matter I think the medical profession will take the investigation and application of "n" ray phenomena seriously in hand. I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Hatton-garden, E.C., April 18th, 1904.

LESLIE MILLER.

PS.—Since writing last night I have heard from someone who was present at Blondlot's demonstration of "n" rays before the French Physical Society on April 15th that he was able to show the effect of a coiled-up watch-spring and a stropped razor—i.e., metals under tension—as sources of the rays. I have just repeated this experiment with a powerful clock-spring, held in the jaws of a test-tube holder and waved behind my cardboard screen. The effect is more