

were made by the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief to procure doctors as after the battle of Waterloo, and with a similar result. They came too late.

"I have in my possession a report from a medical officer of the Company's service on the state of the wounded three months after the first battle, which it would answer no good purpose to publish. It would be what might have been said of the state of the wounded in Portugal and Spain during the first four years of that war. The official statistical returns of the sick and wounded during the first Burmese war, show a loss of 48½ per cent.; those, if published, of the war in China will, I understand, be no better. The cause is well known—the remedy is in great part attainable. The evil remains.

"When Charles VI. of France sent to Spain, in aid of Pedro the Cruel, the renowned warrior Bertrand Du Guesclin, at the head of the *reiters*, the *lansquenets*, the free *compagnons* of his army, from whose prowess he had derived the greatest advantages, and heard in due time that their bones were whitening the fields of Castille and Navarre, he drew consolation from the fact that they could not return, and would not be able to claim the rewards, the pensions he had promised, and to which their services entitled them. After the lapse of three centuries, no better consolation can be afforded to the people of Great Britain under a similar but more severe infliction.

"The royal army of Great Britain is not composed of mercenaries. Its soldiers are the blood, the bone, the sinew of the nation, on whose indomitable valour alone can dependence be placed in the hour of danger. By them the victory must be won; by them the loss must be sustained; and a country grateful for their services should watch over them in their necessities as a mother over her children."

My private efforts having thus failed on two important points, it may not perhaps be considered improperly importunate to endeavour now to ascertain what may be the public feeling on the subject of the care which ought to be bestowed on the wounded soldier. If it should appear that the public are indifferent, I will willingly submit to be considered a troublesome person, whose philanthropy has got the better of his judgment. If, on the contrary, the public declare that the treatment of the wounded soldier on the field of battle and afterwards should be as effective as possible, I will endeavour to show what ought to be done to accomplish the object. Of the favourable intentions of the great authorities of the country—of the Commander in Chief in particular—I have never doubted. It is from the small, secondary authorities in the different offices of the four or five departments each measure proposed has to go through that discomfiture has hitherto occurred, and will probably again take place.

ON MILITARY MEDICAL EDUCATION.

By SIR GEORGE BALLINGALL,

PROFESSOR OF MILITARY SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—It is with no common interest that I have read the letter of my friend Mr. Guthrie, "On the Medical Service of the British Army." The substance of that letter it was my privilege to peruse, in Mr. Guthrie's room, several years ago, but no persuasion could induce him, at that time, (for the reasons he has stated,) to give me a copy of it, or to permit me to read it to my pupils. It would be idle and impertinent in me to attempt to add anything to what has been so forcibly urged from the unexampled experience of my friend, but there is one point connected with this subject on which I may possibly be permitted to offer an opinion.

I have now held the Professorship of Military Surgery in the University of Edinburgh for nearly two-and-thirty years, during which period several hundreds of old army and navy surgeons have attended my lectures, and many hundreds of young men have had their attention turned to those measures tending to diminish the mortality incident to protracted campaigns. "We have lately," says the editor of *The Times*, "been introduced to some elaborate calculations, purporting to show that preventable diseases carry off ten times the number of victims laid low in the most sanguinary engagements." "The actual bulletins of a campaign will undoubtedly give very striking results as to the smallness of the numbers slain in battle, but these numbers must be multiplied at least by ten to show the true consumption of life in war."

In a letter addressed, some ten years ago, to the late Sir

Robert Peel, the patron of my chair at the time I was appointed to it, and in a series of introductory lectures, I have urged the establishment in the other metropolitan cities, London and Dublin, of lectureships similar to the one I hold. In this I have been ably seconded by a succession of leading articles in *THE LANCET*, and other professional journals, and I appeal with confidence to the opinion of my old pupils in confirmation of the views I entertain as to what may be done by the united efforts of men devoted to the collection and diffusion of the accumulated and accumulating experience of the army and navy surgeons.

But let not this matter rest upon medical testimony alone, I appeal to the opinion of numerous general and field officers, from whom I have been honoured with communications, and who, while ready to acknowledge the professional services of their medical officers generally, lament their want of information on many points of military hygiene. Amongst these I would first mention the name of Sir De Lacy Evans, who brought this subject forward in an energetic appeal to the House of Commons, during the last session of Parliament. I hope I may also be permitted to mention the names of the Earl of Cathcart, Sir Thomas Brisbane, Sir Neil Douglas, and my old brother officer General Wetherall. Two of these distinguished officers long held the chief command of the troops in Scotland, another has for many years been the president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and all have had the best opportunities of knowing what is done here. But I have never rested this important question upon what has been *done*, but upon what has been *best*.

Notwithstanding the energetic, the untiring, the admirable exertions of your correspondent Mr. Guthrie, and others, there still lies open a vast field of bygone experience which I hold to be yet but imperfectly cultivated; and I trust that we are not going to enter upon another and a novel field of professional improvement without being in every way prepared to turn it to the utmost advantage. Old as I am, closely approaching to the three-score and ten, if I am destined to witness the commencement of another European conflict, I shall not be slow to watch the progress of events, to receive, I trust, as I have hitherto done, numerous communications from my old pupils, similar to those quoted in Mr. Guthrie's letter, and to do my best to press upon the attention of my auditors the many circumstances, whether prosperous or adverse, which so materially influence the health, vigour, and efficiency of the soldier and seaman, whether as regards the prevention of disease, the succour to be given to the wounded, or the comfort which may be afforded them in the wearisome hours which they must pass in the hospital. My utmost ambition is that in each of the other metropolitan schools of physic a colleague should be associated with me in the discharge of duties, which I know to be interesting to the rising generation of army and navy surgeons, and which may be made most conducive to the best interests of her Majesty's service.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

Edinburgh, Feb. 1854.

GEORGE BALLINGALL.

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF INSPECTORS OF HEALTH IN THE ARMY.

By THE LATE DR. ROBERT JACKSON,

THE GREAT MILITARY SURGEON.

(Communicated by J. RANALD MARTIN, F.R.S., and never before published.)

THE appointment of a person of the medical profession, for the inspection and arrangement of the matters which relate to health in barracks, camps, and transport-ships, bears on the face of it an obvious purpose of utility; but whether it prove useful or not on trial, will depend upon the zeal and ability with which the duty is executed. The causes which affect human health are often obscure, many of them so subtle that they are discerned with difficulty, and can only be appreciated by those who devote their time to the study and observation of them through all their changes. They even sometimes escape the keenest observation of the most accurate observers; yet it is reasonable to suppose that those who prosecute such investigations with zeal actually make some progress in knowledge; and if any discovery of knowledge be made, it is not a matter of doubt that it should be employed to assure the public good. It is easier to preserve health than to cure disease, and it implies less expense of means. If any information on the subject of preserving health in barracks, camps, or embarka-