

northward, and it is, as is well known, very infrequent on the northwest coast of Scotland. This prejudice had undoubtedly much to do with the origin of the treatment, by which patients were confined to close, ill-ventilated apartments, and prevented from exercising in the open air, especially in winter, a treatment which still, strange and irrational as it may seem, has some advocates. In discussing this subject, Dr. Thorowgood shows by figures that the disease is common to workmen in direct ratio to the degree of crowding and deficient ventilation of their workshops.

The book, although containing much that is of general application, has been written especially for English physicians, and that it has been thought well of by them is shown by the fact that it has reached three editions in a very few years. To the present edition is appended a chapter on the diet of consumptives which will be found to contain some useful hints. J. H. H.

ART. XXXII.—*The Principles of Naval Staff Rank; and its History in the United States Navy for over a Half Century.* By a Surgeon in the U. S. Navy. 8vo. pp. 240, 1869.

FEW readers of this journal have not heard something of a controversy about the official relations of medical men in the navy, which has been carried on more or less actively, between the "line" and medical "staff," during very many years. The American Medical Association has frequently spoken in behalf of the pretensions of those of the profession who have chosen military service as the field of their labours. Their number in the navy is limited by existing laws to two hundred, all of whom are carefully selected through the agency of boards of competent examiners, and for this reason it is only fair to suppose they are respectable representatives of the body of the medical profession in the United States. But professional respectability, or even professional efficiency of unexceptionable character in so small a body is not influential enough to obtain from Congress a recognition of the claims of its members to a fixed position relatively to others embraced in the naval officiality. It is believed that these gentlemen have the sympathy of the profession. This well written pamphlet is designed to present to it a summary of the arguments which have been adduced in favour of, and against the pretensions of medical men in the navy to just consideration, in order that their friends may be able to understandingly afford them the benefit of their influence.

Medical officers in the navy ask to be assigned by law an appropriate position relatively to other officers of every class and denomination in the military organization of which they are essential members, that no one may doubt who are their superiors or inferiors—that they may know to what privileges and immunities they are entitled according to the laws and customs of the community in which they officially live.

This position of relationship is technically termed RANK. Military rank means nothing more nor less than relative position in a military organization. There are some who, possibly from a contemplation of English aristocracy through hazy distance, place a vague and indefinite construction on the term. Such persons tell us that rank is "sacred," and is to be defended at the risk of life itself—always provided, however, that it is not the rank of staff officers which is in danger. The rank of an officer is simply his definite position relatively to other officers, and is "sacred"—to be guarded jealously—solely because it is the indication, if not the exact measure, of his importance and authority, as well as of his personal comfort.

A distinct comprehension of the merits of this controversy will be best reached, by our readers, through a clear understanding of the meaning of technical terms. Under this impression we submit the following definitions:—

The terms "line" and "staff" are employed to designate the two classes of officers which essentially complete every military organization.

The "line" of the navy of the United States consists of eleven grades of officers, namely: 1. Admiral; 2. Vice-admiral; 3. Rear-admiral; 4. Commodore; 5. Captain; 6. Commander; 7. Lieutenant-commander; 8. Lieutenant; 9. Master; 10. Ensign; and 11. Midshipman.

These grades constitute a scale, a series of steps. The naval cadet on graduating at the naval academy takes his place on the first step, in the grade of midshipman. Through serving in it he becomes qualified to be advanced to the grade of ensign. Service in this grade renders him eligible to appointment in the grade of master; and so on, from grade to grade, till he is promoted to that of admiral. Service in the lower grade is essential to his advancement to the next, progressively from the lowest to the highest, and this mode of promotion from grade to grade through the series, perhaps constitutes the reason why this classification of grades is denominated the "line."

A definite degree of official authority attaches to each grade. The title of the grade defines in a manner the limits of its functions. The duty of the three grades first named is limited to command fleets or squadrons; that of the three next—who are in fact, first, second and third class captains—to command single ships of the first, second and third rates; and that of all the others is, generally speaking, subordinate. Details in the management of guns and sails, and the administration of affairs on shipboard are assigned to them under the general direction of those duly placed in command.

The official power and importance of the officer increase as he is advanced in the "line;" and each step of advancement brings with it additional emolument and increased honours, privileges and immunities which contribute more or less to his personal comfort and convenience on board ship. But he incurs little if any increase of responsibility till he reaches the grade of lieutenant-commander, when he is eligible, though not absolutely entitled, to command a vessel of the fourth rate, for the reason that in military organizations responsible authority is centralized in the commanding officer. If a ship is stranded through the miscalculation of the navigation officer, or lack of vigilance of the officer of the watch, or surrendered to the enemy, the loss is charged upon her commander, and he is held for trial by a court-martial. He may plead, in extenuation, the faults of his subordinates, but without releasing himself from responsibility in the premises.

Official power descends, in a manner, from the highest to the lowest grades, and, also, from the senior to the junior of the same grade in the "line," because obedience is always due from the official inferior to his superior. It may be truly said that the "line," in military service, constitutes a military hierarchy, and that in it conflict of authority never occurs, because no two officers even of the same grade are equal in rank. Each is superior to every one below him and inferior to every one above him in his grade.

Although authority of general command is vested in it, the "line" is utterly powerless to execute any naval enterprise whatever without the aid of the secondary class, the "staff," so denominated because it is designed to afford necessary support in various ways.

The staff of the navy comprises medical officers, paymasters, engineers, chaplains, carpenters, &c. The corps, formed of each vocation, are organized after the manner of the line. The medical department includes grades of surgeon and assistant-surgeon; the office of surgeon of the fleet is temporary, and the title ceases with the discharge of the duties. Assistant-surgeons who have been found qualified for promotion are called, while waiting for advancement, passed-assistant-surgeons, but they do not constitute a grade according to law. The pay department consists of grades of paymaster, passed-assistant-paymaster and assistant-paymaster; and the engineer department, of grades of chief-engineer, first-assistant-engineer, and second-assistant-engineer, but the corps of chaplains, carpenters, sailmakers consist of one grade each. Rank in each staff corps is as well defined as rank in the line, or in any grade of the line, and therefore there can be no conflict of authority among the members of the same staff corps.

But between officers of the line and staff officers there is conflict, because the latter have no rank which the former are forced to respect, and because they sometimes resent what seems to them arrogant assumptions which are occasionally intolerable, even by the least sensitive minds. If medical men could be brought to acquiesce pleasantly in the opinion of the line on the question, and consequently be dependent upon their own personal tact to obtain, through the condescension or courtesy of the line a fair share of the little advantages of position, and exemption from petty aggression in any of its numberless forms, then there would be harmony; but such a harmony as characterized the relations between exacting masters and obedient, or unresisting slaves.

In general terms it may be said that on this question one-half of the officers of the navy are arrayed against the other. According to the navy register of January 1, 1869, the line—the military hierarchy—included 704, and the staff, 597 officers; and according to the register of July 1, 1869, the line consisted of 763, and the staff of 549. Between the dates of the two registers (six months) the line has been increased 59, and the staff has been decreased 48, the number of vacancies in the medical staff.

As long ago as 1812, the surgeons of the navy asked to be assigned a rank relative to that of officers of the line, who called themselves "officers proper" of the navy, and were generally termed "sea officers," while those of the staff were improperly denominated "civil officers."

Some of the most distinguished naval captains of those days sustained the application of the surgeons. But it was not until 1846 that any official answer was given to them. Then, Secretary-of-the-Navy Bancroft, finding that the officers of the line "were impracticable and would agree to nothing, and that Congress would do nothing, took the initiative" in conferring a rank on the medical staff. He issued a general order, as follows:—

"Surgeons of the fleet and surgeons of more than twelve years will rank with Commanders; Surgeons of less than twelve years, with Lieutenants; Past Assistant Surgeons, next after Lieutenants; Assistant Surgeons not passed, next after Masters. Commanding and executive officers, of whatever grade, when on duty, will take precedence over [of] all medical officers.

"This order confers no authority to exercise military command, and no additional right to quarters.  
GEORGE BANCROFT."

NAVY DEPARTMENT, August, 31, 1846.

To defeat the operation of this order, many officers of the line resorted to quibbles and subterfuges, in some instances worthy only of the low cunning which characterizes the most degraded among pettifogging attorneys. They declared it to be unconstitutional; that the Secretary of the Navy had no legal authority to issue such an order; that it was incomprehensible, and therefore could not be executed—that it was fraught with injury to the best interests of the service; that every officer was a commanding officer to a greater or less extent, because he could not discharge his duty without issuing commands; and that every officer is an executive officer, as long as he was executing the orders of his superior. To them it was a muddle, though they clearly understood that medical officers had no authority and no right to quarters. Under the construction given to it by the "line," this order was without meaning, and not susceptible of practical application in any manner or degree. They objected generally, that the surgeons were seeking rank in order that they might claim a share of the ship's cabin; or to qualify themselves to command ships, because, they said, erroneously, however, "rank carries with it the right to command." This reason is remarkable, only because it was urged before passed-assistant surgeon E. K. Kane and Dr. I. I. Hayes had become renowned commanders of Arctic exploring expeditions.

In vain medical officers urged that the construction of the order is plain; that the term "commanding officers" was used to designate those officers who are assigned to command ships or posts; that the term "executive officers" indicated those who were generally recognized as "First Lieutenants," or "Senior Lieutenants," because executive officers are temporary creatures, and

do not form a grade known to the law. They contended that every command which can be enforced under military laws is, *ipso facto*, a military command—and for this reason the plain intention of the phrase “no authority to exercise military command” is that medical officers shall not command in the line; that the words “no additional right to quarters” means simply that a surgeon, though he ranked with commanders, could not claim to share quarters in the cabin with a commander of the line, and that he should be quartered, as he had been previously, in the ward-room with the lieutenants and others; that “next after Lieutenants” means to rank with, but always junior to, “line” officers of that grade.

The Secretary of the Navy was unable to induce officers of the “line” generally to obey this order. The medical officers were left to their courtesy; and, although Congress legalized it August 5, 1854, the controversy still continued.

Contumacy in this respect may have its origin in external influences. The educational system under which they are reared at the naval academy, the habit of living together afloat in small companies, often segregated from general society for months or even years, and their constant use of the imperative mood in their official intercourse with shipmates, are calculated to beget and foster in line officers excessive self-appreciation, and at the same time, perhaps, an under-estimation of the worth of men of different pursuits. Naturally modest and sensible persons under such influences may be made self-sufficient, opinionated, and learn to entertain extravagant notions, and even fancy themselves to be of a higher caste than the average citizens of the republic. Men with minds so moulded may be found employing for private or personal ends the power which is conferred on them for official purposes exclusively, sometimes much to the annoyance of those placed under it. A commodore of this type might exact more from a midshipman than from a lieutenant-commander; but holding a defined position relatively to himself, being of his own vocation and heirs to his office in the order of their official precedence, he would probably be more forbearing under like circumstances to either, than to any one not of the catenate succession. In his estimation those of inferior caste can have no rights of any kind which may possibly conflict with his own—as he supposes them to be. He feels sure there is no caste superior to his own, and hence he manifests his contumacious spirit when any attempt is made to bound its powers.

Debate has brought no conviction to the “line,” because it entertains a deeply-rooted feeling in place of opinion on the subject, which partakes of the nature of all caste prejudices which have a traditional support and existence: as fast as the arguments with which it surrounds its position are overthrown it entrenches itself in new ones. Its discomfiture in argument serves only to intensify its feeling of hostility. The struggle will probably continue until Congress, the only competent authority in the premises, shall be pleased to enact an appropriate law to regulate the official relations between the “line” and the “staff” corps of the navy.

When Mr. Bancroft's order was issued the “line” included only six grades, namely, Captain, Commander, Lieutenant, Master, Passed Midshipman, Midshipman. The rebellion came. The prowess of the navy deservedly won the applause and favour of the people. As a matter of course, officers of the line were conspicuous in every naval enterprise. Congress, in recognition of the services of *the whole navy*, and in compliance with views which had been long previously pressed on its attention, established additional grades of line officers, July 16, 1862, but passed unnoticed the services of medical and other staff officers. Some medical officers were killed and some were drowned in battle—their vessels sinking in the fight; eleven were taken prisoners by the enemy in one year; some died of disease contracted in the line of duty; and some, prematurely exhausted while yet in the prime of manhood by excessive professional toil and exposure, were placed on the “retired list,” and left, without ability to work, suffering from health, hopelessly ruined, to contend for a pinched existence on the very slender income the law allows. Such evidence of professional zeal and efficiency Congress did not heed. The “line” swallowed up all the attention and favour it had to bestow upon the navy; or it did not consider staff

services (which, though unattended by noise or display, cannot be rendered without risk of life and health) worthy of special recognition or reward.

The medical and all other staff officers conceived, however, that inasmuch as active service exposed them to perils and privations alike with their associates of the "line," they are alike entitled to analogous rewards for their services. The navy department believed that the "staff" had earned a title to consideration.

Congress enacted, July 14, 1862, "That the orders, regulations, and instructions heretofore issued by the Secretary of the Navy be, and are hereby recognized as the regulations of the navy department, subject, however, to such alterations as the Secretary of the Navy may adopt, with the approbation of the President of the United States."

After consulting Attorney General Bates, President Lincoln, and members of his cabinet, it was determined that the Secretary of the Navy was authorized by this law to confer additional rank on the staff officers. He accordingly issued regulations, March 13, 1863, designating the classes of staff officers, and conferring relative rank upon them. The following refers to the medical department:—

"Assistant Surgeons to rank with Masters.

Passed Assistant Surgeons to rank with Lieutenants.

Surgeons to rank with Lieutenant-commanders for the first five years after promotion; after the first five years, with Commanders; and after fifteen years date of commission to rank with Captains.

Surgeon of the Fleet to rank with Captain."

The medical staff believed itself to be entitled to higher degrees of relative rank, and pointed to the positions occupied by medical officers in foreign navies to support the pretension.

A bill to regulate the relative rank of medical officers, which was satisfactory to the corps, and approved by the naval committee, Admiral Farragut and other distinguished naval officers, was reported to the House of Representatives early in January last. It was discussed by gentlemen who were not well informed in the premises, and defeated through promptings of officers of the line who instructed their friends vaguely and generally, but in such manner as to impose false impressions, and create false issues. Rumor says that money was freely contributed by officers of the line to strengthen their opposition to the staff.

General Grant was inaugurated President of the United States. Mr. A. E. Borie was appointed Secretary of the Navy. He assumed the duties of the office March 8th, and it very soon became apparent that he was the leader of the line faction hostile to the staff corps. He issued orders in rapid succession adverse to the interests of staff officers. March 10th he ordered that "commanding and executive officers, ashore and afloat, will take precedence over all staff officers," and on the 11th he directed the uniform dress to be changed disparagingly to the staff; "the practice of covering the berth-decks of vessels of war with shellac to be discontinued"—a sanitary measure suggested by medical officers to abate the dampness of the men's sleeping apartment: yellow paint—applied by advice of staff officers to spars to lessen the extent of rot by reflecting instead of absorbing the sun's rays—to be superseded by black, which experience shows to be more expensive, and injurious: executive officers to be recognized as representatives of their commanding officers, and, ashore and afloat, their orders to be regarded as emanating from the latter, and they are to take precedence of staff officers on all occasions:—medical and other staff officers serving in the capacity of officers of the fleet, as fleet surgeon, &c., are instructed not to wear the uniform of the higher relative rank after being relieved from the duty (thus conveying to the public an offensive, and, it is believed, groundless imputation against the decorum of staff officers);—commandants of navy-yards are directed to send the Secretary any bureau regulations which, in their judgment, "may take from the authority of the line officers of the navy:"—all honors hitherto paid to fleet surgeons, paymasters, and engineers, due only to commanders of vessels to be discontinued. No fleet officer to order any survey, or "go on board any vessel of a squadron

to make an inspection or examination of any kind, without special written orders from the commander of the squadron." The law (May 24, 1828) requires the surgeon of the fleet "in difficult cases, to consult with the surgeons of the several ships;" but under this general order he cannot, without a special written order from the commander of the squadron.

Such is the substance of seven of the thirteen distinct general orders issued in a single day, March 11th. That part of the "instructions to medical officers" which requires the fleet surgeon to order boards of medical survey was annulled March 12th, and on the 15th the order giving rank to apothecaries—relatively to boatswain's mates—was revoked.

Within twenty-four days after Mr. Borie began to administer the affairs of the navy department, the rank conferred by the regulation of March 13th, 1863, and the regulation itself, were annulled, with the effect of greatly reducing the very small pay of all staff officers on the retired list. At every point where the medical staff was vulnerable, an attack was made, seemingly for the purpose of humiliating it and elevating the line proportionately.

About the same time, Senator Grimes, chairman of the naval committee, had passed by the Senate a bill which abolished the bureau of medicine and surgery, and reduced the rank of all medical officers lower than it had ever been. This bill, most objectionable in all its features, without a single exception, in the opinion of very many men of ripe judgment, is still in the hands of the naval committee of the House of Representatives, although Mr. Borie earnestly urged that it should be reported and passed without amendment.

In the face of all these circumstances, Surgeon Pinckney stated to the American Medical Association, at New Orleans, in May last, among other things, that "the medical corps was never placed on a firmer basis than at the present moment." A majority of the medical officers "repudiate his whole speech in letter and spirit, because it is not an exposition in any degree of the views of the corps," and they declare themselves thoroughly dissatisfied with the position to which they have been recently reduced, and alarmed at the still further reduction proposed in the bill of Senator Grimes. They repudiate Surgeon Pinckney's "statement" solely because of its publication by the line as evidence that the medical staff is content with its humiliated condition.

In this connection it may be stated that a court-martial has been in session recently, in Washington, to try whether a medical officer has authority to determine that a patient shall be released from the discharge of his duties in opposition to the opinion of his commanding officer. The question was submitted in a charge of "disobedience of orders," against Passed Assistant-Surgeon Charles L. Green, preferred by Lieutenant-commander Thomas O. Selfridge, of the *Nipsic*, through the Secretary of the Navy, the specification being that Dr. Green had refused to discharge from the sick-list a man who was suffering from a cutlass wound of the scalp, when ordered by his commanding officer. The result of the trial has not been officially published. If it should be determined that the medical officer is incompetent to decide, against the opinion of his captain, whether a patient is or is not physically qualified to perform his duty, neither officer nor man, when sick on board ship, has any refuge from the contingency of annoyance or even cruel treatment by a commanding officer who possibly may be a man of narrow intellect, and of a capricious or tyrannical disposition, or, even worse, he may be a martinet. It is believed, however, that it has always been conceded in all military services, that it is among the peculiar functions of the medical officer to determine who is or is not in condition to be released temporarily from duty, on account of physical ailment. It seems remarkable that the Department submitted such a question to legal discussion.

It is contended that every member of a military organization should have a definite position in it, which is not contingent upon circumstances of any kind; and that the position of medical officers should be, to some extent at least, indicative of their importance or value in it. The rank of medical officers relatively to the "line," in the French and Austrian navies, rises to that of rear-admiral; in the British, Russian, and Spanish navies, as high as vice-admiral, and in all of them they receive the honours and wear the uniform dress pertaining to the rank. There is no exception made in favour of "executive officers." The

rank of medical officers, be it what it may, is fixed, and its privileges or immunities are never contingent upon the presence or absence of a line officer of inferior rank, called "executive"—whose official functions are local—temporary; he is simply the agent, the *locum tenens* of his commander, whose general instructions he executes, without authority to originate any order.

To a private citizen naval rank of any degree is worthless, perhaps absurd; no statesman, scientist, physician, or lawyer, labours assiduously in his vocation to win as a reward a legal right to be of the same rank as a commodore or even admiral in the naval service.

"But officers of the medical staff, as well as those of other staff corps, have learned from 'the line' to appreciate the value of rank in the navy; and they have also learned, from some other source however, to believe implicitly that merits of all kinds are brothers, and, in the same community or organization, are equally entitled to rewards and distinctions of the same nature. Their faith in this doctrine is so firm that it cannot be shaken by the assumption that 'the line' is the whole navy, and that to it exclusively belong all the merits, all the distinctions, and all the rewards, as well as all the honours and glory won by the joint efforts of men who, though not of 'the line,' are recognized nevertheless to be honest, intelligent, skillful, brave, and patriotic. But in preferring their own claims, they wish not to disparage others in any degree. They cheerfully recognize the merits of 'the line,' and rejoice that its efforts, aided by the staff, have deservedly won reward and public approbation."—p. 145.

The pamphlet before us is a fair exposition of the subject, and embraces, perhaps in too much detail to interest the general reader, views of every aspect of the question. No one can read it without a conviction that Congress should, without unnecessary delay, enact such a law as is calculated to put an end to a controversy which has lasted too long, probably with detriment to the harmony which should characterize an organization composed of gallant and intelligent gentlemen. In such a community Congress should not permit well-founded dissatisfaction to exist for want of a law to remove it.

Inasmuch as the degree of rank accorded to medical men in the military establishments of the nation may be regarded as a measure of the common estimation of the profession by the public, the subject is of general interest to all physicians and surgeons. We offer this reason in excuse for a somewhat extended notice of this pamphlet, which is exhaustive in its character.

W. S. W. R.

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ART. XXXIII.—*Report on the Diseases of Cattle in the United States, by the Commissioner of Agriculture.*

A REPORT on the diseases of cattle in the United States is now being published at Washington under the direction of the Commissioner of Agriculture. If the gentlemen selected for the other portions of the work be as competent investigators as those to whom the asserted causation of some of these diseases by fungi has been intrusted, the report will be of the deepest interest to medical men as well as of very great practical importance to the country. It seems to us that in no other way can the department spend its funds more advantageously; the general ignorance on the subject being so great and the money value concerned so enormous. We sincerely hope that Congress will make a sufficient appropriation to enable the Commissioner to issue the final report in a style commensurate with the importance of the subject, and which may bear comparison with the magnificent volumes published by the government of Great Britain on the cattle plague.

We have been favoured with early sheets of the report of Drs. J. S. Billings and Edward Curtis of the Surgeon-General's Office, to whom was intrusted the examination of the blood of infected animals, also with that of Mr. J. W. Ravenel, than whom no more competent person could have been selected to examine the fungal flora of the territory in which the "Texan disease" originates.