Clinical and other Notes.

THE BOMBAY MEDICAL CONGRESS, 1909.

We would wish to draw the attention of our readers to the notice of the Medical Congress to be held in Bombay in February, 1909, on p. 15, of the current issue of the Corps News.

The Central Committee consists of representatives of the different branches of the medical profession, and the Congress will be held under the Presidentship of His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, among the Vice-Presidents being the members of his Council, the Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, the Principal Medical Officer His Majesty's Forces in India, &c. Lieutenant-Colonel W. E. Jennings, I.M.S., is the General Secretary (and Editor of the Transactions).

Tropical medicine, surgery, hygiene and parasitology form the greater part of the subjects to be considered.

Admission to all members of the medical profession will be free, subject to certain restrictions, but medical subscribers of 10 rupees or over will be entitled to admission unconditionally, while those of 15 rupees or over will have their names registered as well for a free copy of the Transactions (which would otherwise have to be bought).

The session will extend over four days, and the subjects will be considered in six sections.

THE CARE OF THE FEET IN THE GERMAN ARMY.

By Captain C. R. Sylvester Bradley.

Royal Army Medical Corps.

In a former article¹ I endeavoured to point out the methods adopted in the American Army to ensure efficiency with regard to their soldiers' feet. The present article deals with the care of the feet in the large conscripted German Army, in which the men serve for a definite short period, discipline is very severe, the pay extremely small, and in which no inducement is needed as in non-conscripted armies to make men enlist. The definite conditions which prevail between a conscripted army and a highly paid non-conscripted army is strongly evidenced by the allotment of boots to recruits during their first year's service. The American recruit gets eight pairs of boots; the German one pair of Wellingtons and one pair of canvas boots. The former recruit is supplied with the best boots that money and skill can supply, whilst

¹ Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps, November, 1907.
the latter is lucky if he has not to be content with a “second-hand” pair of Wellingtons, fitting none too well.

The arrangement for the supply of boots in the German Army is done regimentally, the boots being made in the regimental bootmakers' shop by "skilled bootmakers." These men are professional bootmakers when they join the army, and work in the bootmakers' shop during the whole of their service, only having to go through their "preliminary training" and an annual course of musketry. There are also company bootmakers, whose duty is to repair the boots of the men in their own company; these men are struck off "guards" and "fatigues," but otherwise have to perform their ordinary military duties, and are taken out into camp and on manoeuvres, &c. All minor repairs have to be paid for by the men themselves, but new soles may be obtained from the regimental store, and are "put on" by the company bootmakers.

The issue of boots to the recruit is, as I have remarked above, Wellingtons, or lange stiejel, one pair; canvas, or schnürschuhe, one pair. The Wellingtons are of black calf skin with wide uppers, into which the trousers can be "tucked," and the soles are hob-nailed; these boots are supposed to last one and a quarter years, but are often made to last much longer. The "canvas shoes" resemble canvas laced English tennis boots with leather soles, which must last one and a half years.

There is no issue of socks or other protection for the feet, each recruit supplying his own, and continuing to keep himself supplied out of his pay.

From the above description it is easy to imagine how very inferior the "foot-gear" of the German soldier really is, and one would naturally expect to find them correspondingly "poor marchers"; but this is not so, for they are well up to the average of the modern European infantry soldier. It is the maintenance of this standard of efficiency with inferior equipment that is so interesting to investigate. There is no system of regimental or company chiropodist in the German Army, so that efficient results have to be attained solely by (1) individual effort on the part of the soldier; (2) taking full advantage of the regimental and company bootmakers; (3) constant supervision of the feet by company officers, medical officers and N.C.O.'s; (4) deterrent punishment in case of neglect.

The disadvantage of "Wellington boots" to march in are many, the chief ones being their liability to slip and rub at the heel unless they are made so tight that they pinch at the instep; no support is afforded to the ankle, and when marching in wet weather or wading through streams they are apt to fill with water, which has no means of escape.

As there is no provision of socks regimentally, the German soldier has been forced to find the best means of protecting his feet with as little drain on his pay as possible, and the outcome of this is the square piece of rag, or fusslappen, in which they wrap their feet much in the same way as a triangular "foot-bandage" is applied. This form of protection
Clinical and other Notes

is cheap, easily renewable, and when properly applied can be made to overcome many individual peculiarities of foot or boots. It is a common practice to keep the fusslappen oiled or greased; and another not generally known practice amongst men who suffer from easily blistered or "fired" feet, is to first wrap their feet in an old piece of newspaper. I have never tried this myself, but was told by an old soldier that as soon as the paper had got warm and accommodated itself to the shape of the foot it was most comforting and effectual.

The boots are kept thoroughly oiled or greased, and are only polished for church and other big parades.

The system of company bootmakers is decidedly sound, as minor repairs or alterations can be executed on the march, but the great secret of success is the personal supervision by company officers, medical officers, and N.C.O.'s, the feet and boots of all men being inspected daily, and daily washing of the feet being strictly enforced. A dusting powder of salicylic acid, starch and French chalk for hardening the feet is constantly used on the march, and also in barracks, while formalin in powder and liquid form is also provided.

There is no specified punishment for a man who falls out with sore feet, but should the company officer consider the soreness due to neglect in the repair of his boots, washing his feet, applying dusting powder, &c., he may and does punish him, with most excellent results.

---

THE SANITATION OF STANDING CAMPS IN INDIA.

BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL F. W. CATON JONES.

Royal Army Medical Corps.

The following notes are supplementary to those on Indian sanitation already published in the Journal for January, 1907.

We have all, I am sure, been depressed by the very insanitary condition into which camps get after being occupied for a short time. This, too, in spite of all the instructions in the little red books.

Being a "Fly Maniac," I judge of the result of our efforts, and gauge our peril, by the number of flies present. Flies are the camp warning signal of enteric fever danger. But please note that the "Fly Maniacs" do not relax any precautions against water infection. They are as keen on that as their brethren of the "water only" school. But they recognise both dangers.

In making recommendations, the first consideration out here is one of expense, but much can be done at little cost. A sharp outbreak of cholera in the 117th Mahrattas in October last made us think out a system of disposal of excreta in camp by which flies would not be attracted or bred. Lieutenant M. F. Reaney, I.M.S., and myself