(1) To place the patient on the operating table or bed the two bearers raise the stretcher to the level of the table (or bed) as in fig. 2. The three nurses then raise their patient off the stretcher. The bearers keeping that handle of the stretcher which is next the table steady, allow the opposite handle to fall like the flap of a folding table, so that the stretcher assumes the position as in fig. 3. The nurses then move forward and lower their patient on the table (or bed); after that the stretcher is removed.

(2) To lift the patient from the table (or bed) the process is reversed. The two bearers place the stretcher as in fig. 3. The nurses then lift the patient, and while moving back from the table (or bed) the bearers raise the stretcher to a horizontal position under the patient as in fig. 2.

Lecture.

"ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CORPS." 1

By Lieutenant-Colonel E. M. Wilson, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Royal Army Medical Corps (R.).

I have been asked by Lieutenant-Colonel Nichol to give you a short address on subjects connected with your duties as officers of the Corps. I know that since your arrival at the Depot you have attended many lectures, and for fear that you may be inclined to say, as was said of a lady long ago, that you "had suffered many things of many lecturers, and were nothing bettered but rather grew worse," I will try to make my remarks as interesting as possible and reasonably brief.

As I have been connected with office work for some years, you must not be surprised if I devote a little time to what may seem uninviting topics, such as regulations, correspondence, forms, &c. I promise you at the outset that I am not going into unnecessary details, but only intend to give a few hints on matters which, whether you like it or not, you will have to learn sooner or later, and which it will be to your advantage to learn as soon as possible.

In "Little Dorrit" (I do not know whether anyone reads Dickens nowadays), the bright, engaging young Barnacle of the circumlocution office says to Arthur Clennam, "You had better take a lot of forms away with you. Give him a lot of forms." I am sure you would be as disgusted as he was if I spent this half-hour in discussing these printed abominations; but on the other hand, it is as well for your own sake,

1 Delivered to officers under instruction at the Depot, Aldershot, on October 24th, 1908.
On Matters relating to the Corps

if from no other motive, that you should realise the importance of having an accurate knowledge of routine administration.

Do not think this knowledge beneath the dignity of an officer of a scientific corps. Gibbon tells us that the gifted Julian, when studying whatever was the equivalent of squad drill in his days, ejaculated, "Oh Plato, what a task for a philosopher!" Do not you, when filling in some "beastly form," exclaim, "Oh Æsculapius, what a task for a bacteriologist!" and I will tell you why.

First, because it is essential, if you mean to be top in your own show, whether in charge of a hospital or as company officer at an outlying detachment, or as commander of a medical unit in time of war, that you must know a little more of everything than your subordinates, whether it is Military Law, King's Regulations, Standing Orders, or anything else. You should be in a position to teach them and not to be dependent on them for anything. A distinguished officer who once commanded this Depot had occasion to reprimand a subordinate for slackness. "If you do not do your work better, you will go back to ordinary duty," he said, "I can do without you." "Yes sir," said the subordinate humbly, "I know you can, and that is the worst of it." Senior officers will, I am sure, agree with me on this point, especially as regards India, where there is a tendency, if not checked, for routine matters to get into the hands of native clerks, which is not desirable.

The second reason is, that undue reliance on juniors and subordinates must (apart from loss of personal prestige) sooner or later lead to disaster. You will at some time or another, to put it vulgarly, "get let in." An officer said to me the other day, with natural indignation, "My clerks expect me to know regulations and teach them, whereas it is their business." This is all very well, but if you act on this principle something will happen some day which "will hurl your soul from Heaven, and fiends will snatch at it," meaning, with all due respect, that Principal Medical Officers, Deputy Assistant Governors, Chief Accountants, and people of that sort, whose duty it is to correct officers when they go wrong, will have something to say that you will not like.

The third reason, which I have kept till the last, because I am certain it will appeal to you most, is that through ignorance or negligence you may do an injustice to a junior officer or subordinate of the Corps. I need not labour this point, because I feel sure that in such matters as confidential reports, favourable or otherwise, orderly-room awards, claims, recommendations, &c., you will wish to act perfectly fairly and with full knowledge of the results of your decisions, and this you cannot have without a thorough acquaintance with military law and the King's and other regulations.

One word about the much-abused "forms." If you were suddenly called upon to obtain or give certain information regarding a large body
of men, how would you proceed? You would at once make out and tabulate a "form," despatch it with instructions how to fill it in to the various individuals or departments concerned, and compile your own from the reports which you received. You could not do anything else, otherwise the clerical labour would be immense and the result unsatisfactory. I am not saying anything now as to whether the information is useful or necessary, only that you are ordered to do it, and I am suggesting the easiest way.

I well remember being on a committee at the War Office some years ago when this question was discussed. It was often said, "Why do you want a form for this?" I said, "Well, what do you propose instead? The information has to be given." The reply was almost invariably, "Make it out in manuscript." Now I pass round half a dozen of these detestable forms and ask any officer present which is the easier, to make out a score or a hundred or a thousand of these in manuscript with full directions, or to print an equal amount and give each a definite number.

Observe that each form has definite instructions and footnotes how to make it out, and observe also that I am not saying a word as to the necessity or utility of the forms when completed. It is sufficient for our present purpose that we are obeying orders. I only ask, which is the easier, which gives the least clerical labour to officers and clerks, and which is likely to be most uniform and accurate?

I think I may add after some years' work here and at the War Office, that no officer in the Army is anxious to multiply forms, but rather to simplify and reduce them, and so far as our own Corps is concerned I have done my best in that direction, and I shall always be glad to receive suggestions and recommendations for their further simplification in the future.

For your comfort I may say that company work has largely decreased in the last few years, and that as regards what remains you are no worse off than officers in any other branch of the Army.

Before leaving this subject may I give one word of warning regarding returns relating to accounts or money? These are to many, perhaps to most of us, the least interesting. A friend of mine at a foreign station once said that the only form of this nature which interested him was his own pay list, and that he generally did wrong! Yet none is more important. Should anything go wrong, little clouds have a tendency to grow into thunderstorms at very short notice. Not long ago some trouble occurred at a certain station regarding a postage account and the results were very widespread. I should like to urge junior officers never to sign a return connected with money until they are thoroughly satisfied as to its correctness.

Leaving paper work, which it is difficult to make attractive, I will turn your attention to something more interesting, and that is your
relations to the men you will command; and first and foremost I wish to
lay stress, as I have done before in similar lectures, on the special advan-
tages our officers possess over all other branches of the Army by the fact
that they are the medical officers as well as the commanding officers of
the Corps. From the commencement to the termination of his military
service, when anything important happens to any soldier he is medically
examined. As regards the commencement—his enlistment—I need not
detain you, as I know this has already been brought to your notice by
better men. I will only quote once more to you the instructions laid
down in Recruiting and Medical Regulations. The first says:—

"Recruits for the Royal Army Medical Corps will not be finally
approved until they have been certified by the medical officer as 'suitable
for the Royal Army Medical Corps,'" and the Medical Regulations direct:
"In passing recruits for the Royal Army Medical Corps the medical officer
will satisfy himself that the recruit can read (not only printed matter
but plain handwriting) and understands what he reads, and can write;
he will not approve of any man who, judging by his want of education
or intelligence, unsatisfactory character or appearance, does not seem
likely to prove a suitable man for the Royal Army Medical Corps."

I ask you to bear these instructions in mind, and whenever you are
engaged in recruiting, and a doubtful candidate for our Corps is brought
before you, to think of two things: First, that our Corps is a favourite one
and that it is always nearly full up and sometimes even in excess of its
establishment, and that, therefore, there is no necessity to accept doubtful
candidates. Secondly, to ask yourself, "Is this the sort of man that
I should like to have serving under me at a small hospital with only one
N.C.O. and two or three privates?" If not, why should you send him
to one of your brother officers? Remember also, that all extensions of
service from three to seven years, and from seven to twelve years, are
strictly limited, and from the latter we have to select all our senior
N.C.O.'s and warrant officers, and you will realise how much you may
help the officer in charge of Records, with whom the decision rests,
by your recommendations or refusal to recommend as circumstances
require. We must be guided in our office mainly by recommendations
from officers commanding who know the men personally, while we can
only know their official records.

The position is interesting, but the scheme has not been in working
order long enough to enable me to form any decided opinion; it is un-
doubtedly an application of the Darwinian theory of the survival of the
fittest in a severe form, and should give us in a few years the finest
senior N.C.O.'s and warrant officers in the Army.

Now let us turn for a moment to the other end of the soldier’s career.
A large number, the great majority in fact, cannot extend and must go
to the reserve. Will you try to help them and see that they understand
what they must do on joining the reserve and how they can best obtain
employment? I am in daily correspondence with these men, and I am often astonished how little they know when they put on their civilian clothes and walk gaily out of barracks into the world outside—a world which is over-full of unemployed men already. The letters I get are pitiful. The men lose their postcards (A.F.D. 424); they do not report themselves and forfeit their reserve pay; they have no work and do not know how to get it; they want to get back to the Army, any branch if they cannot come back to us, and are often in great distress. I would ask you and all officers, when men are going away, to take a personal interest and see if they really know what they are going to do and how they are going to do it. Do not leave it all to the staff-serjeant, however good and capable he may be. I am quite aware that the men themselves may resent advice. They have been well fed and clothed for several years; they have money in their pockets and are quite ignorant of the competition and pressure in the industrial world. The instructions they receive are quite clear if they are explained to them, but they will learn far more from a few words from an officer than they will from their printed instructions which they stuff into their pockets and never read. There is a short notice in a recent Royal Army Medical Corps Journal on the subject of obtaining employment if you will look at it. We are a branch of the National Association for the Employment of Reserve and Discharged Soldiers for our own Corps, but it is not much use registering men in this branch for unqualified labour. For trained men, dispensers, valet attendants, masseurs, &c., &c., we are fairly successful in obtaining billets, but the untrained men had better register in the districts where they intend to reside.

Finally, for those who fall by the way, or for those who leave widows and children behind them, there is our own Corps Fund, which though small is steadily increasing, and has already done good service towards relief of distress and the education of children. It is supported by grants from canteens and recreation funds and also by a donation from the Royal Army Medical Corps Fund to which we all subscribe. For the men with whom you are serving, those who like the Army and who wish to stay in it as long as they can, you can do a good deal if you care to try. You have already had some experience as to what is done at the Depot, and if you look at the Corps News, which is published every month in the Journal, you will see accounts from stations at home and abroad of good football teams, good cricket elevens, good sports, entertainments, and recreations of all sorts; and where this is the case you will find good companies and very little crime. And those who are ambitious to rise—and they are many—you may be able to help with a little kindly advice and explanation. The new standing orders have hardly been published a year, and since then a pamphlet has been issued modifying the courses of instruction in the nursing section and facilitating the advancement of really good men. The main point to drive home is this: Our powers of extension
of service are so limited that we can only accept the best, and if a man
wishes to remain in the Army to earn a pension or to obtain promotion
to warrant or commissioned rank he must qualify in some special subject,
or pass the ordinary examinations of the Corps, and the sooner he does
so the better, or he will be swept into the reserve with the rest. This
is the age of examinations, as you know to your cost, and as the pathway
is narrowed it is a case of the—reserve take the hindmost. Perhaps
a little fellow-feeling may induce you to direct the ambitious young
private or N.C.O. in the way he should go.

I have avoided going into wearisome details and have only tried to
indicate some of the main points which may be of use to you in your
future service; and it should not be forgotten that it is one service,
one badge, one motto, one uniform, and that the head is not much use
in peace or war unless it has trained hands to assist it in carrying out
instructions.

**Reviews.**

**WAR SONGS.** Selected by Christopher Stone. With Introduction by
Price 2s. 6d.

This is a collection of nearly a hundred songs and ballads, many
of them rescued from the obscurity of ballad books and archaeological
collections, arranged in chronological order of composition. They range
from “Bannockburn” and “Otterburn” to “The Red Thread of Honour”
and “The Private of the Buffs” of Sir F. H. Doyle. “Soldiers’ Songs”
would have been a more fitting title, as, with the exception of “The Sea
Fight at Sluys,” exploits on land only are dealt with; the compiler having
collected “Sea Songs and Ballads” in a companion volume. Many of
these poems, such as “The Burial of Sir John Moore” and “Hohenlinden,
would hardly be called songs; and, as Sir Ian Hamilton tells us in the
introduction, with four or five exceptions, they are caviare, not perhaps
to the general, but certainly to the soldier. He adds that it is well they
should be published to keep alive old associations and sentiments, and
to teach us, in these days of Peace Conferences and Millennium Dreamers,
how our ancestors jeopardized their lives and found it more a matter for
joy than lamentation.

The Army as a whole, he says, although lukewarm, as compared with
German and Russian troops, about singing themselves, are always glad—
eager, indeed, would be the better word—to listen to the singing of
others; and that they like a good soldier song most of all, though they
have few opportunities of knowing the best. Of this he gives several
striking instances. He regrets the abyss into which we are being lured
by our music-halls, and shows how soldiers still greatly appreciate songs
which are innocent and touching, especially if generously seasoned with
sentiment.