

Editorial.

WE have read with much interest in the last number of the Journal Colonel Forman's letter entitled "The Future of the Journal." It brings back to the mind far away schooldays and *Quot homines, tot sententiae*.

Colonel Forman begins by saying that a considerable number of our officers do not subscribe to the Journal, which fact would seem to prove that there is a lack of general interest and that it is not widely popular. We must confess that the number of non-subscribers, 120, is larger than we would like. This is, as he says, much to be regretted, but we think it will be granted that in any body of men there will always be found a certain percentage who will be governed by private considerations rather than the general good. To some also the *res angusta domi* may be a not altogether unimportant argument. It will therefore probably be impossible under any circumstances to extend its popularity so as to secure the support of all. Next it appears to Colonel Forman that "the tone of the magazine has been too ultra-scientific, too strictly professional, and especially too prominently bacteriological." In January, 1904, we wrote that the main function of this Journal was to assist in the development of the Army Medical Service into a scientific corps by which a large part of the scientific medical work of the Empire would be done.

Colonel Forman places two kinds of papers side by side, "The Investigation of Malta Fever" and "The Humour of Indian Sanitation," and asks us "to look here upon this picture and on this." Let us do so. We see in the papers on Malta fever scientific work which has resulted in the discovery of the mode of infection of this dreadful malady, which has already lessened by some 90 per cent. the incidence of this fever among our soldiers and sailors, and which in all probability will blot out the yearly 70,000 or 80,000 days of illness from this cause alone which have disgraced the annals of the Army and the Navy in the past. This is work which will be honoured in all parts of the world, and will probably be quoted for generations as one of the most brilliant examples of preventive work in the history of medicine.

Is to search out the causes and prevent the incidence of disease in our Army not our real work? What is treatment in comparison

to this? What are clinical cases, descriptions of routine surgical operations, travel or sport, in comparison to such a result?

On the other hand we have "The Humour of Indian Sanitation," well written and full of humour no doubt, but disclosing a cynical and deplorable condition of things wherein stupidity and fraud seem to reign equally. Reforms may be brought about by ridicule, but, in our opinion, it is a roundabout way of doing the work, as scientific investigation must precede the reforms if they are going to be lasting and useful. It is also suggested by Colonel Forman that the papers on Malta fever need not have been published in full but merely presented in abstract. We, on the other hand, thought it would be useful to show in detail how work of this kind is done, so that it might serve as a model to our officers undertaking an investigation in out-of-the-way places.

Colonel Forman further believes that controversial matter should be admitted to the Journal. So do we, and we will publish anything of the sort, in reason, which comes in, and we also see no reason why correspondents should not use pseudonyms if they so desire—in fact, they have already been used. We do not agree with him in thinking that the Journal should take up the cudgels against anonymous writers in the public Press.

In conclusion, we would say in our defence that the Journal is what our officers make it. Every paper sent in is published if room can be found for it. We are not keeping back any papers from our brethren in the Reserve Forces who wish to discuss questions in which they are interested. Preference is certainly given to original scientific work, but this takes up comparatively little space, and when the Mediterranean Fever Commission comes to an end it will take up still less. We would wish to publish every paper immediately it comes in, but this is impossible, as only about 100 pages are allowed to each number. It is often proposed that the Journal should be printed on thinner, lighter paper, in order that officers might carry their copies about with them. This, we believe, is seldom done. If a set is bound and kept in each military hospital and mess there will be no necessity to carry it about. This could easily be done if officers would only present their copies to the hospital or mess instead of destroying them.

