

Artillery—suffer more from ear troubles and deafness than other branches of the Service, and it is quite a common practice to have men attend at the Medical Inspection Room for the purpose of having their ears syringed. No doubt the firing has some special effect either in breaking up the wax in the ear or in its secretion; be this as it may, I find that by dropping in some slightly warmed almond oil over-night and syringing with warm soap and water on the following morning, the desired relief is generally obtained and no further trouble experienced for the time being.

In an interesting discourse, given, I think, by Mr. Cantlie, some months ago, at the United Service Institute, on the subject of gun-deafness, a preparation composed of animal wool and moulder's clay was advocated as an ear-plug during gun-firing, and is worth a trial; but from its antiseptic properties, and the facility with which it can be moulded into the external meatus, I do not think any protection yet devised superior or equal to Plasticine, a report on the more extended use of which I shall look forward to seeing in future issues of this Journal.

I am, &c.,

P. G. IEVERS,

Major, R.A.M.C. (R.).

Fort Stamford, Plymouth,  
April 10th, 1907.

N.B.—Since writing the above, I distributed Plasticine in pellets amongst a number of men for trial during gun-firing, and found that it proved highly successful in each instance, although experimenting only on those who had previously suffered more or less from gun-deafness.—P. G. I.

#### PREVENTIVE MEDICINE IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS."

SIR,—I have read with interest the letter of Major S. F. Green on the above subject, which appeared in your issue of March last. As a military Sanitary Officer I would like to say a word on the subject.

While entirely in agreement with Major Green's contention that the Sanitary Officer reports to the Principal Medical Officer normally, still in a large area cases must frequently arise when it is necessary to take immediate action on the spot, and to report to the Principal Medical Officer afterwards. Outbreaks of infectious disease, for example, refuse to be restrained by the bonds of red tape, and in such emergencies the military Sanitary Officer must go direct to the General Officer Commanding, or other executive officer on the spot, who can at once transport, segregate, or isolate, as the occasion requires. The fact is, that in a large area the duties of the military Sanitary Officer are those of a Medical Officer of Health, and most of his outside work is done in

connection with Administrative Medical Officers, Commanding Royal Engineers and Commanding Officers, while he reports at intervals to the Principal Medical Officer. The same thing must happen in war time, and if the Principal Medical Officer cannot so far trust his Sanitary Officer it is presumed he will promptly get rid of him as useless. In small areas, like some of the colonies, the case is different, and the military Sanitary Officer's duties are confined to laboratory work, as the Principal Medical Officer is always on the spot, and there is no room for initiative on the part of the Sanitary Officer. This, however, does not tend to make him efficient for his duties in time of war.

The post of military Sanitary Officer will not be at all an enviable one in war if he is deprived of liberty of action, as he will always be the first person called to attend when infectious disease breaks out.

May I, in conclusion, make a strong protest against the ungrammatical appellation of "Sanitary Officer"? We talk rightly of "sanitary dustbins," "sanitary carts," and so forth, but unless we mean that all other officers are insanitary and unhealthy we should be styled "Sanitarian Officers," as is the case in foreign armies, and this would rightly define our duties.

Jamaica,  
March 27th, 1907.

I am, &c.,  
E. CARRICK FREEMAN,  
Major, R.A.M.C.

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A REJOINER (*vide* EDITORIAL, VOL. VIII., No. 3).

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS."

SIR,—It is just about as unprofitable to argue with an Editor as it is to reason with a Bengal tiger when he has got you down, both of them are so manifestly "top dog." Once in the rashness of my youth I tried it, with the result that the said Editor, after devoting a column or so to obloquy and genial abuse at my expense, blandly closed the controversy in the curt footnote, "this correspondence must now cease." They say, "there is no fool like an old fool," and instead of profiting by my youthful experience, I am once more laying myself open to pulverisation.

And first I should like to say, that in writing my original letter nothing was further from my mind than to "crab" the Journal, or to find fault with its Editor. It has done, and is doing, good work for the Corps, and we are all too sensible of the obligation under which we lie to its conductor—a thankless job at the best—to be so graceless as not to be grateful. Rather was it an attempt, by implication and suggestion—good, bad, or indifferent—to give a helping hand along the path to success—or should I not say *increased* success?—and assist in the regeneration of those one hundred and twenty backsliders. I did not know, when I wrote, that there were so many, and I am sorry to learn it now, nor have I much patience with them, for surely, there is such a thing as