

It is so seldom that we find the military authorities supporting their medical officers in matters of military etiquette and discipline, that we feel bound to put the following paragraph on record. Such a flagrant instance of insubordination could, however, scarcely be passed over, and we sympathize with a member of our profession who innocently is the cause of severe punishment upon one of his own charge, however richly that punishment may be deserved.

“ROYAL MARINES.—On Wednesday morning the officers and men of the Chatham division were drawn up in the barrack square for the purpose of having promulgated the finding and sentence of a district court martial, which assembled two days previously for the trial of A. M'Closkey on the charge of striking his superior officer, Assistant-Surgeon Wm. Conolly, M.D., in the receiving-room, Melville Hospital, on the 24th ultimo. The prisoner was tried on the previous day by a divisional court martial, and sentenced to forty-two days' imprisonment, and he was taken to the hospital to ascertain his fitness to undergo the imprisonment, when he struck the medical officer a violent blow with his clinched fist. The court sentenced the prisoner to receive fifty lashes, and to undergo twelve months' imprisonment in Fort Clarence. The infliction of corporal punishment was carried into effect in the presence of the whole of the division. The prisoner during the punishment cried out most lustily. He was then removed to the hospital to have his back dressed.”

MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH.

THE activity displayed by the medical officers of health in the contingencies arising from the present cattle plague and threatened epidemic of cholera is beyond all praise. The broad manner in which they have apprehended the nature of their duties, and the unwearied energy and zeal they have displayed in executing them and in forewarning and, as far as practicable, prearming their respective districts, give them the highest claim upon the consideration and confidence of the public. It is difficult to open out a daily paper without finding some reference to the important labours of this invaluable, but as yet too limited, body of officials. For example, on the table before us lies a report of a recent public meeting at Hammersmith, called by the indefatigable and able officer of health for Fulham, Mr. Burge, to consider the measures requisite to be adopted with regard to the prevailing epidemic among cattle. Mr. Burge opened the meeting by a clear and effective statement of the nature of the plague, and the means requisite for its restraint. He also discussed the question of the milk supply, and suggested a mode of allaying the public fears as to the use of this important article of food. Dr. Brewer, and Professor Armatage, of the Albert Veterinary College, assisted Mr. Burge, and a sympathetic audience rewarded their efforts.

In another journal we read an elaborate report to the Vestry of Newington by Dr. Iliff, the officer of health for the parish. In this report Dr. Iliff not only details at length the origin and course of the present cattle-plague, and the public measures which have been taken to restrain it, but he also gives a most interesting and valuable account of the great epizootics amongst horned cattle in 1714 and 1745.

Again, a special report on the Prevention of Cholera lies before us, addressed by the medical officer of health for Glasgow, Dr. W. T. Gairdner, to the Board of Police for that city. Dr. Gairdner directs attention chiefly to the influence of impure water in favouring the disease, and the defective distribution of the admirable water-supply from Loch Katrine in certain districts; and to the pollution of the atmosphere arising from middens and ashpits, still numerous in Glasgow.

TESTIMONIAL.—Surgeon-major F. Douglas, M.D., H.M. Indian army, has been presented by his friends in Lucknow with a very handsome silver salver and epergne, value £150, on the occasion of his resigning the appointment of civil surgeon, after an incumbency of seven years, “in testimony of high esteem and regard, and in remembrance of many past kindnesses.”

The Lancet Sanitary Commission

FOR

INVESTIGATING THE STATE

OF THE

INFIRMARIES OF WORKHOUSES.

REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

No. VI.

ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS AND CLERKENWELL.

THE two infirmaries which we are about to describe possess a peculiar interest for the student of hospital hygiene; for they are the worst in all London. Not even St. George-the-Martyr, nor the Strand, though each of these has distinctive demerits which render it sufficiently conspicuous, can rival St. Martin-in-the-Fields and Clerkenwell in that general unsuitableness for hospital purposes which condemns them as fit for nothing but to be destroyed.

ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS INFIRMARY.

The feature which first strikes the observer who inspects this infirmary is the remarkable character of the ground on which it stands. The whole workhouse, a gloomy prison-like structure, forms an irregularly foursided enclosure, of which the infirmary proper occupies the south side (immediately behind the National Gallery, from which it is separated only by a narrow court); or rather, the “sick wards” occupy two of the three stories which compose the buildings on this side of the workhouse area. The ground *within* the buildings is raised so much above the level of the surrounding streets that the ground-floor is converted into a basement on that aspect; and this elevation of the ground is due to the circumstance that the site is, in fact, an ancient and well-stocked *churchyard*. This being the case, it would hardly be believed, but is nevertheless true, that the basement floor, with this offensive abutment of churchyard earth blocking up its windows on one side, has been converted into surgical wards, the first floor not being used for infirmary purposes! After such an instance of carelessness in the location of the sick, one is not disposed to expect any great things of the accommodation in the wards themselves, and inspection fully confirms the anticipation. Not one of them is more than 8 ft. 6 in. in height, and the surgical wards are scarcely over 8 ft; the allowance of cubic space per bed, on the average of the four sick wards, is only 428 ft. (little more than one-third of that prescribed in the regulations for the construction of the military hospitals); and the gloomy darkness of the wards, especially those in the basement, is most objectionable. Nothing but the presence of windows on each side of the sick wards prevents them from being intolerably oppressive, for there is no proper system of subsidiary ventilation; and, of course, at those times when, from cold weather or other causes, the windows are obliged to be shut, the atmosphere becomes very offensive. Of the bedsteads and bedding the most that can be said is that they are not conspicuously below the average workhouse standard; but the beds are lumpy and comfortless, the means of washing are extremely deficient, and the waterclosets are decidedly bad.

The faults which are evident in the arrangement of the sick wards are repeated throughout the house. Like most of the metropolitan workhouses, St. Martin's has a population which, without reckoning the nominal “sick,” who are housed in the infirmary, really consists almost entirely of diseased or infirm persons who require more or less of medical attendance. Thus in June last, on the occasion of our first visit, out of a total population of 368, 114 were entered as “sick;” but there was a