

United Services Medical Society.

SESSION 1911-1912.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT,

MAJOR E. B. WAGGETT,

Royal Army Medical Corps. (T.F.)

I PROPOSE to begin my term of office by omitting the first item on the agenda, namely the Presidential Address. I have only to make a word or two of explanation.

Hitherto this chair has been held by officers of the highest distinction in the regular services, it is now occupied by a Territorial officer, and this fact requires some explanation as the reason is important.

The Society holds its meetings at the Royal Army Medical College, and the notion has gone abroad that it is largely a Royal Army Medical Corps institution. It is, in fact, nothing of the kind, and a very large section of the members belong to the Navy, to the Indian Medical Service, and to the auxiliary forces both of the Navy and Army. It is to emphasize this point that the Council has done me the great honour of nominating me as President.

It is a difficult task for me to preside at these meetings as I cannot hope to add anything of value to the discussions, and I therefore propose to justify the confidence of the Council by devoting my year of office to bringing officers of the auxiliary forces into closer touch with the Society.

It is a very great privilege for us at these meetings to come in contact with the experts, and by listening to their papers and discussions to gain a view, in proper perspective, of the problems we are concerned with. We all recognize that it is impossible to gain real working knowledge from text-books, and that this comes only from contact either with the actual facts or with the minds of men who really know. The actual facts are not available for us, and especially for the officers *à la suite*—and this Society affords precisely that access to the minds of the experts which is necessary if we are to do our work properly on mobilization.

At the outset some of the officers *à la suite* were inclined to regard their military function in the light of a joke, to-day they are realizing more and more that the responsibility they have undertaken is a very serious one. Many distinguished physicians and surgeons are present to-day and many more have written to express

their genuine regret at unavoidable absence. It would, I think, be well that the fact should be widely known that any officer is entitled *ex officio*, to admission to the Society on the payment of a nominal fee. The Council welcomes papers from officers of the auxiliary forces, and, as I know from personal experience, the Society listens to our papers with an interest so remarkably well feigned as almost to deceive. Two meetings this session (February and May) have been set aside for papers from officers of the auxiliary forces; I shall be very glad to receive suggestions for discussions or titles of papers. Papers will also be read upon subjects which directly concern us, namely upon the function of the clearing hospital and upon the diseases to which auxiliary troops are specially prone.

The Honorary Secretaries, Fleet Surgeon Laurence Smith and Major Harrison, have secured for the opening meeting a paper upon what is, after all, the ultimate purpose of an armed force, the destruction of the enemy. Major Pilcher, who gives us his experiences with the new pointed bullet, is known to most of us; the few who do not know him personally are already under an obligation of gratitude to him which will shortly be increased.

THE POINTED BULLET.

BY MAJOR E. M. PILCHER, D.S.O.,
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MANY of the great Powers have comparatively recently adopted a light pointed bullet in place of the more or less blunt-nosed one at present in use. So far as I am aware this bullet has not yet been submitted to the test of actual warfare, but a certain amount of experimental work has been done with it, the results of which are extant in various languages. To go fully into all these experiments is not the purpose of the present paper, as the time at my disposal is too short, but I hope to give some idea of the changes in wounding power which may possibly result from the qualities of increased ranging power and greater instability of the new missile.

Now the object of most of the changes in the shape and material of bullets, from the round sphere of soft lead to the thin elongated, cylindrical-bodied and taper-nosed "picket" made up of a hardened lead core and a harder rigid envelope, has been first and foremost an improvement in ballistic qualities,

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