

As far as possible separate wards were kept for these patients, but complete separation from wounded men was impracticable, neither was it possible for them to be in charge of a medical officer who had no septic wounds to attend to.

In the second place, considerable interest is attached to the late results of a series of operations for the cure of inguinal hernia, in which the patients are of the fairly uniform type described above; the operation and the conditions of the operation the same in all cases; the after-treatment uniform; and the object of the operation and subsequent treatment the same in all, viz., to render the men fit for full military service in as short a time after the operation as possible. It will be generally agreed that this is a much more severe test than is likely to occur with a number of consecutive cases in civil practice.

As a rule, the operation was performed two or three days after admission, but in a considerable proportion, since most of the men were sent down from duty with their units at the front, often suffering from boils or other septic lesions, slight bronchitis, slight pyrexia, or some other minor ailment, an interval of one or two weeks for the treatment of these disorders was necessary before the men were fit for operation.

Usually, the men were allowed up about fourteen days after the operation, and after another week or so, unless they were kept for a longer period for light ward duty, were discharged to the convalescent depot; there they were given gradually increasing exercises and light duties, and in about three weeks they were sent to their base depots for duty. No case ever had to be re-admitted to hospital from the convalescent depot, and the commanding officer, Lt.-Col. J. Dalrymple, R.A.M.C., informs me that in no case was there any trouble with the wound, and that all the men did well during this stage of their convalescence. Certain of the men were discharged direct from the hospital to their base depots; these were kept at the hospital on "light hospital duty" for three or four weeks instead of spending this time at the convalescent depot. It will thus be seen that the object of the operation was to render the men fit for full duty in about six weeks.