

partment, from the entirely distinct nature of their pursuits, whatever they may believe to the contrary, do actually know as little of hygiene, medicine, and surgery, as they do of engineering. Because, moreover, medical men are supposed to be qualified, they are appointed for the express purpose, and because, without authority, they are unable to carry out their own views, and it is impossible, therefore, that the public service can receive the full benefit of their ability.

Fortunately, recent events in the Crimea and in Turkey have furnished an opportunity to test, in some degree, the relative value of the two systems as supplied directly to the medical department.

The French army sanitary system is exceedingly complicated, and its details are made out in the most elaborate manner; nothing is left to conjecture; every duty is defined so explicitly that there can be no chance of error. As to authority to deviate from these rules, they have none. Each hospital is placed under the charge of an officer of the line, called the Military Intendant, whose only qualification for this position is that he possesses military rank, by virtue of which he is entitled to command. The medical officer merely prescribes and makes surgical operations, dresses wounds, and *suggests*. He cannot command the most subordinate attaché of the wards. He cannot, in theory, order a nurse to dispense a medicine, or a sick soldier to leave his bed, except through the Military Intendant.

In the British service, the system is much less elaborate, and there is much less precision in the rules while govern its details. So that, to the casual observer, it seems imperfect, and contrasts unfavorably with the French system; but the British surgeons are permitted to exercise a certain amount of authority over their own department, such as is not allowed to the French surgeons.

In the allied expedition against Russia, of 1856, the British medical officer had authority to command over the hospital orderlies, the nurses, and the apothecaries. He was permitted to regulate the general hospital police, to give orders, and to enforce their execution in relation to the hygiene, medication, and subsistence of the sick.

The result, fairly traceable to these apparently insignificant, but as every medical man knows them to be, important practical differences, was that the English army closed its campaign with a loss, by death or invaliding, of less than one-third of the troops, while the French had lost more than one-half of their whole number.

It must be understood also that by far the largest proportion of those who died or were invalided in these campaigns we thus lost to the service by epidemics, such as the cholera, dysentery, &c., which were in a great measure capable of prevention. The proportion lost by wounds received in battle was very small, probably not more than one in ten or fifteen.

Whether, as more than one writer has intimated, the French were compelled to make a hasty peace, because their forces were broken and disheartened by the progress of disease amongst them, we are not prepared to say; but however this may be, it is certainly capable of mathematical demonstration that without large additional conscriptions, and we may add, some change in the condition of the sanitary police of the army, the emperor would have been compelled soon to close the war on the part of France by a disgraceful retreat.

M. Baudens does not hesitate to declare the imperfection of the French regulations as contrasted with those of their English ally, and to intimate the real source of their own misfortunes. "The English hospitals," he remarks, "were remarkable for cleanliness. We have seen that this quality did not exist in ours. The difference is partly due to the higher and more independent military position which the English surgeon holds, and which entitles and enables him to exercise greater authority in hygienic measures. His ordinary sick-diet table is more ample and varied than the French, and the surgeon can order what extras he thinks proper for the sick. Indeed, the English camp was abundantly supplied with stores and comforts of all kinds; to which circumstance is to be ascribed its preservation from scurvy and typhus in 1856."