

The Canadian Practitioner and Review.

VOL. XXV.

TORONTO, APRIL, 1899.

NO. 4.

Original Communications.

THE SOLDIER AND THE SURGEON.*

BY SURGEON LT.-COL. G. STERLING RYERSON, D.S.G.

It was with pleasure, not unmingled with fear and trepidation—a fear born of knowledge of my own unworthiness and of the great merits of the lecturers who have preceded me, and, perhaps, of the keen and well-informed critics that I see before me—that I accepted the flattering offer of the committee to address you to-night on the subject of the medical service of the Imperial army and of the Canadian militia.

It may not be out of place to say that my mind has long been directed to military medical affairs, and that I ascribe this fact as being due in no small degree to the influence of a great painting which adorned, and still adorns, the walls of the auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris. The picture represents a sixteenth century battle-scene. In the distance are groups of men engaged in combat. In the foreground is an operating table, on which is strapped and held by the blood-stained assistants, a powerful man who has just had his leg lopped off by the old circular method. To the right of the picture is a brazier filled with glowing charcoal, in which repose several cauterizing irons, one of which is being handed to the king, who offers it to the surgeon, Paré. Beneath the picture in letters of gold runs the legend, "The King aids their efforts and rewards their zeal." Gazing upon this painting day after day as I followed the lectures, the idea came to me that I would like to become an army doctor. It was not my fate to enter the service of the Imperial army, but I made

* A paper read before Canadian Military Institute, March 6th, 1899.