

Selected Articles.

MY EXPERIENCES IN WAR--A CONTRAST, 1885-1900.*

BY LIEUT.-COL. G. STERLING RYERSON, M.D., C.A.M.S. TORONTO, ONT.
Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England.

I wish to say how much I appreciate the honor done me by your association in inviting me to be present and to take part in this most interesting meeting. I do not know of an occasion when medical officers whose experience covers so long a period of time from 1861 to 1902, and so wide a sphere of action, the Philippines, South Africa, Cuba and the war of the Rebellion, have been gathered together to compare notes and to deduce from the sum of their experiences something which may be for the public benefit. I am not one of those who believe that the time is at hand when there shall be no more war, and that the best efforts of humanity will be devoted to the arts of peace. I am rather of the opinion of my late friend Surgeon General Hamilton, who thought that so long as man had a cerebellum he would fight.

Wars are more frequent and more bloody at the end of the 19th than in the 1st century. Education and religion have not eradicated nor even lessened man's love of war. Indeed, the conditions of the every-day struggle for existence, is of the nature of war. Thomas Jefferson said that the world needs a little blood letting every twenty years, and history shows that there has been a war of more or less magnitude at these intervals of time.

To the medical profession falls the honor of mitigating the horrors of war and of minimising the ills and suffering of those who fight for their country. Our work of mercy knows neither race, creed nor color. A broad humanity covers them all.

I have been asked to say something about the medical side of the war in South Africa, but I cannot do so to my own satisfaction without relating briefly some of my experiences in the North-west rebellion in Canada in 1885, especially as the two campaigns present many interesting points of contrast, and it will add another campaign to the records of to-day's discussions.

* Read at the 27th annual meeting of the Alumni Association, Buffalo University Medical College, May 2nd, 1902.