

**MEDICAL NOTES ON ENGLAND AT WAR**

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**FROST-BITES AND COLD-BITES.**

The outstanding feature of the recent admissions to the hospitals from the front has been frost-bite, a very unusual condition in British practice. The cold has been severe in North-west France and Belgium; the men have had long exposures in the trenches, from the effects of which thousands are suffering with sore feet. To wear boots and stockings continually for a week or ten days soaked in cold mud or water and mud, passing long hours in the upright position, naturally causes vasomotor paresis with swelling, and the prolonged stasis has led in not a few cases to necrosis. The cases varied extremely. In the first place there may be nothing more than aggravated chilblain, with the stages of protracted venous stasis, edema, bullae and superficial necrosis. A lad at the Canadian Hospital, Beechborough Park, had slight tenderness of his feet which had only been swollen and blue, but over the backs of both hands and knuckles were areas of superficial necrosis. He had been in the trenches for days, his hands had been swollen, particularly the backs, and he was completely incapacitated.

Secondly, there have been cases of genuine frost-bite; the temperature was protractedly low, and widespread necrosis followed; but several men with necrosis of the toes assured me that the water in which they had stood had not been frozen. In the sequel of events no doubt all of these lacked the preliminary complete anemia of ordinary frost-bite. Gangrene never follows this stage directly, but the succeeding condition of stasis in veins and capillaries. A very common form has been great swelling, with lividity, blackness of the toes, with a slight necrosis of the superficial skin of the pads, or shedding of the nails. As in Raynaud's disease, the final condition is often very much better than one could have anticipated from the appearance of the feet at first. A man at Paignton had a curious distribution of the necrosis, confined to the sole of one foot.

Thirdly, with these conditions, with which all are familiar, there have been an unusually large number of cases to which the term "cold-bite" is more applicable. The men return with swollen