

CHAPTER XI

PROPHYLAXIS

IN conclusion it may be well to speak briefly of means that may be taken to prevent in future such terrible strains being made on the efficiency of fighting forces as the neuroses have produced in all the armies at present at war. The first method which naturally comes to mind is the removal at the time of enlistment of all men who are not adapted to fighting. This is, of course, a simple recommendation but one that demands keen judgment and wide outlook on the part of those who would put it into operation. One difficulty is inseparable from the problems of war itself. It must be obvious to every reader that the vast majority of cases quoted in this report show men who are well adapted to civil life but capable only to a limited degree of enduring the strain of modern warfare. The sad fact is also plain that the very qualities which may be the greatest assets to the civilian, and to the country in which he lives, may be just those characteristics which are most apt to jeopardize complete adaptation to trench warfare. I need only mention independence of judgment and a strong feeling of sympathy for those in pain, to make it clear that the ideal soldier must be more or less of a natural butcher, a man who can easily submit to the domination of intellectual inferiors. Whether men who are more valuable to the State as civilians than they are as soldiers, should be drafted into an army or not, is, fortunately, not a question for a physician examining recruits to decide. It is his duty, rather, to make up his mind, after an examination of any given applicant, whether the chances of that man's competency in the firing line will be sufficiently good to justify the money which the government will spend in feeding, clothing and training him.