

account of suppuration. This was a fairly severe infection, calling for opening up of the wound and one or two incisions for drainage. In addition to this, in a very few, certainly not more than three or four, there was a little trifling superficial sepsis, due probably to a ligature, but scarcely bad enough to delay convalescence. When one remembers the conditions under which the operations were performed, and the fact that probably 50 per cent. of the men were suffering from boils or some other septic lesions at the time of admission, I think that this must be considered very satisfactory.* In all cases the skin was sterilised by means of a 2 per cent. solution of picric acid in methylated spirit, which I had employed instead of the customary iodine solution, since 1913, and which I suggested would be a useful substitute for iodine in military surgery in October, 1914.†

Respiratory troubles after the anæsthetic occurred in a fair number of cases, being generally an exacerbation of some pre-existing condition. Though only one case was evacuated after pneumonia, the two cases described as "debility" were in reality the result of respiratory troubles following the operation.

Late Results.

In 1917 an attempt was made to ascertain the condition of all these patients. At first I intended to ascertain if the result was satisfactory twelve months after the operation, but in those days, in France, twelve months seemed to be a very long time, and the chance of tracing the men after this interval appeared very dubious. It must be remembered that, while these operations were being performed and enquiries were in progress, the first battle of the Somme took place, in 1916, and, in 1917, the battles of Arras, Vimy, Messines and the fighting in Flanders, and that the men sent down for operation belonged to, and were sent back to, units engaged in these struggles.

This being so, and as information was required to guide one

* During the same period there was one other case of suppuration—a varicocele. Though these operations were continued at intervals until the end of the war, I can only recall two other "clean" cases in which suppuration occurred—another hernia and also a case of varicose veins. This must have been considerably less than 1 per cent. of all cases. The great majority healed firmly and soundly by primary union.

† P. Turner, *Guy's Hosp. Gazette*, October 24th, 1914, "A Note on the Use of Picric Acid for Sterilising the Skin." Also "An Investigation of the Germicidal Properties of Picric Acid," and other papers, *Guy's Hosp. Gazette*, November, 1914.