

Post-Graduate Medical Journal

LONDON: JULY 1, 1940.

War Wounds of the Head, Face, Spine and Peripheral Nerves.

In this special number of the Journal we present articles on this important group of war wounds. The incidence of wounds of the head, face and neck is high, for in the Great War 1914—18 it was found that of 48,290 cases admitted to Casualty Clearing Stations 15.96 per cent. were suffering from wounds of this region. As a matter of fact the incidence of wounds was highest in this part of the body (Official History of the War—Casualties and Medical Statistics). Our knowledge regarding the management of head injuries was increased considerably as the result of experience gained during the years 1914—18 and during the latter part of this period cases of head injury began to be segregated in certain centres and standardized methods of treatment were adopted. The segregation of these cases is most important and the formation of teams trained in the principles of neuro-surgery is necessary. The modern views concerning the management of these cases are put forward in the important article contributed by HARVEY JACKSON. The importance of maxillo-facial surgery in warfare is self-evident and we are very fortunate to have the mature opinion of COLE who had a large experience of this subject in the Great War. In his article the principles and practice of the treatment of wounds of the jaws and face are clearly defined. As the result of experience in 1914—18 two fundamental principles were evolved in the treatment of these cases, namely—(1) the close co-operation of surgeon and dental surgeons; (2) the early institution and the continuous and systematic conduct of treatment. Injuries to the spine and spinal cord are exceedingly common in warfare: during 1914—18 it was difficult to form a true estimate of the number of such casualties, as very many were included in the category of killed or missing. Injury to the spine is often associated with severe injuries to the chest or abdomen. The subject has been dealt with in detail by G. C. KNIGHT. In the Great War injuries of the peripheral nerves were extremely common and it is estimated that of all serious battle casualties about 20 per cent. showed at least some injury to important nerve trunks. Large numbers of these casualties were segregated in special hospitals and special studies were made of these injuries. As the result of these studies considerable advances were made in the management of peripheral nerve injuries. We are fortunate to have the views of so eminent an authority on the subject as PLATT who has written this special article on these injuries. Finally, the subject of tetanus has been reviewed by RAVEN, who embodies in his article the experiences of others in the Great War and the most recent work on the subject.

This issue of the Journal concludes the series of Special Numbers on War Wounds and Injuries. It is hoped that the articles will provide a useful guide to physicians and surgeons called upon to manage cases involved in the plague of war. It has been our object to present present opinions regarding the treatment

of war wounds; it may well be that our present opinions will require modification as the result of our future experiences, but it is essential that we have a sure foundation on which to build.

Readers will be glad to hear that the special articles which have appeared in the March to July issues of the "Post-Graduate Medical Journal" are to be given a more permanent and convenient form. They will form the main contents of a book which Messrs. Edward Arnold & Co. will publish under the title of "War Wounds and Injuries." Every contributor has been given an opportunity to revise and amplify his material, and additional illustrations will be added, and also a new article on "Anæsthesia" by Dr. LANGTON HEWER. The book will include a Foreword by LORD HORDER, the President of the Fellowship of Medicine, and an introduction by Mr. H. S. SOUTTAR.

This promises to be one of the most useful books a doctor can possess at the present time. It will be ready very shortly, the probable price being 10s. 6d.

Post-Graduate News.

The following Post-graduate Courses have been arranged:—

CLINICAL SURGERY COURSE (for F.R.C.S. Final Candidates): Royal Cancer Hospital, by Mr. Ronald Raven on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, 10—12.30, July 1st to 26th. Fee to Members, £3 3s. od., and to non-Members, £3 13s. 6d.

OPERATIVE SURGERY (for F.R.C.S. Final Candidates): Royal Cancer Hospital, by Mr. Ronald Raven on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, 2 p.m.; July 22nd to August 16th. Fee, to Members, £10 10s. od., and to non-Members, £12 12s. od.

Application should be made to the Fellowship of Medicine, 1, Wimpole Street, W.1 (Langham 4266).