

WAR SURGERY

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War surgery by Edmond Delorme

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EDMOND DELORME

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BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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EXTRACTS FROM AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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Unity of doctrine is absolutely essential. This I set forth in my "Advice to Surgeons." In order to avoid the excess of operative measures which has been seen in recent wars, it was urgent to lay stress on the almost uniform conservatism of our present surgery, but a rapid, synthetic outline was not sufficient. It was necessary to complete it by information on the special aspect of the wounds we see, on their complications, and also by adequate details with regard to the best methods for us to follow. Therefore the present work became a necessary supplement.

It is intended both for beginners and also for those surgeons whose everyday practice—often specialized—has not allowed them to follow the advances made in military surgery. I have been obliged to give a scientific form to many descriptions, and to lay stress on legitimate reasons for the methods I have advised; I was also forced to give up the concrete, imperative form, which is excellent in addressing young surgeons just entering the profession, but insufficient to secure conviction from those on whom, in the rear, the whole

weight of the most important treatment of the wounded will fall.

I hope both these categories will follow my writings in the few moments of leisure left them by their daily work. . . . They will be able to turn to account what the book teaches them, and our brave wounded will be benefited.

* * * * *

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

IN translating the work of so distinguished a military surgeon as Dr. Dclorme, I have endeavoured so far as possible to keep closely to the French text.

H. DE MÉRIC.

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WAR SURGERY

CHAPTER I

WEAPONS

THE weapons used in warfare are either *defensive* (helmets, cuirass) or *offensive* (cold steel, firearms). We will not stop to consider defensive ones, as projectiles from modern rifles go through them at whatever distance an action is engaged.

Cold Steel.

Amongst cold steel weapons we may include the bayonet, the sword-bayonet, the sabre-bayonet, the cavalry sword, the lance.

Bayonets have a straight styloid blade with a slender point, two sides (Lebel rifle), and sharp serrated edges. Some are merely a kind of hunting-knife (Germany, Austria, England, Italy).

Bayonets are employed as puncturing or stabbing weapons, the direction being specially towards the abdomen or the upper part of the lower limbs. The serious injuries thus inflicted are somewhat analogous to wounds made by pointed instruments, or by those that at the same time are pointed and cutting.

During the Balkan War bayonet injuries were very frequently observed. In certain battles they reached a proportion of 10 per cent. of the wounded. The injured regions

were mainly the body, the abdomen, the upper part of the lower limbs.

The *sabre* or *sword*, having a blade with hollow sides, straight or curved, is used for stabbing and thrusting in the same way as the bayonet, or as a cutting weapon. The wounds it inflicts are generally numerous (two, four, twenty). They are usually found on the head, the right elbow, the upper part of the left arm.

The *lance* is a pointed weapon that has considerable power behind it. The head of the French lance is 15 centimetres long (5.9 inches) and 2 centimetres (0.7 inch) in diameter; its section is quadrangular. The head of the German lance is 30 centimetres long (11.8 inches) and 15 millimetres (0.6 inch) in diameter; its section is triangular. In the attack the point of the lance is directed against the trunk.

Wounds by cold steel, rarely observed during relatively recent wars, now tend to increase in number. During the war of 1870 only 600 cases were recorded among 98,000 wounded. They now occur in the proportion of 5 per cent.

Weapons of Offence (Firearms).

These comprise rifles, mitrailleuses, guns. The projectiles from these arms are alone of interest to the military surgeon.

Projectiles of Firearms carried by the Soldier.

They are projected by means of smokeless powder, which has increased their velocity. At the present time they are pointed instead of conical cylinders. Their calibre has been reduced from 11 to 8, and even to 6.5 millimetres (from 0.43 to 0.31, and even 0.25 inch) (D bullet). Their length, on the contrary, has increased: from 2 calibres it has risen to 3, 4, and even 5 (D bullet). Their weight, on the other