

with Compliments
G.S.

REPRINTED FROM *The Guy's Hospital Gazette.*

HISTORICAL NOTES
ON
HASLAR AND THE NAVAL
MEDICAL PROFESSION.

BY
GERALD SICHEL (late R.N.)

LONDON:
ASH & Co., LTD., Printers, 42, Southwark Street, S.E.
1903.

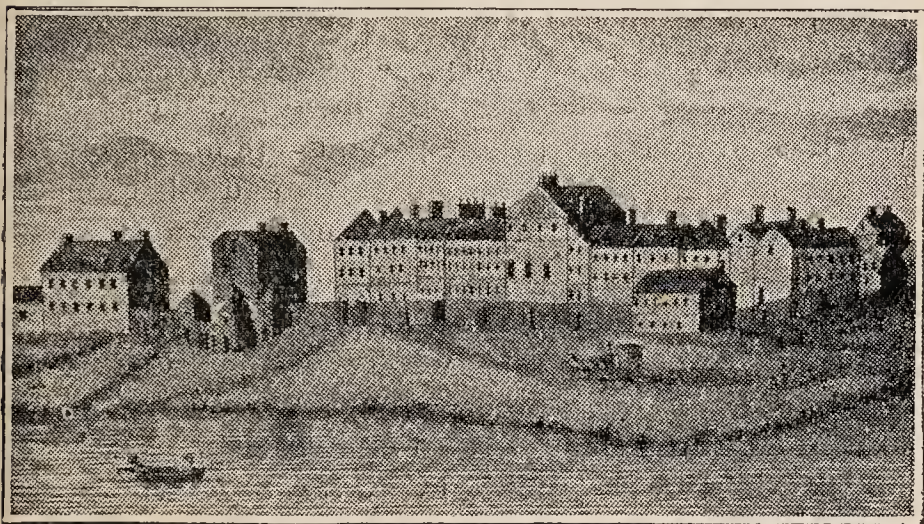
92470

Historical Notes on Haslar and the Naval Medical Profession.

THE HOSPITAL.

HASLAR is the Royal Naval Hospital at Portsmouth, and the largest establishment of its kind in the world.

It was erected between the years 1746 and 1762 at the "earnest recommendation" of John, fourth Earl of Sandwich, the then first Lord of the Admiralty, who obtained a vote to construct a hospital at Portsmouth in 1745, in which year the land was purchased. The



Haslar in 1790.

word "Haslar" is said to be a corruption of Hazelwood, which was the name of a farmer who previously owned a farm there.

Before the present hospital was erected, there was apparently another one in Gosport called Fortune Hospital, founded by one Nathaniel Jackson, who contracted with the Commissioners (of the Admiralty). This was furnished by them with 700 beds for the treatment of sick and wounded seamen.

Before 1750, however, it is probable that sailors were chiefly treated in civil hospitals or in lodgings.

The present hospital at Haslar forms three sides of a square: the original plan included a fourth side, but it has been omitted in the completed building, and this is held to be an advantage since, being the S.W. one, it allows greater access of sun to the rest of the building.

It is constructed of red brick with white stone facings, in the style which is known as the palatial system, and is modelled after a part of Greenwich Hospital, which was designed by Inigo Jones. Mr. John Turner was the architect.

Over the main entrance is a fine sculpture in Portland stone carved by Mr. Pearce, representing the Royal Arms, with the figures of Navigation (on the left) and Commerce (on the right), the former leaning on a rudder and pouring ointment on a wounded seaman. The letters G. II. R. are carved on the upper part. The central block over and about the main entrance contains the Receiving Room (where patients are first admitted), Telephone Office, Inspector General's and other officials' Offices, Surveying Room (where men are examined as to fitness for further service, etc., and which contains a curious old painted Royal Coat of Arms dated 1706) and Bath Rooms. Above are wards, Rontgen-Ray Room, "Duty Cabins," Operating Rooms, "Dark" Room for examining throats and eyes, Dental Room, Mess Rooms for Sick Berth Staff, and right at the top the extensive hospital Kitchens.

All the interior is modernised and thoroughly up to date. Formerly there was a spacious hall here, at first used as a chapel and later apparently partly as the agent's store and partly as apartments of surgeons. All this has again been changed as above.

On each side of this block extend the general wards in double rows, separated by a considerable space, which allows of the entrance of light and air.

At the present time there are 63 wards opened, capable of accommodating 1094 patients—on occasion 1800 or more (McGrigor mentions 4000!) have been taken in.

Of these 63 wards, 61 are oblong averaging $60 \times 24 \times 11$ ft., and furnished, as a rule, with 14 beds each.

The upper wards are a little wider (owing to the walls being thinner), but not so lofty as the lower ones.

The walls are immensely strong and so are the foundations, it being popularly said that there are as many bricks below ground as there are above. It is also said that all the bricks of which Haslar is built were made on the spot.

Nearly all the wards are named after some celebrated naval commander, and they are also numbered, the odd



The carving over the front entrance.

numbers being on the medical side (in the southern wing) and the even numbers being surgical wards (in the northern wing).

It may briefly be said that the sanitary arrangements in all the wards are excellent and quite up to date.

The fourth side of the square is filled in with lofty iron railings, having in the centre a gateway leading to the little unpretentious chapel, which was built in 1763.

Behind the chapel lie the "airing-grounds," and at the far end of these, the Terrace, erected in 1796-98,

and containing residences for the Inspector-General, Chaplain, Head Dispenser and other officials.

The hospital building occupies 7 acres, the "airing-grounds" (so called because the convalescents take the air there) 33 acres, and the whole is surrounded by a high brick wall. Altogether the enclosed land amounts to 46 acres.

The Haslar land proper is far more extensive, and extends over 95 acres, including the large field now used as a playing ground for the boys from the training-ship "St. Vincent."

Haslar forms a complete little community in itself, containing, besides the above-mentioned buildings, other old official residences, probably as old as the hospital itself, quite modern quarters for surgeons and nursing sisters, a brand-new Zymotic Hospital for infectious fevers, a large dispensary, a good water supply (with two deep wells, engine-house and water-tower, which latter is 120 feet high and forms a land-mark for miles around), a modern steam laundry, a well-fitted laboratory, a most valuable museum and medical library, and last, but not least, two little railways to itself for conveying patients from the landing jetty to the general and infectious hospitals. This jetty is situated on Haslar Creek, an arm of Portsmouth Harbour, up which the patients have to be brought by the special hospital steam-boat from their respective ships.

In olden time (Henry VIII.'s reign) Haslar Creek was called Ostrepool Lake (Oyster Pool Lake) because there was a bed of oysters there, and in the early part of last century it is recorded that a large whale found its way into the creek, where it was stranded and killed. It took six horses to drag it ashore.

About 200 yards higher up the creek from the jetty stands Haslar Bridge, which still exacts a toll from the passer-by, a state of things which, existing in this year of grace 1903 (and apparently in the middle of a public thoroughfare), is looked upon by the antiquarian as an interesting link with the Dark Ages, but by the public as a decidedly unfair imposition, since in order

to avoid the expense, the traveller to Haslar must wend his weary way some three miles round the head of the creek. However, it is an ill-wind which blows no good to any man, and I have heard that the bridge company pays a good dividend. But this is by the way!

The present bridge was built and opened in 1835, and previous to this, since 1801, the passage had been effected by ferry boats. Before this, again, there had been a wooden bridge called Forbes Bridge.

Running down the creek from the jetty is a spit of land, Blockhouse Point, at the extreme end of which stands Blockhouse Fort, forming the southern guard to the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour, from which in bye-gone times great chains extended to the opposite side of the water. These chains were tightened in times of danger, by means of capstans, and thus served to protect the harbour from hostile fleets. They were last used in 1778.

On this point also formerly stood a gibbet on which the bodies of local criminals were hung as a warning to evil-doers. Jack the Painter, who set fire to Portsmouth Dockyard, was gibbeted here. The last time it was used was in 1780.

In Howard's "Lazarettos of Europe," published in 1791, there is the following account of "The Royal Hospital at Haslar near Gosport": "I always found this well-conducted hospital remarkably clean and quiet, and (what is very different from the practice in the county hospitals) none of the floors were sanded or dry-rubbed, and the windows on all the staircases were open. (Dr. Lind long since informed me that he had the sash windows on the staircases nailed up in the summer to prevent their being shut.) The patients have white linen shirts; and the hospital clothes and the linen of the beds are white. In this hospital there are about eighteen hundred beds, nineteen or twenty in general in a ward. The wards are sixty feet by twenty-four, and the height twelve feet on two floors, and ten feet on the third, and the arcades below are twenty-four feet wide. All the nurses here and in the hospital at Plymouth are

women, which is very proper, as they are more cleanly and tender, and they more easily pacify the patients who are seafaring men. Visitors are admitted, very properly, only on two days a week. The staircases are spacious, but they are of wood; the rises are too high, and there is no hand-rail on the wall. The inside sewers are offensive; there are no cisterns in the wards. The two cells for lunatic patients are too close and badly situated. The ceiling of the attic floor is too low. To each wing there should be a sea-bath." Further slight criticism follows, and the article is embellished with an excellent plan and front elevation of the hospital.

Howard, the philanthropist, mentions the "spacious" staircases: they still present one of the finest sights in the hospital, with their handsome old oak balustrades, which, polished by age and long use, are said to have called forth a remark of admiration from our late Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria, when she inspected the hospital.

Dr. Thomas Trotter, M.D., Physician to the Fleet, in his book entitled "*Medicina Nautica*," vol. i., published in 1797, says that at this time there were no baths in Haslar—tubs were employed for this purpose, "but the seamen had such a dislike to them, that it was found impracticable to get a rheumatic patient to bathe, because they reminded them of *scrubbing* by way of punishment on board."

Trotter further remarks, "a sailor under disease ought to be bathed like a gentleman." He was evidently a fine old gentleman, who had great hopes in the future of the Naval Medical Service. "In a hospital like Haslar I think the practice of the medical profession might be carried to a higher degree of perfection than in any other in Europe, and the pure spirit of science made subservient to the treatment of the objects it is intended to relieve, beyond what can be done anywhere else. If I am thought to be singular or Utopian in this opinion, I have no objection to stand alone."

There is one more passage from Trotter which I must quote verbatim:

“On September 30th, 1795.—This day Earl Spencer, accompanied by Lord H. Seymour and Mr. Pybus, Lords of the Admiralty, honoured the Charon hospital ship with a visit.

“Next day their Lordships surveyed Haslar Hospital and marked out the ground for erecting the houses for a governor, lieutenants, and other officers, about to be



The New Surgeons' Mess.

added to this institution, in consequence of a general enquiry by two flag-officers, and two Captains of the Fleet, made in March, 1794, at my representation.”

The houses referred to are those which now form the Terrace.

THE PATIENTS.

The first patients were admitted to Haslar in 1754; and a pretty motley crowd they must have been, for there was no uniform laid down for seamen until more than one hundred years later; and very often men were sent from ships in a shocking condition—sometimes, indeed, with hardly any clothes on at all.

Few sailors then lived to be old, it was too hard a life.

According to Trotter, the British sailor was, as a rule, a fine, bold, free-and-easy, happy-go-lucky fellow; but occasionally he was detected malingering; "hence he employs caustics to produce ulcers, and drinks a decoction of tobacco to bring on emaciation, sickness at stomach and quick pulse."

He also speaks bitterly of the evils of impressing, as causing—and naturally—"a species of mental affliction—without any apparent disorder." It is not to be wondered at, that being impressed into the service against their will, patients at Haslar often attempted and sometimes effected their escape. Poor wretches! who can blame them for trying to regain their freedom, which meant in many cases return to their wives and families.

The melancholy side of this fearfully rough and ready age will be brought forcibly home to the reader by the following narrative, related before the House of Commons, in a speech by Sir William Meredith in 1777: "Under the Shoplifting Act, one Mary Jones was executed, whose case I shall just mention. It was at the time when press-warrants were issued on the alarm about Falkland Islands. The woman's husband was pressed, their goods seized for some slight debt of his, and she with two small children turned into the streets a-begging. 'Tis a circumstance not to be forgotten that she was very young (under 19) and remarkably handsome. She went to a linen-draper's shop, took some coarse linen off the counter and slipped it under her cloak. The shopman saw her, and she laid it down. For this she was hanged. Her defence was 'that she had lived on credit and wanted for nothing, till a press-gang came and stole her husband from her; but since then she had no bed to lie on—nothing to give her children to eat—and they were almost naked; and perhaps she might have done something wrong, for she scarcely knew what she did.' The parish officers testified to the truth of this story; but it seems there had been a good deal of shop-lifting about Ludgate. An example was thought

necessary (by the judges) and this woman was hanged for the comfort and satisfaction of some shop-keepers in Ludgate Street. When brought to receive sentence, she behaved in such a frantic manner as proved her mind to be in a desponding and distracted state—and the child was suckling at her breast when she set out for Tyburn Gallows.”

In an article on “Haslar Hospital,” in the *Navy and Army Illustrated* for 19th February, 1897, it is mentioned that in 1755 Haslar was a common “take-off for deserters.” In spite of naval and military guards, as many as eleven men would escape in one night, and the main drain opening into Haslar Creek was, at low tide, evidently a frequent means of exit for these poor wretches. To my mind, it is a marvel that the place was not demolished “en masse,” when the method adopted for recruiting the Navy was so brutal.

Here is another yarn of the atrocities of press-gangs, related in the “Life of Thelwall”:—“As a vessel was coming into the port of Poole, the few hands on board saw a press-gang making towards them. The whole of the crew determined to resist. Notwithstanding, the captain of the gang boarded the vessel, and succeeded in conquering the unfortunate seamen. In the struggle two of the seamen were shot dead, upon which the young mate, seeing his men overpowered, wounded and killed, in a fit of frenzy, bared his breast, exclaiming ‘You have murdered my companions, murder me also.’ The ruffianly lieutenant took him at his word, and coldly and deliberately levelling his pistol, shot him through the heart.”

The iron railings erected on the fourth side of the square at Haslar were put up in 1795 in order to check these frequent desertions and at the same time the lower windows of the hospital were barred, and the wards kept locked at night. Compared to those times, the blue-jacket of the present day may indeed consider himself well off, for as a patient in Haslar he certainly has not much to complain of, and to give him his due, he is generally a well-contented patient.

Many other nationalities besides British have been treated in the wards of Haslar. It is recorded that in 1796 a number of Portuguese from the Portuguese fleet was sent to Haslar with typhus, and among others, French prisoners (many of whom were confined on board a hulk at Porchester) and Turks (there was a Turkish burial place where part of the new infectious hospital now stands, and this was transferred bodily to the new cemetery when the ground was wanted).

Although the seamen of those days more often than not had a very rough time of it, it must not be imagined that they were altogether badly treated: had the above example been very common, it is certain that the British Navy would have ceased to exist. There is a brighter side to the state of things existing a century ago. Thus we read of captains who took an interest in their crews, ordering various games, books, etc., for them. "Captain Charles Thompson ordered the people of the *Vengeance* 'tops' by way of exercise, when we approached the cold weather, on our passage home."

Apparently, if we may judge by the characters in Marryat's and Smollett's novels, the naval officer was frequently a pretty queer customer, but about the year 1790, many young men of the first families, following the example of the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) began to flock into the Navy. One ship in particular was remarkable for having a great many of these young sprigs of nobility. These young ones were accustomed to reef and furl the mizen-topsail. One day when they were aloft furling sails, the captain thus addressed them from the quarter-deck:—"My Lords and Gentlemen, and you Right Honourable Lubbers, on the mizen-topsail-yard, roll that sail up, and be d——d to you, and come down."

The most prevalent diseases in the Navy then were typhus and scurvy. Some ships would send as many as one hundred cases of typhus to hospital, and in 1795 it was feared that the whole Channel Fleet might be rendered inactive from the ravages of scurvy.

The following sick list of men taken ill in His Majesty's ship *Colossus* for June, 1795, is instructive:—

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Fever ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 |
| Flux ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Catarrhal complaints | | | ... | ... | 6 |
| Scurvy | ... | ... | ... | ... | 60 |
| Ulcers | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Other diseases | | ... | ... | ... | 4 |
| Wounded men, etc., 23rd June | | | ... | ... | 53 |

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | 128 |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

Besides this, the following passage from an old naval doctor writing in 1797, may be mentioned as throwing a lurid light on the Navy of the time:—"The treatment of the drunken paroxysm or a fit of intoxication is the most frequent part of a navy surgeon's duty." Nowadays, the blue-jacket is, as a rule, a well-behaved and orderly patient—he is keenly alive to his own interests, and apt, though very occasionally, to make ungrounded complaints about his diet and so forth; he does not stand pain, as a rule, so well as the London costermonger, but that is because being better fed and looked after, his nerves are the more sensitive. On the other hand, one sometimes meets with instances of extraordinary pluck during pain.

Thus on one occasion the writer had to remove a loose cartilage from the knee-joint without chloroform, and on another it was necessary to amputate a finger without a general anæsthetic. During the latter operation the patient bit a piece of indiarubber, but in both cases the pain was borne without wincing.

With the blue-jacket, more than with any other class of patient, has the mental factor to be reckoned. I have met with great, young, powerful giants as hysterical as a weakly young girl; and these were genuine cases and not impostors. I suppose that the peculiar and often trying conditions of life in a ship are responsible for this fact—and I firmly believe that home sickness is as real a disease in some cases, as typhoid fever. Mind

you, in saying this I do not in any way mean to disparage the blue-jacket of the present day. I have indeed a great admiration for him—and especially for the “bad-hat” have I a lurking regard, for troublesome as he is at ordinary times, in a “tight corner” he generally turns up trumps.

A shipmate of mine once spun me the following yarn:—“The ship I was then in, during a storm, had run on to some rocks on the coast of Newfoundland, and in the heavy sea running, it was evident she must soon break up. Our only chance was to get a life-line rigged to the beach, so a volunteer was asked for to attempt the almost impossible feat of swimming ashore with a line. The ‘bad-hat’ of the ship volunteered, and after having asked for a bottle of brandy and swigged it off, plunged overboard and managed to get to the shore, and as a result we all escaped what was almost certain death. We all got ashore by means of the life-line except the ship-steward’s boy, who was too frightened, and in a frenzy of terror jumped overboard; we made certain he was lost, but we found him next day, though how he managed to get through that sea I can’t imagine.”

Yes, the blue-jacket is a peculiar mixture, but most of his faults—and they are many—may be put down to the peculiar circumstances under which he serves his country; he is not bad at heart. And the same may be said for his brother—the “soldier and sailor too”—Joey the marine.

NAVAL MEDICAL OFFICERS.

When I mention such names as Dr. Lind, Sir Gilbert Blane, Dr. Trotter, Professor Huxley, Sir Andrew Clarke, Sir Dyce Duckworth and Sir J. D. Hooker as occurring at one time or another in the Navy List, I need ask no excuse for this chapter. Every naval medical officer is a unit of a profession, the capacity of which for saving life is more than that of all the heroic naval and military commanders, past, present and future, put together, so that the subject appears to me deserving

of some little notice here, especially as Haslar may be looked upon as the headquarters of the department. I do



A Naval Doctor in William IV's Reign (epaulette on right shoulder, scale on left—red facings—bullion on hat).

not write thoughtlessly, because disease is always more terrible than war *per se*, the truth of which statement was recognised many, many years ago.

I will quote Sir Gilbert Blane from his "Health of the Royal Navy," published in 1830, dedicated to William the Fourth.

"After my return to England in the year 1783 I was enabled, from my own notes, and from information derived from the official records at the Navy Office, and at the Office of Sick and Wounded Seamen, to make out a statement of the whole loss of lives in the fleet in which I served as physician, from the beginning of 1780 till April, 1783, a space of three years and three months. It came out as follows:—

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| "Died of disease | ... | ... | 3,200 |
| Killed in battle | ... | ... | 640 |
| Died of wounds | ... | ... | 500 |

| | | | |
|-------|----|-----|-------|
| Total | .. | ... | 4,340 |
|-------|----|-----|-------|

"It is a very general and true remark, that in war more perish by disease than by the sword: in the present case the proportion is about three to one. We find the same remark made by ancient historians."

So little is known historically of the naval medical officer—and what little there is, is so interesting—that I am venturing to give a few outlines here, although as much of the time is prior to 1750, there is no direct connection with Haslar.

I ought to say that I am indebted for many facts now mentioned to a most interesting pamphlet by Dr. W. R. E. Smart, C.B., Inspector-General R.N., reprinted from the *British Medical Journal* in 1874.

There is reason to believe that some men of good surgical repute devoted themselves to sea-service as early as Queen Elizabeth's reign.

In Henry the Eighth's reign, the King owned the ships in his first fleet, and he entered on an agreement by indenture with Sir C. Howard to man them. This indenture specifies only two classes of men (1) masters or captains, (2) common men. This shows that surgeons were rated and paid as common men. Probably, however, naval surgeons of this time were not of any great social standing, for, speaking of army surgeons, Dr. Smart

quotes Thomas Gale, who wrote somewhere about the middle of the sixteenth century, "I remember when I was in the wars at Montreuil (1544), there was a great



An Assistant Surgeon in the "sixties."

rabblement there that took upon them to be surgeons. Some were sow-gelders, and some horse-gelders, with tinkers and cobblers."

According to William Clowes, some time naval surgeon and finally surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and

to Queen Elizabeth, writing in 1596, there were many worthy men, but also many scamps, in the naval medical service—if such it can be called—in those days.

The entire management of medical affairs of the navy appears to have been placed in the hands of the Company of Barber-Surgeons of London. In a letter written on 23rd March, 1635, from the Navy Office to the Admiralty, is found the following:—"The fleet now drawing and ready to goe to sea, we have according to the ancient custom given orders to the Masters and Warders of Barber-Chyrurgeons, to press chryrurgeons for all the ships of the first fleet, and have given them charge to cause them to appear before us, att the Meeting House in Mincing Lane, on Fryday in the afternoon, the 1st of Aprill."

Dr. Smart considers that William Clowes may perhaps be looked upon as the first "Medical Director General." His successor was one John Woodall, at one time Surgeon-General of the East India Company, and appointed by Charles I.

Surgeons then, being neither masters nor captains, were rated as common men until 1704, when they first became warrant officers together with pilots, boatswains, gunners, and carpenters; and, according to Robinson, "at some time in the eighteenth century, but . . . "not officially until the issue of the regulations of 1808, masters, surgeons and pursers received the title of 'warrant officers of ward-room rank,' and were thus differentiated from the boatswain, gunner and carpenter."

It must be remembered, however, that in those days a surgeon was a somewhat senior officer, and the juniors or assistant-surgeons had to remain content with hammocks, and gun-room fare and company until about the middle of the nineteenth century, a state of things which was a fruitful source of grievance.

The surgeon's mate of Smollett's day held a very inferior position—as a favour he might be allowed to mess with the warrant officers.

Nowadays all naval doctors are commissioned officers of ward room rank, and the titles are as follows:—

Director-General.

Inspector-General of Hospitals and Fleets.

Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals and Fleets.

Fleet-Surgeon (after 8 years as Staff Surgeon).

Staff Surgeon (after 12 years as Surgeon and Examiner).

Surgeon.

Deputy Inspector-Generals are promoted by selection from Fleet-surgeons, and Inspector-Generals again by selection from the Deputies.

In 1842, the naval medical ranks and titles were :—

Inspector of Hospitals.

Physician.

Deputy-Inspector of Hospitals.

Surgeon.

Dispenser.

Assistant-Surgeon.

Acting Assistant.

Later the rank of Staff Surgeon was instituted between Deputies and Surgeons, and then this class was divided into Staff Surgeons 1st Class, and Staff Surgeons 2nd Class, although this nomenclature received much objection as implying a difference in conduct or ability rather than seniority, so that eventually this “classification” was done away with, and Fleet Surgeons first appointed about 1875. Exactly when naval doctors ceased to be warrant officers and received commissions I do not know, but they were warrant officers until at least 1825; for in the “Regulations Established by the King in Council for His Majestie’s Service at Sea, MDCCCXXIV.,” we find :—

“The following are the denominations of the warrant officers and the order of their respective ranks :—

Masters.

Secretaries.

Physicians.

Chaplains.

Surgeons.

Pursers.

Second Masters.

Assistant-Surgeons.

To rank with Lieutenants
in the Navy, but sub-
ordinate to them.

Mates.
Gunnery.
Boatswains.
Carpenters."

Naval Medical Officers, as a rule, are an unpretentious class of men, but in a quiet plodding sort of way they have done not a little good work.



+
A Naval Doctor in the middle of the Nineteenth
Century (1869).

Naturally scurvy was the first disease to attract their attention and special work. Thus, as early as 1696, William Cockburn, Physician to the Royal Navy of Great Britain, published a work entitled "Sea-diseases, or A Treatise of their Nature, Causes and Cure." In this he enters into detail especially as regards the disease scurvy. Through his exertions many were cured, but the author regrets that this "distemper" had as yet been left without a remedy at sea. He was evidently a keen observer, and points out that "refraining from the sea diet, and living upon green trade (as it is called) on shore proves an absolute cure." (Green trade means vegetables.)

In the middle of the next century, the truly great Dr. James Lind was doing sound hard work for sick and



Dr. James Lind, R N.
Physician to Haslar Hospital.

disabled seamen — such as should render his name honoured and venerated for all time. He has been well called the "Father of Naval Medicine," and must have

spent very many years in the service, for his first work that I can find (on "The Scurvy") was published in 1757—and this was the second edition—and he was senior Physician to Haslar Hospital in 1799, on the magnificent salary of £300 a year!

Here it will be interesting to give the earliest published list of residents in Haslar, from the "Navy List" for January, 1799:—

Royal Hospital at Haslar, near Gosport.

W. Yeo, Esq., *Governor*, 500*l.* per ann.

Lieutenants: T. Parke 1st, A. M'Gregor 2nd, H. Blaxton 3rd, 130*l.* each. *Physicians*: J. Lind, 300*l.*; R. Hope and A. Thompson, 250*l.* *Surgeons*: T. FitzMaurice, 230*l.*; C. Dods and J. Stephenson, 200*l.* *Steward*: J. Merritt, 150*l.* *Agent*: G. Mottley, 150*l.* *Dispenser*: W. Richardson, 150*l.* *Chaplain*: J. Hall, 150*l.*

In those times, and indeed until quite recently (April, 1870), besides the Medical and other Officers of the hospital, there were also (as will be seen above) various executive officers appointed, in order apparently to keep up the discipline of the place.

Some of the old Governors—or Captain-Superintendents as they were also called—must have been funny old men to deal with, as the following anecdote from "The Autobiography of Sir James MacGrigor" goes to show. Sir James was Inspector at Portsmouth in the Army Medical Department at the time (1808), and a great part of Haslar had been lent by the Admiralty to the Army for the accommodation of their numerous patients. (It was just when the remains of Sir John Moore's army had returned "with an overwhelming number of sick and wounded." Typhus was rampant.)

"Two deputy-inspectors of hospitals were sent to Portsmouth to act under my orders. I appointed one of them for the inspections afloat, the other for those on shore, especially for the naval hospital at Haslar, which we had obtained possession of only on condition that we should strictly conform to all the rules of naval discipline (and this was intimated to us in such a way as

though they feared a breach of it), and that the utmost deference and respect should be paid to the naval captain at the head of the hospital, who was styled 'Governor.' I inculcated on Mr. Hogg, the deputy-inspector at Haslar, that he should impress on all the young medical officers the utmost respect towards this personage, and that he would see that the externals of respect, which I knew the 'Governor' rigidly looked for, were most ceremoniously paid to him. In no long time I found that the young medical officers, having become acquainted with the character of 'His Excellency the Governor' of the hospital, rather exceeded in the externals of respect towards the old gentleman, and received him with much mock state, which, however, he for some time received most graciously, until he found out that this marked respectful demeanour was shown in derision. He then complained to General Whetham, and said that, by the introduction of these young army doctors, the discipline of the hospital would be destroyed, and that he would never again be able to bring the medical officers of the navy to a due sense of the respect they owed him.

"One of the standing orders of this dignified personage was that on entering the gates of the hospital every military as well as naval officer should have his name taken down by the porter in a book, with the precise hour and minute of his entry, so that his Excellency should be acquainted with all the movements of each individual.

"Another of his orders was to this effect—that every medical officer should touch his hat to him every time he saw his Excellency, however often that might be.

"Two very young Irish assistant surgeons had somehow been wanting in this mark of respect for the Governor, of which he made a formal complaint to General Whetham, and the complaint was conveyed in such terms that I was sent with General Porter, second in command of the garrison, to explain and to pacify the Governor. We had some difficulty in keeping our countenances during the time we executed our mission to his Excellency. I called the medical officers together

and explained to them that, while we were indulged with the use of the naval hospital for the soldiers, we must conform to all its regulations, and that the utmost courtesy must be paid to the Governor. This was caught up immediately and carried into execution in its most literal meaning.

“ On the following day, and for many days afterwards, the medical officers assembled in the court-yard of the hospital, and awaited the appearance of the Governor, when they formed a line on each side of the path through which he had to pass, and as he passed through the line, all were instantly uncovered. This was understood by him as a mark of perfect respect, and as he passed through the line he smiled most complacently, bowing on each side very graciously. On another occasion, he called for higher honours than the military guard at the hospital paid him, and he insisted that, besides the guard turning out to him when he passed, he was entitled to a march by beat of drum. The sergeant came up to the young Irish officer who commanded the guard for instructions, and he instantly told him to beat ‘ the Rogue’s March, which quite satisfied and delighted his Excellency, he not knowing the kind of air which was played to him, although every man of the guard was almost suffocated with laughter. But the beating a march was never repeated.’ ”

Dr. Thomas Trotter, the author of an extremely interesting book entitled “ *Medicina Nautica*,” entered the Navy at Christmas, 1778, as a surgeon’s-mate : he quickly rose, for in the “ Navy List ” (Steel’s original and correct List of the Royal Navy, hired armed vessels, gun-boats, Revenue and excise cutters and packets, etc., corrected to June, 1795) we find the following :—

Physicians to His Majesty’s Fleets.

Dr. Harness. Dr. Trotter.

Their pay £1 0s. 0d. per Day.

(in the same list is the name Horatio Nelson with the date 1779 as the year of his first commission as captain).

Trotter pursued his duties in a most indefatigable and zealous manner. When Physician to the Fleet, he

used himself to “attend” the stalls at the vegetable markets, and scour the country round in order to obtain the supply of lemons he required for the sick.

He was evidently a keen observer, for he mentions that the issue of grog was followed by an increase in the amount of scurvy. Again, in discussing the prevention of contagious disorders, he says:—“Heat I consider as one of the most powerful correctors of contagion,” what would he say could he but see our up-to-date sterilizers and disinfectors nowadays! Some of his passages are very quaint: he recommends a “band of music” in a ship as a preservative of health—and would “pronounce a physician strongly fettered in the craft of technicals, that excludes from his hygiene, the exciting influence of melodious notes, or the agile movements of the ‘light fantastic toe.’” He mentions that he himself was passionately fond of both.

In the Navy List for May, 1797, among the list of surgeons is the name William Beatty (date of first warrant, 1796). This, I think, must be Nelson’s surgeon; he evidently got on well, for in “A List of the Medical Officers of Her Majesty’s Fleet,” published in 1842, we find, among physicians retired, Sir William Beatty, Kt., M.D.

Sir Gilbert Blane, Bart., is probably the best known of all the old-time naval Medical Officers by reason of the “Gilbert Blane Medal,” which is still presented periodically for meritorious professional services, and which also serves to perpetuate his name. Without a doubt, he was a very able and distinguished physician. In one of his works the following occurs:—“In the course of the year 1780, my first year of service as physician to the Fleet on the Windward Station, I found from my own returns and from examining the records of the hospitals, that the annual loss of lives from disease previous to our arrival, and for some time after, had been at the rate of one in seven”; and chief among the causes of this mortality from disease, Blane mentions “the abuse of spirituous liquors, and want of soap.” He also says “it was not till the year 1795 that the general

supply of lemon-juice was decided on by the Board of Admiralty" as a preventive, of course, for the scurvy; it was apparently first suggested by Dr. Blair, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for the care of sick and wounded seamen.

Naval surgeons are not always without honour even "in their own country," and when Mr. Anderson, one of Captain Cook's surgeons, died of "a consumption" at sea, on the same day, sighting land, that great commander, "to perpetuate the memory of the deceased, for whom he had a particular esteem, distinguished it by the name of Anderson's Island." Sir William Burnett is another famous name intimately connected with the Naval Medical Department, of which he eventually became Inspector-General — analogous to Director-General of the present time. Between the days when the department was supplied, and it may be said managed, by the Company of Barber-Surgeons, and our present system under a Director-General, things medical were for many years administered by a sort of Committee styled the Commissioners of the Board for the care of Sick and Wounded Seamen—or the Sick and Hurt Office.

Robinson says that "on January 22nd, 1805, a uniform was first established for medical officers."

In 1812, the facings were ordered to be white; in 1825, "waistcoats and knee-breeches of white kerseymere were ordered for all grades, but pantaloons of white or blue cloth and half-boots were also allowed." "All civilian officers were to have black grips to their swords."

Physicians wore a dress rapier; the lappels of their coats were blue. Physicians' buttons had an anchor with a snake twisted around the shank and stock.

In 1827 knee-breeches were abolished except at Drawing-rooms. In 1833 facings were changed from white to red, but later again back to white.

In 1843 all executives wore their buttons on their full-dress coats, double-breasted, and all civilians single-breasted, the doctors' buttons arranged in threes, and the sword-grips were changed to white. Later the

buttons were changed in arrangement, and are now the same in all branches.

Various other peculiarities will be noticed in the accompanying illustrations, which require no further description here.

I have taken the above outline of changes in uniform chiefly from Commander Robinson's excellent book, "The British Fleet."

THE NAVAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.

Nowadays, naval surgeons enter the service by a competitive examination held twice a year in London for duly qualified men between the ages of 21 and 28.

The successful candidates, whose names are borne on the books of Nelson's old ship *Victory*, are immediately, or within a few days, sent to Haslar, there to undergo a four months' course of instruction in hygiene, the diseases of foreign stations, bacteriology, and naval surgery.

This course of instruction evidently was started—though not on quite the same lines—on 15th September, 1827, when a certain Dr. Scott "read an introductory lecture which was attended by twenty-two gentlemen belonging to the hospital and H.M. ships in the harbour and at Spithead. In this lecture I endeavoured to point out the nature and objects of the institution, and to pay a just tribute of respect to the late and present Lord Melville, to Dr. Burnett, Commissioner to the Victualling Board, etc., to the late Dr. John Harness, to our present Commissioner Dr. Weir, and the other Commissioners of the Board. I expressed the strong conviction I entertained that His Royal Highness, the Lord High Admiral, would nobly support the institution, following up the suggestion of Dr. Burnett, the founder, who had unremittingly laboured to establish the museum and library."

In the "Instructions for the Royal Naval Hospitals at Haslar and Plymouth" for 1834, one section is headed "Instruction for the Librarian and Lecturer." His duties were to give a course of lectures "twice a year in the

practice of medicine and surgery, as far as may be more particularly applicable to the diseases which are prevalent among seamen, whether in the home or foreign stations," also occasional lectures in physiology, pathology, and pharmacology: he was also to keep a record of meteorological observations, "for which purpose you will be provided with the proper philosophical instruments."

The audience was confined to "medical officers of the army and navy, whether on half-pay or otherwise," and other "respectable individuals" who were expected "to observe the strictest decorum and not presume to offer any remark on the opinions you may think proper to advance, either aloud or by whispering, such practice being calculated to distract the attention of the lecturer and the studious."

At a later period the instruction, then as now, more especially for newly-entered surgeons, was conducted at Netley by army officials.

On March 15th, 1880, an Admiralty Committee was appointed to consider, among other matters, "the question of examination necessary for candidates for admission to the service, and also in regard to the advantages or disadvantages of Netley Hospital for the use of the Naval Medical Profession."

As the result of the deliberations of this committee a medical school was established at Haslar, where newly-entered surgeons were instructed in ward duties, naval hygiene, pathology, meteorology, etc., and also obtained a familiarity with the interior economy and ventilation of ships, and the more serious surgical and medical cases usually met with in naval medical practice. A laboratory was fitted up for their use, where the lower lunatic wards now are.

The first "Instructors" were Staff-Surgeon Walter Reid—widely known in the world of surgery for his method of treating aneurysms by rapid pressure—and Surgeon Collins.

The present laboratory was first used in 1899, in the latter part of which year the teaching course was much extended, the staff consisting of a Fleet-Surgeon, Staff-Surgeon, and Surgeon.

THE SICK BERTH STAFF.

The Sick Berth Staff consists of head ward masters (who are warrant officers), ward masters, sick berth stewards, first and second-class (petty officers), and sick bay men, or as they are more generally called, sick berth attendants.

The sick berth staff is only of recent formation, some twenty or thirty years old.

When Haslar was in its infancy, as Howard has shown, the nurses were women, and apparently, as was the case with other hospitals at the time, not always very refined sort of persons. Thus one of the old hospital regulations reads as follows, "That all nurses who disobey the matron's orders, get drunk, neglect their patients, quarrel or fight with any other nurses, or quarrel with the men, be immediately discharged the service of the house, and a note made against their names in the books of the hospital that they may never more be employed."

In ships the patients were nursed by seamen told off for the job, and in the "Regulations and Instructions relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea" for 1757, we read—"The captain is to appoint some of the ship's company to attend and serve the sick men night and day by turns, and to keep the place clean."

Apparently in those days there was no fixed sick bay (as it is called), for in the same regulations occurs this order—"Convenient room shall be made between decks in all His Majesty's ships for the reception of sick or hurt seamen, whither they are to be removed with their hammacoes and bedding, when the surgeon shall advise the same to be necessary."

Trotter, in 1803, says, "The apartments of the sick, before the present war, were very imperfect." The model that he recommended was that adopted by Captain Markham in the *Centaur*. "The Markham sick-berth takes in the two foremost guns under the fore-castle, and all that space from the ship's side to the foremast, so that it includes the mid-ships which was formerly occupied by a pig-stye."

Up to quite recently sick bay men were nick-named "lob-lolly-boys." The explanation of the term seems to be found in the following from an old book termed "*Colloquia Maritima or Sea Dialogues*," published in 1688. Salt provisions are mentioned as being the "one main cause, that our English are so subject to calen-tures (a shrensy or inflammation of the brain), scarbotes (scurvy), and the like contagious diseases," and the substitution of "husked hominy" and "lob-lolly" (made from maize) is recommended, although it was considerably doubted whether the seamen would appreciate the change. Even in those days the navy was apparently a very conservative institution; certain it is that now-a-days at all events, old customs and traditions die hard.

Under the present organisation, the sick berth staff was started in 1885, since when all "new entries" undergo a course of instruction in nursing, dispensing, cooking, and ambulance drill at Haslar, as probationers; at the close of the course an examination is held, and the successful candidates become full-blown attendants.

Previous to 1885 the uniform consisted of a cap without badge, a short blue Eton jacket with black buttons, black tie and blue trousers, now the cap has the badge of a crown and anchor, and the coat is a blue double-breasted monkey jacket, with gilt buttons and the Geneva badge on the right arm, the various badges distinctive of rank and good conduct are worn on the left sleeve.

It is the fashion among writers at the present time to say that men will never—or hardly ever—make good nurses. No more untrue or unjust statement was ever made. Among the naval sick berth staff the writer has met with numbers of men who could not possibly be bettered as attendants on the sick. A good attendant is respected throughout his ship, both by men and officers, and in many critical cases I have seen qualities displayed by these men, which were deserving of the highest admiration and praise, and in which they gained not only the confidence of the doctor, but the love and gratitude of the patient.

It would be invidious to mention names, although several occur to me at the time of writing, which would serve to illustrate the case.

Another comparatively recent institution has been the establishment of Naval Nursing Sisters. These ladies hold appointments in the Royal Naval Hospitals at Haslar, Plymouth, Chatham, and Malta. Before entering the service they require to have gone through a thorough training, and after their appointment, they take up their duties at one of the first three hospitals mentioned above, after which their names appear regularly in the Navy List.

THE LAST OF THE GREENWICH PENSIONERS.

The following yarn was spun to me by John Bright, aged 85, on 2nd October, 1901, in 53 ward, Haslar, of which he was an inmate. As he is the last *genuine* Greenwich pensioner I think it worth reproducing here.

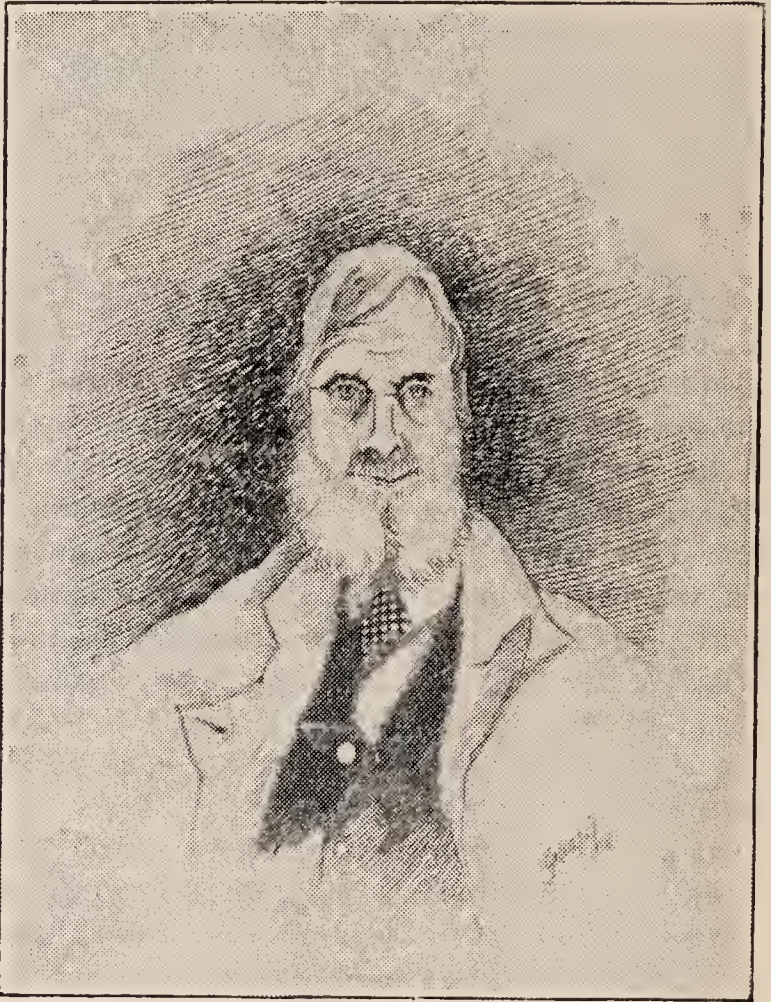
When Greenwich hospital, as a home for naval pensioners, was broken up in 1869, the old gentlemen were transferred to Haslar; they have gradually died off, and old Bright is the only one left who really ever was an inmate of the historic pile on the banks of the Thames.

I give the old gentleman's story as far as possible in his own words.

"Yes, *I am* a Greenwich pensioner, sir! Medals? yes, I did have some medals once, but I pawned 'em long ago, for what's a man to do, sir? I got five shillings for the two Crimea medals, and a little time ago I thought I'd like to buy them back again, but they wanted seventeen-and-six—*seventeen-and-six-pence, sir!* for one only, so I never got them."

"In 1835 I joined the English legion, which was raised to fight for Queen Isabella II. of Spain, against Don Carlos—and I remained in Spain five years and seven months. In the same year I received two silver medals and a silver cross, in 1837 another silver cross, and in 1839 a gold medal, which carried with it the title of Don, the right to travel free all over the country, a

pension of ten pence a day, and food, as long as I remained in the country; but later on I felt I wanted to return home. In 1841 I got a silver medal which was given to all the English troops who remained until the war was finished. In the same year I came back to England and



John Bright, the last Greenwich Pensioner,
October, 1901.

worked on the new railway they were making between London and Gosport. However, this work gave me rheumatism in my hands from shovelling and wheeling barrows, so I joined the red marines then stationed in Portsmouth, and I remained in the corps fifteen years and one hundred and fifty days, and was then invalided

for a bad knee. Whilst serving with the Marines I gained in 1855 the Crimea medal with two bars, and the silver medal given by the Turks. After being invalided in 1856, I joined the *Sidon*—the ‘lop-sided *Sidon*’ we used to call her—as ‘lob-lolly-boy’ (sick bay man). In those days they were rated as A.B.’s, and had six-pence a day extra pay; but one day hurrying to get something for the doctor from the cockpit, and not knowing they’d taken the ladder away, I fell down a hatchway and dislodged my liver, so had to be invalided home. When I was better I served in the *Illustrious* as an A.B., and then in the *Marlborough*. When I was in the latter ship I fell overboard, was taken ill, and eventually invalided out of the service at Haslar. Then I went to Greenwich hospital as a pensioner, but in 1865 I went out to Australia, where I was offered a good job at £2 5s. a week, and I didn’t return to England until 1882. While I was away Greenwich hospital was done away with.

“When I came home I lived with my son for a while, then I left, and after being in the union a short time, I came into the Haslar hospital.”

It is interesting in connection with this story, to recall what terrible sufferings the British Legion underwent in Spain; the natives hated them as foreigners, the generals in many cases were not too capable, typhus and dysentery both raged with violence, and the battles were desperate. Truly old Bright has lived his life.

THE OLD CEMETERY.

One day, towards the latter end of September, 1901, I was introduced to Mrs. B——. Mrs. B—— had often heard her great-uncle, the late Captain Young, R.N., formerly of No. 1, High Street, Portsmouth, talk of the wreck of the *Royal George*, in 1782, of which disaster he was an eye-witness.

He was walking along the sea-front, which now extends along the front of the new Zymotic Hospital, and saw

the great line-of-battle ship lying out at Spithead, surrounded by a number of small shore-boats which had brought off visitors, friends and relations, to bid farewell to the officers and crew.

He turned for a moment to look at some object inland, and when again he directed his gaze seaward the mighty ship had gone; hardly a vestige of her was to be seen.



Admiral Kempenfelt.

In an instant the noble ship had capsized and sunk, carrying with her Admiral Kempenfelt and some 600 or 800 men, with many women and other shore-going friends. It seems that the *Royal George* was being careened over to port to have her bilges cleaned, when, either caught by a breeze or for some other reason—and her ports being opened—she suddenly heeled over too far, filled and sank.

For days afterwards bodies were washed up—not only on to the mainland, but also on the beach near Ryde, in the Isle of Wight. It is not known where Kempenfelt was buried; quite possibly at Haslar, although no record can be found. Certain it is that many burials have taken place in various parts of the hospital grounds which are no longer used for such purposes, and of which absolutely all knowledge is now lost.

The house in which this small history is now being written stands on part of what was once a graveyard. It is said that some long time past Haslar was the scene of a great battle, which accounts for some of the numerous skeletons found, but whether this is true or not I do not know. Numerous skulls and bones have been dug up in the course of building operations in parts of the grounds which were never previously supposed to have been consecrated.

There is one tomb-stone which still remains in a corner of this supposed unconsecrated ground, and the fact that the ground was supposed to be unconsecrated, and that the inscription had become undecipherable except by an expert, led to the belief that the grave must be that of a suicide; and popular legend—amongst the few who ever took any interest in the matter—had it that the monument was in memory of the young and lovely daughter of a long-time-past Captain-Superintendent, who, disappointed in love, sought relief from her misery in self-inflicted death.

Unfortunately this legend, which might have given some sentimental—or sensational, which you will—interest to Haslar, was upset by a recent Inspector-General, who had the unkind curiosity to obtain an expert's opinion on the inscription: it turns out to be only the grave of a deceased naval chaplain, and his brother, a colonel in a line regiment, which was stationed at Gosport at the time of his death.

Truth may be stranger than fiction, but sometimes at all events it isn't half so picturesque.

The other skeletons found may have belonged to victims of the *Royal George* disaster, or to French Prisoners who

died at Porchester Castle and elsewhere, or to Portuguese patients who died in Haslar.

Until the new cemetery was opened a short time back in Clayhall, there used to be a small Turkish grave yard where part of the Zymotic Hospital now stands; this, however, was transferred bodily when the ground was wanted. The old cemetery at Haslar is a most picturesque spot. It was consecrated in 1827, although some



View in the Old Cemetery, Haslar.

of the tomb-stones are dated back to 1800 or earlier. Thus there is one "To the memory of Mr. Edward Young, Surgeon of His Majestie's Royal Hospital at Haslar, who departed this life Dec., 18th, 17—, aged 64 years, and was buried in this ground by his own Desire." Truly, promotion was slow in those days! Again, "To the memory of Nicholas Easters, late Master's Mate of His Majesty's ship M Haslar Hospital of Fever on board the above ship French Prisoners Earl Howe's Glorious Victory on the 1st of June 179—, aged 25 years."

Much of these inscriptions is now worn away and illegible.

Beyond the residents of Haslar, the policemen on duty, the gardeners, and three white owls, the sanctity of this really beautiful spot has few invaders.

The new cemetery is situated outside the hospital grounds, so calls for no further remark here. The old cemetery is now disused.

APPENDIX I.—The present staff at Haslar consists of—

- 1 Inspector-General.
- 2 Deputy Inspector-Generals.
- 1 Chaplain.
- 2 Fleet Surgeons.
- 1 Staff Surgeon.
- 1 Store Officer.
- 1 Inspector-General's Secretary.
- 1 Head Dispenser.
- 5 Surgeons (2 more have been added since writing this).
- 1 Civil Engineer.
- 3 Assistant Dispensers.

Besides Nursing Sisters, Head Ward-Master, and minor officials.

APPENDIX II.—Until November, 1869, the appointment of Dispenser at Haslar was held by a medical officer—a Staff Surgeon—and the Assistant Dispensers were unqualified. Then things were changed, and the dispensing and dispensing stores put in charge of a Head Dispenser, who was assisted by a staff of properly-qualified Assistant Dispensers ; this system is still in force.

APPENDIX III.—Fleet-Surgeon G. Kirker, R.N., was kind enough to lend me an interesting pamphlet from which I venture to give the following abstract :—

Before the large naval hospitals were established it seems that naval medical charges were thrown as much

as possible on the "Chest of Chatham." This was an early benefit society established in 1588, supported by the mariners themselves for the relief and support of the hurt and maimed.

The chest itself was kept in the south porch of Chatham Parish Church, and later at Greenwich Hospital.

The pensions awarded varied from £12 a year for the loss of both eyes to £4 a year for the loss of one eye, or for compound fracture, or for ulcerated legs, or fractured skull, etc.

The Chest Fund apparently flourished, and in 1814 was amalgamated to the tune of £1,355,400, together with its estate, with the Funds of Greenwich Hospital.

APPENDIX IV.—Besides to Dr. Kirker, I must own my indebtedness to the Rev. C. R. Mullins, R.N., and Mr. W. H. Long, of Portsmouth, for helpful suggestions to Mr. Arthur Walford's "Historic Sketches of Gosport," and finally to Mr. Wilks, of Haslar, who did the photographic work for me at a very much reduced charge.

GERALD SICHEL,

(Late R.N.)



