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NEW SERIES.

PROVINCIAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

THE NAMES OF MEMBERS WHOSE SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE RECEIVED, WILL IN FUTURE BE PRINTED ALPHABETICALLY ONCE A MONTH IN THE JOURNAL. The first monthly list—embracing all subscriptions for 1855 received up to the last day of January—will appear in the JOURNAL of February 9th. Members are particularly requested to bear in mind that subscriptions for the current year became due on the 1st day of January.

A safe and simple method of remitting subscriptions is by post-office order, payable to the undersigned at the General Post Office, London.

Attention is directed to the notice published on January 5th, for additional information.

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, *General Secretary.*

21, Edwards Street, Portman Square, London.

ANOMALOUS POSITION OF MILITIA SURGEONS.

AMONGST the citizens of the world, there are none who hold a position so strikingly anomalous as the members of the medical profession. As the ministers of an art which concerns every member of the community, they are *public men*, in the fullest acceptation of the term. In the most important matters connected with the management of state affairs, their services are at all times being called into requisition. In the performance of his duty, the medical man often holds a position as onerous and as important as that of a minister of the crown, the commander of an army, or the judge on the bench: yet, by a series of strange and unfortunate circumstances, the profession of medicine has the weakest of all voices in arranging those plans by which the affairs of the nation are carried on. Even in the great questions relating to the administration of his own professional services, the medical man is rarely if ever consulted. If the members of the executive require his assistance, they call for it immediately, and use it unsparingly, but only as an instrument over which they must have direct and absolute control. To add to this despotic treatment, too, the personal interests of the medical officer are last thought of: like the unhappy mistress of a rich *debauché*, he is without legal rights, and cared for only so long as he suits the purposes of those who claim over him an abused authority.

The truth of these statements could not be more fully corroborated than in what is now called the grievance of the militia surgeons. The government of this country, foreseeing or fearing war, call into play an additional force for the defence of our own shores; and the militia is organised. Of course a medical staff is required, as one of the most important parts of this organisation. Educated men, practising in different districts, become the militia surgeons; and, even in times of peace, find soon to their cost that the duties implied bear with them no important influence, and, in a pecuniary sense, tend to the losing side. As it now

turns out, in a time of war, that which was previously only barely tolerable becomes an absolute grievance. The force with which the medical officer is connected moves about from place to place, and assumes the fighting attitude; yet his position as an officer remains unaltered; while he is prevented from performing those private duties upon which he depends for an existence. He becomes, in fact, a soldier on active service, subjected to all the vicissitudes of a soldier's life, but possessing no more of the rights of a soldier than his legal neighbour, who remains at home, engrossing his parchment, increasing his practice, and enjoying peace.

With these statements before us, we need not wonder that the militia surgeons have published the spirited appeal to the justice of the government which we here subjoin:—

"January 1st, 1855.

"The medical officers of the embodied militia force having observed in the various recent orders in Council, and more especially in a recent Act of Parliament to enable Her Majesty to accept the services of the Militia on Foreign Stations, that whilst commissions in the line and other favours have been freely offered to the regimental officers, yet the claims of the medical branch of the service have been altogether overlooked, feel themselves compelled to submit to Her Majesty's Government a brief statement of the disadvantages under which they at present labour, and strongly, yet most respectfully, to solicit a just and fair consideration of them.

"I. The militia medical officer is at least equally qualified with that of the line or the ordnance department, his education has been as perfect in every respect, as protracted, and as expensive; but the present militia surgeons are generally of more mature age, have been resident in fixed localities, and have gained knowledge and practical experience: when they accepted their commissions, they never anticipated absence from home, beyond a limited period of one month in each year, except only in the case of foreign invasion. Under these circumstances, they submit that their position is more disadvantageous than that of young men who enter the service at an earlier period, and adopt it as a profession from the commencement.

"II. The duties of the militia medical officers are at least as onerous and as important as those of any other branch of the service; nay, in many instances, they are more so. He must examine hundreds of recruits; he must commence and arrange and organise his regimental hospital, with its staff of serjeant and orderlies, out of the most crude and inefficient material; and often he is obliged to perform all this important duty alone and unassisted, without even the advantage of an assistant-surgeon. Yet let these duties be ever so well performed, and ever so long continued, they constitute no ground for present promotion, and offer no hope for future provision: it seems a hardship that so striking a difference should be made to his disadvantage.

"III. The militia medical officer, who is seldom a man of extensive private means, is subjected to great expense, in order that he may perfectly conform to the regulations of the service; his uniform, his outfit, his contributions to the band and mess funds, and other expenditure, that need not be now enumer-