

ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL.

EDITED BY JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

No. CXI.

LONDON: FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 16, 1855.

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 second monthly list—embracing all subscriptions for 1855 received up to the last day of February—will appear in the JOURNAL of March 9th. Members are particularly requested to bear in mind that subscriptions for the current year became due on the 1st day of January.

The simplest method of remitting subscriptions is by post-office order, payable to the undersigned at the General Post Office, London.

JOHN ROSE CORMACK, General Secretary.

21, Edwards Street, Portman Square, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BOOKS RECEIVED. [*An Asterisk is prefixed to the names of Members of the Association.*] 1. TATE, THOMAS. Elementary Course of Natural and Experimental Philosophy. Vol. I. pp. 102. Vol. II. pp. 102. London: 1855. 2. *BROWN, WILLIAM. Thomas Zuckerbecker. pp. 78. Edinburgh: 1855. 3. Sketch of the Life and Character of the late Dr. William Brown. pp. 86. Edinburgh: 1855. 4. Eight Report of St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital and Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear and Eye. 1853-54. pp. 11. Dublin.

DR. PYEMONT SMITH OF LEEDS. A correspondent takes exception to our statement contained in a leading article of February 2nd. We said:—"After much inquiry, we cannot hear of any one experienced medical man to whom the government has given the rank of surgeon, on or off the staff; but we have heard of many, well qualified in every respect, who have been refused that rank avowedly for the reason that the army regulation stands in the way, and routine laws of promotion must be kept up." Our correspondent informs us that Dr. J. Pyemont Smith, a gentleman every way well qualified, "after some difficulties", received a letter of introduction from the Director-General to Dr. Hall, then at Scutari, and that having offered his services freely and gratuitously, he was permitted to give his services—being ranked as Assistant-Surgeon,—though allowed to perform the duties of Acting Staff Surgeon.

Now this is just what we complain of. There is, and has been, very great want of well-trained and experienced Surgeons at Scutari, but greater in the Crimea; many gentlemen have offered to go—some without stipulating for anything but permission to be useful—asking neither pay nor pension; yet such is the cruel and horrid selfishness of the official routine, that while the soldiers are perishing, the surgeons are refused. Few "experienced" surgeons will go to the seat of war, "to act as Assistant-Surgeons,"—to be placed under the present system.

JUSTICE. An anonymous and an *ex parte* statement would carry no weight. The behaviour of the practitioner complained of, seems to have been very bad; but the case is not one which we can discuss in the ASSOCIATION JOURNAL.

BOOKS, LETTERS, AND COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE EDITOR and General Secretary may be addressed to 21 Edwards Street, Portman Square, till after the 25th March, when it is requested that they be sent neither to Edwards Street nor to Putney, but to 37, Russell Square, London.

OUR ARMY MEDICAL SYSTEM.

NO. III.

A WRITER in the *Daily News*, signing himself F.R.C.S., in a letter, which, from its heavy metal, is probably official artillery, attacks the *Times* vehemently in the interest of the Army Medical Department. The *Times*, which has generally been friendly to the real interests of the medical profession, and which, from the first publication of Sir Robert Peel's letter (leading to the admirable "Sick and Wounded Fund"), to the present time, has led the van in succouring our army in the East, is styled "the great propagator of falsehood" regarding army medical affairs.

"F.R.C.S.," who is evidently attempting to ingratiate himself with the directing powers that be, and to "boo" himself into the army medical department, admits, while defending that department, the truth of almost all the charges of mismanagement of the interests of the sick and wounded that have been made against it, whether by the

special correspondent, by general correspondents, or by the editors of the "leading journal".

He admits that the medical department of the army has no independent action; that in all matters of detail the medical authorities are "absolutely powerless"; that, for example, the medical department is entirely dependent on the transport service, instead of, as in the French army, having a transport service of its own; that "the whole transport service of the country needs revision"; that the ambulances were left on the beach at Varna, leading to the horrors experienced by the helpless wounded at Alma; and that, while the whole of Great Britain has been ransacked for lint and old linen for the wounded, "ample supplies were, and still are, for aught that is known to the contrary, within a few hours' sail"; viz., with the ambulances at Varna! The Director-General must have asked of his awkward apologist, "Call you that backing your friends?" for the letter from which we quote purported to be the first of a series (promising to be both long and heavy), but of which no more has been seen. Perhaps, however, a very ill-judged leading article in the same newspaper of last Saturday, against the proposed hospital at Smyrna, distinguished for its tone of official exclusivism and disregard of the interests of the wounded soldier, in comparison with those of the army system of medical promotion, is by the same hand.

Can anything be more ridiculous than to accuse of falsehood those who have told the world of the miseries necessarily resulting from the mismanagement of the Director-General, and at the same time to recognise that mismanagement in detail? The *Times* has never accused the army medical officers, individually or collectively, of any neglect of duty; on the contrary, it has done more than all the other journals of the kingdom put together, to do justice and honour to the worthy members of the medical profession in the public services. But the *Times* has promptly, and with unswerving boldness, told the public of the unnecessary suffering and loss of life which has resulted from official blundering and imbecile routine. The public has naturally become indignant, and calls on the Director-General for his defence; and his apologist attempts, with true blundering official logic, to prove the general assertion a slander, by admitting the truth of its details!

Such advocacy is a very lame and impotent attempt to bolster up a medical dictatorship which is a dishonour to our profession, possessing, as it does, all the vice of absolutism without any of its energy, ability, or directness of purpose; a dictatorship won, not by merit and skill, but by favouritism, seniority, and routine—three abuses which it pursues with the imbecile instinct of a Bourbon following up its tradition of the Divine Right of Kings. It is a totally irresponsible system, wherein even bribery might, and favouritism must, exist, unless the Director be an angel of disinterestedness. A system which should give a modern Sir Malachi Malagrowther the patronage of the new Order of Merit, would not be more disgusting or disastrous than that which at

MEDICAL BENEVOLENT COLLEGE.

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The Council have the satisfaction of announcing to the Governors, and to other Friends of the Institution, that the **THIRD ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL** of the College will take place at the **LONDON TAVERN, BISHOPSGATE STREET**, on **WEDNESDAY**, the 28th Instant, under the Presidency of the

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF CARLISLE, K.G., F.R.S.

The Council are induced to hope that, as great exertions are being made to open the College in June next, the Festival will be numerous and influentially attended, particularly by members of the Profession; and that the support given to the cause on the occasion will be such as will enable them to accomplish that desirable object.

The following Noblemen and Gentlemen have kindly consented to act as Stewards:—

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Gentlemen desirous of Acting as Stewards, are requested to communicate with the Secretary.

TICKETS, ONE GUINEA EACH, may be had on application at the Office, or at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street.

By Order of the Council,

EDWARD HENRY SIEVEKING, M.D., Hon. Sec.
HERBERT WILLIAMS, Assistant Secretary.

Office, 37, Soho Square,
February 14th, 1855.

The Fourteenth List of Contributors will be Published on the 10th of March.