

ASSOCIATION MEDICAL JOURNAL.

EDITED BY JOHN ROSE CORMACK, M.D.

No. CXII.

LONDON: FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 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.

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. Positive Medical Agents: being a Treatise on the New Alkaloid, Resinoid, and Concentrated Preparations of Indigenous and Foreign Medical Plants. pp. 364. New York: 1855.

ERRATA. In Association Intelligence, p. 160, for "T. Stillman, M.B., Bilston", read "Wm. Stillman, M.D., Bilston"; and at p. 162 read for "twenty-three members were present", "twenty-four", etc.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS by Mr. A. B. Steele, Dr. L. Lindsay, Dr. Copeman, Dr. Cockle, and Mr. Borham, have been received, and will be inserted.

DR. SEATON. Thanks for the Memorial on Vaccination, which will be inserted with the least possible delay.

DR. A. (MANCHESTER.) The correspondence, in its present stage, is not suited to this Journal.

ROYAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SOCIETY. Mr. Campbell De Morgan has given notice of the following motion for the 1st of March:—"That this meeting regrets the course taken by the council in reference to the amendment adopted at the last annual meeting; and that as inasmuch as great dissatisfaction prevails in the Society in consequence of the manner in which the question involved in that amendment was settled by the council, this meeting is of opinion that an opportunity should be given to the fellows at large of determining by ballot whether the recommendation contained in that amendment should or should not be carried out." We trust that a ballot may be the means of settling the dispute, and preventing a continuance of the present condition of the Society.

OUR ARMY MEDICAL SYSTEM.

THAT the readers of this JOURNAL may be able to judge whether the remarks contained in our late leading articles are or are not justified by the facts which have transpired, we subjoin, in continuous order, a few extracts derived from various authentic sources. Many private letters now before us from the seat of war contain similar facts and opinions.

(*Eclectic Review for February. From a notice of "Our Camp in Turkey."*)

"It is deplorable that the formalities in which all departments are absorbed should still prevent the war ministers and directors of the army medical department from accepting the services of medical men, well trained in civil practice, familiar with operations, and skilled by long experience in the course of wounds and injuries. Far more experienced than most army surgeons, only a few of whom in time of peace see any practice worth speaking of. Yet, with a few army surgeons only who have seen much practice, the authorities insist on keeping up the 'regulation' which requires medical recruits to be young, and to enter as acting assistant-surgeon, refusing in this terrible crisis to procure, or even to accept, the services of the practically trained medical men of whom we speak. We know that such have offered their services, gratuitously if preferred, asking only that temporary surgical rank which would ensure them some independent action and scope; and that, in obedience to this regulation, and in order that the proper grade of 'promotion' may be preserved, that such men have been refused!

"The time will come when this will be inquired into in Parliament, and when the nation will indignantly denounce the

system of official routine which prevents our brave, unspeakably valuable army, from possessing the very best surgical and medical skill and experience which can be procured.

"Even at Varna, and in spring, our authoress speaks bitterly of the same want of medical provision which has been dwelt on during the whole campaign by soldiers, officers, and correspondents of the press, which, after Alma and Inkermann, led to horrors innumerable, and which is now filling the heart of the English people with a tide of indignation. But will it be able to bear down an official 'regulation'? Will the 'rules of the service' not resist the strongest and justest national clamour? Can any amount of parliamentary remonstrance check the regular routine of 'promotion', or secure to our wounded and dying men a sufficiency of trained and practised medical attendants. Of the hospital at Varna, Mrs. Young says, 'It was a terrible place, and the sick had not half enough medical officers to attend them. The assistant-surgeons were worked nearly to death, as many will bear me witness; and numbers of soldiers went in there who never saw a doctor, and were so sent on board a vessel in harbour used as a floating hospital'. And this before the field of Alma! A soldier who was wounded there, sent to Scutari, returned to camp, and who wrote home after the battle of Inkermann, in which he had joined, even then recalls the shocking scenes resulting from the want of a proper ambulance corps, and a sufficient supply of doctors at Alma. 'Never shall I forget the night of the 20th September. We had to lie amongst the dead and wounded all night; and to hear the cries of the wounded it would melt a heart of stone; some crying to their comrades to shoot them dead, their sufferings were so great; others crying for help, but no one could assist them. There they lay, some all night; for the doctors could not attend upon all at once, being so many. They were days before they could attend to them. There the poor fellows were, weltering in their blood. I went at dark after the battle to the doctor, to get my wound dressed; and never shall I forget the sight.' Yet, though this, and such as this, has been urged upon the authorities; though Balaklava and Inkermann have come to corroborate the tale,—the army 'regulation' must not give way; the 'rules of the service' must be kept up; promotion must proceed in its regular routine; the army must get its medical recruits fresh from the ranks of the students; and the offers of men accustomed to the work required to be done must continue to be refused. Never was a greater wrong inflicted on a gallant army than this."

(*From "Our Camp in Turkey," by Mrs. Young.*)

"It will seem extraordinary, no doubt, that an army should have been sent to Turkey, liable to all sorts of accidents, even if not actually employed in the field, and yet that no carriage for the sick was provided; yet such was absolutely the case; and a poor officer from Devna, with a broken limb, had been sent jolting in on an araba only a few days before, to the intense suffering, as may be supposed, of the unfortunate patient. The French were provided with a sort of covered litter, open at both ends, to be borne on the shoulders of men; and they had also '*les ambulances*', mule-litters, which formed either bed or chair, balanced on either side, and attended by men who carried water and comforts for the sick. We, however, anxious as we were for our sick friends, could only look for the chance hire of a native cart, in which they might be jolted over rough roads and across furrowed fields, to the shelter that was required." In this detestable conveyance, the sick man was jolted on to Varna, two miles distant, three hours and a half in the burning sun and sultry atmosphere, buzzing with insects, "quite enough", as the author says, "to have caused violent fever in a patient so exposed." (Written in spring, 1854, at Varna.)

In the French camp, says Mrs. Young, in *Our Camp in Turkey* (writing in spring), "ambulances for the sick, artillery, carts, canteens, appeared to occupy every slope; and the roads were crowded with French. From time to time, our men fell seriously ill, or accidents occurred; but we had no carriage for the sick. A commissariat cart was the best resource; and so