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## THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICE.

To the branch of the profession engaged in medical practice in the army, the year 1882 has been by no means an uneventful one. In the early part of this period, at the beginning of the month of April, a change occurred in the direction of the Army Medical Department. Sir William Muir, K.C.B., who acted as its chief for a year beyond the allotted term of seven years, having received the appointment in April 1874, was succeeded by Surgeon-General Thomas Crawford, the present Director-General. It was during the tenure of office of Sir William Muir's predecessor, Sir Galbraith Logan, that the disruption of the old arrangement of the department into staff and regimental officers, and the unification of the medical body into a single corps, had occurred; and when Sir William Muir took over the Directorship, he found the new system established, but requiring much still to be done to give it due consistence, and to bring it into harmony with the working of other parts of the military machine. At the time the new system of army medical organisation was introduced, the present Director-General, Dr. Crawford, held the post of head of the medical branch at the central office in Whitehall Yard; and the views entertained by him at the present time on the subject may be fairly assumed from a recollection of this circumstance. It was not without surmounting great difficulties, and overcoming very powerful opposition in high quarters, that the reformed system of administration, as its supporters regarded it, was introduced; and Sir Galbraith Logan, as its parent, had personally to encounter much obloquy, which was continued to his successor when it was found he was determined to follow in the same path. The influence of the opponents of the new system, who reckoned among their numbers not only the majority of the combatant officers of regiments, but also many medical officers who preferred the previously existing mixed regimental and staff organisation of the department, together with a general feeling of dissatisfaction among the medical officers at the derogatory, and in many respects unfair, manner in which they were treated relatively to officers of other parts of the military service, had led for several years to a dearth of candidates for commissions in the army medical ranks. The evils which this state of things brought about were frequently commented on in Parliament; and at last, under pressure of the need for a better supply of aspirants for medical commissions, and the representations made by various public bodies, among which the British Medical Association took a prominent part, the Government felt itself constrained to issue a Royal Warrant removing most of the grievances complained of. This concession, which emanated from the War Department towards the latter part of the time when Sir William Muir was Director-General, restored contentment in the medical service, and there has been no want of candidates for commissions in it since; but among the provisions of the new warrant was one which had for its object to defeat any repetition of a similar demonstration on the part of the profession, such as had been made before the warrant was granted. This was accomplished by partly closing the door of entrance by open competition, and substituting for it a power of nominating in the future a proportion of medical officers to commissions instead. On the occasion of the first competitive examination of candidates in the past year (1882), an attempt was made to show that the fact of no surgeons having commissions conferred on them without competition was a breach of the nomination clause of the warrant; and we found it necessary to expose in the JOURNAL the fallacy of these assertions, and to indicate the trouble to the authorities, as well as discontent in the medical schools of the kingdom, which would have inevitably followed such a course, had it been adopted. It would be out of place, in a summary of this kind, to refer further to the changes in organisation of the Army Medical Department; but it has been necessary so far to advert to them, inasmuch as during the latter part of the year which has just passed away an agitation has arisen, backed by very powerful supporters, for a return to the old system of departmental administration, in consequence of the breakdown, as it is alleged, of the existing system during the late campaign in Egypt. On this subject, some remarks will be made presently.

About the month of May 1882, accusations of inattention and misconduct on the part of men of the Army Hospital Corps in South Africa, during an outbreak of enteric fever which occurred among some of the troops who had been left in occupation after the close of the Boer campaign, were freely commented upon in various newspapers. The subject was referred to in Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates, and an influential opinion was expressed that the short service system did not work well in the Army Hospital Corps. A Departmental Committee, with Sir Evelyn Wood, K.C.B., as the chairman, was appointed by the Secretary of State for War to inquire into the occurrences complained of; and though no report on the subject was published, it was understood that the general charges against the men of the corps fell to the ground under the investigation. All

that could be proved was that there had been faults in some particular individuals; but it was at the same time shown that these had been noticed and adequately punished at the time they had occurred. Subsequently the inquiry by this committee was led to assume a wider range, and the Secretary for War, Mr. Childers, stated in the House of Commons that the whole question of the organisation of the corps had now been submitted to for consideration. The Committee were still engaged on this question, when their proceedings were interrupted by the services of the chairman and some of the members being otherwise required in connection with the arrangements for the approaching campaign in Egypt.

The Egyptian campaign, remarkable in its military aspect for the rapidity with which its objects were accomplished, led to severe criticisms on the working of the medical department of the army. A general cry was raised that the medical service had "broken down". All sorts of charges were made against it. Hospitals were said to have been quite destitute of medical comforts, operations to have been performed without the use of chloroform, patients left without ordinary attention, and invalids on the voyage home to have been half-starved from not being able to get the kinds of food which were necessary for them. None of these accusations, so freely uttered, could be substantiated when they were sifted. We ourselves undertook a searching inquiry into the subject, questioning in considerable detail invalid soldiers and officers, as well as hospital orderlies and nurses, who had been in Egypt; and the result of the investigation was published in the JOURNAL of the 21st of October last. As there shown, sufficient proof was afforded that there was no justification for the allegation that the hospital service had broken down; and as to the assertions of there having been a dearth of chloroform, medicines, medical necessities and comforts, they were simply untrue. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Garnet Wolseley, in his report of September 24th, at the termination of the war, testified that "the medical department under Surgeon-General Hanbury, C.B., had done everything that could possibly be done for the care and comfort of the sick and wounded"; and this official tribute was confirmed by the strong sympathy evinced by the civil members of the profession in the memorable banquet which was given by them to the medical officers of the Egyptian Expedition in London. This banquet was attended by all the heads of the profession in the metropolis, and a large number of eminent provincial practitioners.

The medical officers of the British service worked under immense difficulties in the expedition. The Army Medical Department had provided for the wants of the campaign on an extensive and elaborate scale, and especially had despatched a hospital ship—the *Carthage*—equipped with every requisite for a large number of sick and wounded patients. But the movements of this vessel were not under the control of the medical department; and, at a time of urgent need, she was left behind at Alexandria, for reasons with which the medical service had no concern. The Commander-in-Chief had considered it necessary to keep the change of his base from Alexandria to Ismailia a profound secret; and, as soon as he had secured a footing at Ismailia, had found himself obliged to advance and engage the enemy, so that a considerable number of wounded required immediate care and attention. These sudden demands were responded to, and the difficulties connected with them overcome, in a manner that should call forth admiration, considering the circumstances in which the medical officers concerned were placed. It is all the more remarkable that the special wants thus created were supplied as well as they were, when it is remembered that the medical department has no opportunities afforded to it of gaining in time of peace the experience which alone can make things work smoothly as well as successfully in time of war. In every other part of the army it is admitted, as a matter of course, that the actual establishments which will have to be employed on active service in the field should be rehearsed from time to time during peace. But even when field operations are practised on the largest scale in which they are ever practised in England, it is never considered by the military authorities to be necessary for bearer companies, field hospitals, or other field medical establishments, to take part in the practice. The more the discussion has been carried on in the public press regarding the alleged failures of the Army Medical Department during the late war, the more it has been rendered apparent that the defects in the medical service, whatever they may have been, have not been due to faults of the medical officers themselves, but to the fact that they have no separate and integral organisation of their own, as other parts of the military service have. Such defects in the service in Egypt as have occurred have been due to the want of autonomy in the department, and of control over the transport and other materials which are essential for its even working in war time; and the evil results that are inevitable under such conditions, when the pressure of war has to

be met, have been foretold in the writings of our best military surgeons over and over again. As soon as the outcry against the medical department broke out, some military surgeons were led to advocate a return to the old regimental system of organisation, while military officers have been tracing the defects of the medical service to the want of more military control over the hospital establishments; but it is obvious that no change of organisation, much less a return to systems which are incompatible with modern arrangements, can improve matters so long as the only possible method of medical officers gaining experience in field duties, practice in time of peace, is withheld from the department. An official inquiry is again proceeding on the subject, and it may be hoped that it will lead to the Government and the public becoming impressed with the conviction that it is a false economy not to afford the means which alone can enable the medical department to work as smoothly and efficiently, when it is subjected to the strain of war, as other departments of the army are enabled to do. The Committee, which, as we have already mentioned, was originally constituted under the presidency of Sir Evelyn Wood, to inquire into alleged neglects on the part of the Army Hospital Corps in South Africa, has been again further expanded, and placed under the direction of the Earl of Morley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. The scope of its inquiries has been enlarged, so as to comprehend the whole question of hospital management and nursing in the field, as well as the sea-transport of sick and wounded. It was stated in the House of Commons that the Committee is also to ascertain what deficiencies, if any, existed in the field or other hospitals, or in the hospital ships and invalid transports, during the Egyptian campaign, with a view to future remedy. Evidence is in the course of being taken on these subjects; and, shortly before the last session of Parliament closed, it was announced that great efforts would be made to have the report completed by next session. The inquiry of this Committee is not merely a medical concern; it is rather one that concerns the interests of the whole army, as well as the character of the country at large; and we trust that a right solution of the important questions under its consideration will shortly be attained.

The hospital service of the large Indian contingent which took part in the Egyptian Expedition not only escaped without the animadversion which the sister service of the British forces evoked, but met with expressions of praise on all sides. This happy circumstance was doubtless due to the fact that the experience of continual field-service in India had taught what was necessary for efficiency; and because a greater liberality in the constitution of the Indian field-hospital establishments, as well in the *personnel* as in stores and transport, had rendered them self-reliant and comparatively independent. Each of the Indian field-hospitals, regarded as an unit, was complete within itself, possessing the means of supplying all its wants; and it is not a matter for wonder, therefore, that they accomplished their work with less friction than other establishments could do, which were dependent on a variety of other departments for their working and efficiency.

One other point connected with the history of military medical events during the past year must be alluded to, and we must then close this part of the summary. For many years past, the question of effecting an amalgamation between the home and Indian branches of the military medical service has been under discussion. To accomplish this fusion has been manifestly a desirable object ever since the rule of India was transferred from the Honourable East India Company to the Crown; not merely for the purpose of simplification of medical administration in the military forces of India, but also in the interests of pecuniary economy. The difficulties in the way of bringing about the union for a long time appeared insuperable, owing especially to the rights of the natives, guaranteed in the act of transfer, to compete for commissions in the Indian Medical Service, while they were disqualified for commissions in the British army. Some steps towards a coalition have, however, been gained of late; so that, during the last war in Afghanistan, the British and Indian Army Medical Departments were both together solely directed by one head—viz., the Principal Medical Officer of the British Forces in India. The way towards amalgamation of the two services has been further cleared of late by a partial separation of the Indian medical department into military and civil branches; and on Dr. Crawford, during whose period of administration in India these changes had occurred, becoming Director-General, it was known that efforts would be made to carry out the system, which had thus commenced, to its legitimate conclusion. Shortly before the present Director-General's return to England, the Indian Government had sent home its scheme of reorganisation of the medical department on the principle of unification of the British and Indian services. The War Office and the Horse Guards were believed to object to many of the articles embodied in this scheme; and, although the correspondence was carried on confidentially, it was generally understood that the dis-

cussions on the subject were being carried on between the central authorities in England and the Government of India up to the time when the preparations had to be made for the Egyptian campaign. The subject of the amalgamation of the two services was then allowed to drop for a time, but is now, we understand, on the eve of being resumed; and in the interest of India itself, as well as in the interest of the officers of a department to whom India owes so much of its present development and prosperity, it is to be sincerely hoped that no long time will be allowed to elapse before the questions in dispute are settled, and the medical services of that vast country, both civil and military, placed on a settled and satisfactory basis.

#### THE NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICE.

THERE has been some reaction in favour of this service, from which it may be inferred that the Order in Council of 1880 has had beneficial results, as there have been more candidates, and fewer resignations after experience of the service. Still the active force remains at about 25 per cent. under established strength; but as many as have been advertised for have been entered, so that the new policy would appear to be to keep down the staff to working necessities.

Deaths have happened, on or from active service, to two deputy inspectors-general, one fleet-surgeon, and one staff-surgeon; of whom it may be said that all are losses to the service. Deputy-Inspector-General Hill died in charge of Malta Hospital, of chronic dysentery contracted on service in Japan; Deputy-Inspector-General Cotton of hepatic and enteric disease, displaying itself when in charge at Plymouth Hospital; Fleet-Surgeon Dr. Anderson, in charge of the Marine Infirmary at Walmer; and Staff-Surgeon Connell in Japan waters.

The credit of the Medical Department has been well sustained in the bombardment of Alexandria and on shore in Egypt, at the ports where the sick and wounded have been received, and in the fighting at Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir, respectively; for which Dr. Shaw, of the flag-ship, was awarded the decoration of C.B. without promotion, and two junior officers have been raised each a step in rank. The manner in which the service in general, and especially in the affairs preparatory to the Egyptian expedition, has been executed so satisfactorily to the Government, that its chief—Dr. Watt Reid—has received Knighthood of the Order of the Bath from Her Gracious Majesty.

Amid such general approval and propitious outlook, it is to be regretted that dissatisfaction is loudly expressed at the allotment of pensions that have fallen vacant.

#### MILITIA SURGEONS.

IN January 1881, a clause was issued in the Militia Regulations for that year, stating that all militia medical officers on the departmental list should be compelled to retire when they reached the age of sixty-five. This clause was at complete variance with the Warrant of 1876, and the several Acts under which militia surgeons held their appointments, and was, as they considered, *ultra vires* and at variance with all rules of equity and law—depriving them, from no fault of theirs, of incomes ranging from £100 to £350 a-year, and in many instances leaving them destitute of any means of livelihood. Some of the militia surgeons, therefore, headed by the President of the Militia Surgeons' Society, issued a circular to all the members and militia surgeons, both past and present, urging them to co-operate and subscribe funds to bring the matter before the Secretary of State for War, and the House of Commons. We are sorry to find that but a very small proportion of the militia surgeons responded; many from want of means, and others believing it was hopeless to expect any redress, as they had been repeatedly denied such from previous Secretaries for War. However, a sufficient sum was subscribed to enable them to submit a case to two eminent Queen's Counsel; and, although their opinion was adverse to presenting a petition of rights, they both considered the militia surgeons had good legal and equitable grounds for pensions of six shillings a-day, as granted by Acts of Parliament, extending from George II to Victoria, 1876, at which time all these Acts were repealed, and the militia were brought under the authority of the Crown; but this was in no way retrospective, or took away previous rights.

The Secretary for War, although appealed to by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, supported by several members of Parliament, having declined to receive any deputation, or to allow the case of the militia surgeons to be stated personally to him, a petition was prepared, numerously signed, and presented to the House of Commons about April of this year; and was supported by numerous petitions from several of the licensing bodies in the United Kingdom, and from Branches of the British Medical Association. The Secretary for War, in consequence of a strong representation made to him by several members of Parliament, and by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Bills Committee,