

HOSKINS (General Elliott)

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THE CASE

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICERS

OF THE

GUERNSEY ROYAL MILITIA.

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AMONG THE MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

1861.

THE
MEDICAL OFFICERS
OF THE
GUERNSEY MILITIA.

MARCH 1, 1861.

FOR nearly twelve months a question has been pending between the Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, and the Medical officers of the Militia, relative to the appointment of Dr. Ozanne, an avowed homœopath, as a staff-surgeon in that force. The question is entirely of a public nature. It concerns the whole of the Medical profession, whether engaged in Army, Navy, Hospital practice or otherwise, and the Military Service generally.

Without seeking to discuss the merits or demerits of any peculiar doctrines or dogmas, the Medical officers object to co-operate with homœopaths on the broad principle, that persons holding diametrically adverse opinions, as to theory and practice, cannot concur

in any measure conducive to public or private benefit.

In a Military, as well as a Medical point of view, the appointment above alluded to is irregular and objectionable. Dr. Ozanne, without having done any public duty, was summarily elevated over the heads of all the Regimental Medical officers, and placed on a Staff previously composed, exclusively, of Surgeons promoted thereto in consequence of seniority, and great length of service. A recent Militia order states that he is now "attached to head-quarters,"—an ambiguous phrase susceptible of the most opposite interpretations; but his name is retained in the Army List in connection with the Guernsey Militia, as the sole representative of its Medical-Staff.

The Royal Militia of Guernsey forms an integral part of the British forces, with its registered place in the Army List. The attempt to engraft homœopathy, even upon this remote branch, forms a dangerous precedent, which may lead to its introduction into the regular Army, the Navy, and into our Public Hospitals. Unless homœopathy be legally admitted into these services, it must be hazardous to obtrude it into the

Guernsey Militia, in which, as elsewhere, a combination of discrepant systems cannot but produce discontent, confusion, and interruption of discipline.

Maintaining the principles before stated, and finding that the respectful representations of their honest convictions was disregarded by the Lieutenant-Governor, the Medical officers deemed it right to tender the resignation of their commissions, and they subsequently memorialized the Right Honourable the Home Secretary on the subject.

After the lapse of nine months, the Staff-Surgeons were favoured by the acceptance of their resignations ; but this indulgence was refused to the Regimental Medical officers, who continue to perform their duties gratuitously, although they are liable at any moment to professional association with a homœopath, who, according to an unrescinded Militia order, has the right to preside in his turn at Medical Boards, and to attend in rotation on the field, where as Staff-Surgeon he is entitled to command not only all Regimental Medical officers of the Militia, but all those junior to himself in rank in the Regular Army, when, as occasionally happens, Her Majesty's troops are brigaded

with the Militia. This association would be particularly painful to their feelings, and is one from which in civil life they would carefully guard themselves.

The plea set forth for granting a commission to Dr. Ozanne is, that the Lieutenant-Governor had not otherwise the power to save him from doing duty in the ranks, according to the "peculiar constitution" of the Guernsey Militia. It is true that all natives of the Bailiwick, and others of Her Majesty's subjects resident therein, are bound to perform personal service in the Militia ; but this rule admits of exceptions.

The above mentioned plea, whereby the regulations of the Medical department of the Army are evaded, will on further examination be found to be fallacious. Lieutenant-Governors have always exercised the power of exempting certain persons from all Militia duty. The present Lieutenant-Governor possesses the power inherent in his predecessors. He may grant total exemption, unquestioned, to his own private and personal attendant, and in this manner redress the grievances complained of, without any sacrifice of dignity or authority on his part.

The Lieutenant-Governor carefully disclaims the in-

tention of forcing the Medical officers into professional contact with Dr. Ozanne; but his successor cannot be bound by his intentions, and may view it as a strange anomaly, that no duties can be assigned to a person whose name appears on the Army List in connection with the Militia. Moreover, so long as Dr. Ozanne holds a commission he has a right to claim the performance of the duties defined in an unrescinded Militia order, dated October 15th 1844.

For the purpose of retaining an individual in a manifestly false position, injustice is done to a whole body of Medical officers. The organization of the Medical department of the Militia is disturbed. The staff is arbitrarily disposed of. The Regimental officers are refused permission to resign, or to serve in the ranks, which they would prefer, so long as Dr. Ozanne holds any medical appointment in connection with the Militia, and so long as his name is retained in the Army List.

The Right Honourable the Home Secretary declines any further interference in a matter which is declared to be settled "after a very full and careful examination!" A mode of settling the question which leaves grievances unredressed, in a manner savouring strongly of

a denial of justice. Such being the state of affairs a more searching investigation than that hitherto vouchsafed seems to be requisite.

The production of the whole of the official correspondence which has taken place, would doubtless reveal such evidence as would tend to a speedy settlement of the question at issue, without compromising the dignity or the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, without injustice to Dr. Ozanne, and with entire satisfaction to those who now feel deeply aggrieved, and are fulfilling duties in Her Majesty's service under protest and compulsion.

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