

A letter to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Palmerston ... on the subject of the Ophthalmic Institution for the cure of Chelsea Pensioners / by John Vetch.

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A
LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD VISCOUNT PALMERSTON,

SECRETARY AT WAR, &c. &c.

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE OPHTHALMIC INSTITUTION,

FOR THE

CURE OF CHELSEA PENSIONERS.



SECOND EDITION,

WITH AN ADDITIONAL APPENDIX.

BY

JOHN VETCH, M.D. F.R.S.E.

PHYSICIAN TO THE FORCES,

MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, AND OF THE
ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

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1819.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE *Strictures* which have appeared on this *Letter* in the daily and other prints, have induced the *Author* to submit the whole to the *Public*, contrary to his original wish or intention; and on a subject, on which a general interest has been excited, he has deemed the publication of the additional papers contained in the *Appendix*, the best method of affording the *Public* a fair view of the question.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.

MY LORD,

IN consequence of your Lordship having successfully resisted the enquiry moved for by Mr. Grant on Tuesday last, respecting the institution of a new and expensive establishment for the Ophthalmic Invalids of Chelsea Hospital, and the employment of an individual for its superintendance wholly unconnected with the army, and whose appointment can alone be justified, not merely by his personal merits, but by the incapacity of the Medical Officers of the Army, for the duty which your Lordship's patronage has devolved upon him—I am particularly called upon to advert to the grounds on which your Lordship has opposed the production of the documents moved for.

The controul which your Lordship has exercised over the responsible duties of another department having afforded a fair and open field to Sir William Adams for the trial and exhibition of his pretensions to new and superior modes of treatment, it was most naturally to be expected that your Lordship, in justification of such a decision, would have granted the most open and satisfactory proofs both of his success, and of the failure of those practitioners who had been formerly employed.

When however the moment has arrived for this investigation, we are informed by your Lordship, that the Reports made by the two Boards specially appointed to observe and record the evidence on this subject, having been dictated by a spirit of professional jealousy and hostile combination against Sir William Adams, are unfit to be produced; and that your Lordship's own testimony, and the statement given by Sir William Adams himself, render further evidence not only unnecessary, but inadmissible. On such proofs your Lordship has thought fit to authorize a liberal remuneration to the individual in question for his *voluntary* services, with the additional burden on the Public of a new and extensive establishment.

Whatever impression such evidence and such allegations against some respectable members of a useful profession may have made at the time on your Lordship's immediate hearers,

hearers, even they, as well as the public at large, will acquiesce in the necessity of further enquiry when they, for a moment, consider the improbability of a combination among such men to destroy the fair reputation of any individual; and when they reflect on the glaring partiality of entirely withholding the reports of those Gentlemen, whom your Lordship stigmatizes with so serious a charge. The formation of two distinct Boards seemed intended by your Lordship to prevent the possibility of any unfairness towards Sir William Adams, each having made its reports without any communication with the other; the reports of one being made to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, of whom your Lordship is one; the other reporting immediately to your Lordship, as Secretary at War.

While the profession in general are accused of entertaining a jealous feeling towards the supposed merits of Sir William Adams; your Lordship has at the same time declared that his pretensions to a new and successful mode of treating the second stage of Egyptian Ophthalmia, are so fully established by the testimony already given by Sir Henry Hallford, Dr. Baillie, Sir Everard Home, Messrs. Cline, Cooper and Abernethy, as to render all further enquiry superfluous: but so far are these Gentlemen from bearing your Lordship out in this declaration, that not one of them attributes to Sir William Adams the merit of such a discovery; and the certificates given on the occasion, to which your Lordship alluded, do not warrant such a construction.* It is no longer a question that Sir William Adams was taught the knowledge of this stage of the disease, and its treatment by excision, by the late Mr. Saunders; in return for instruction so liberally given on this and other occasions, he sought, by substituting a knife in place of the scissors used by Mr. Saunders, to appropriate to himself the whole merit of the discovery. The change of the instrument was, even if successful, of very inferior moment; and, unfortunately for such pretensions, has, after a trial much too long and perseveringly adhered to, been found to be so objectionable, as at length to have been laid aside in practice even by Sir William Adams.

About the same time, viz. in 1806, though unknown to Mr. Saunders, I had fully ascertained and demonstrated in my practice, the importance to be attached to this stage of the complaint, and the necessity of a strict attention to the internal surface of the eye-lids, as the only and indispensable criterion of recovery. I found by farther experience, that various caustic and astringent substances, carefully applied, were superior in efficacy to the use either of the scissors or the knife; the truth of which statements, I am ready to prove to your Lordship, by the personal and written testimony of those who assisted me in carrying the practice into execution at the time.

After all that has been said and written respecting this affection, as connected with

* "These testimonies were given in 1814, and related to a single pretended improvement, and proceeded upon a very limited experience. We should be satisfied to refer the whole question at issue, to the deliberate opinions which the same gentlemen would give in 1819." Vide *Edinburgh Medical Review*, No. 60.

Opaque Cornea, I am satisfied that many circumstances necessary to give effect to the treatment I have recommended, are not sufficiently understood, or attended to; and the superiority of my success I still am, as I have always professed myself to be, willing to prove, by a comparative trial with Sir William Adams, or with any other person; I totally and distinctly deny that I ever received any information whatever from the practice or publications of Sir William Adams, my own having been fully matured before he was known to the public.

The cases of blindness occasioned by an opaque state of the Cornea, being a small proportion to the whole number, the proposition of effecting a great saving to the Nation by the pretended discovery of this operation, was a direct imposition on the credulity of those to whom it was made; but the operation having proved utterly abortive, even in those cases where it was at all applicable, after the repeated trials which the unwearied indulgence of your Lordship has permitted, the further employment of Sir William Adams must now rest on a supposed superiority of his general skill and judgment, as an oculist, to every other person. Admitting that a more habitual practice as an operator, had really conferred the superiority we shall suppose him to possess, as the guardian of the rights, welfare, and interest of the army,—does your Lordship conceive that the exclusion of army surgeons from their valuable and legitimate field of practice, is to uphold the present and future interest of the service?

It is well known, that in this Metropolis, individuals acquire a separate reputation for the treatment of particular complaints; but it was never before thought proper to withdraw the cases of the army from the care of their own officers, to be placed, according to the nature of their disease, under that of a civil practitioner. If the measure now acting upon by your Lordship, be from the humane consideration of benefiting the pensioners, why should it be confined to one class of invalids? and why are the benevolent intentions of your Lordship forced upon these, without the least regard to their wishes on the subject?

I shall now examine the actual result of the cases which have been placed under the discretionary treatment of Sir William Adams. Against the admission of what he calls his report of all the cases he has treated during the last year, as a verified or authentic document, I must be allowed strongly to protest; besides its discrepancy from the Reports of the Army Medical Board, of the Medical Officers of Chelsea Hospital,* and the evidence of the patients, a considerable number of men, who have been long under treatment, do not appear, and have not been seen by either of the two boards above mentioned.

That the operations of Sir William Adams, as stated by himself, are less successful than those of others whose veracity is unimpeached, may be seen, by a reference to the

* Extracts from these Reports will be found in the Appendix to this edition; and for the particular cases, the reader is referred to the Reports themselves.

practice, and annual reports of the Cork Street and City of London Infirmaries, for the cure of diseases of the eye.—While, with respect to the treatment of Opaque Cornea, the success has been infinitely less than the result obtained under my care and direction, though conducted with every local disadvantage, while his practice has been aided by the immediate and official patronage of your Lordship.

After the assurance given by your Lordship that it was the consideration of the successful issue alone of the practice of Sir William Adams, manifested in a variety of cases, which had induced your Lordship to bestow any remuneration for services gratuitously offered and received, it cannot fail to surprise every impartial mind to observe that even from the report of Sir William Adams himself, so far from effecting a National saving of £60,000. per annum, by a reduction of the Ophthalmic pensioners, not one *has been sufficiently benefited, to admit of his pension being either reduced, or taken away*; and of six soldiers included in the report, all of them cases of Opaque Cornea, combined with the secondary stage of Egyptian Ophthalmia, *not one has been rendered fit for duty*; and have all been added to the list of pensioners. As a measure of economy the plan has therefore been most completely defeated. It now remains to be examined as one of humanity, the ground last taken for its support.

The cases of operation, admitting the operator's statement of the patients' vision to be correct, produce in those competent to give an opinion, one very different from what a superficial view may have conveyed to your Lordship and others; who, with all deference, cannot be supposed capable of entering fully into the merits of such a question. Most of these confer any thing but credit on the operator, being cases where, with the total loss of one eye, a greater or less degree of useful vision existed in the other:* in all of which, I assert, that the hazard of attempting an operation, as was done, upon the only remaining eye, was wholly unwarranted by any benefit which, from the state of the organ, *it was even possible for the operation to bestow*; while the risque and consequences of a failure were such as never could have been hazarded in general practice, or consented to by the patient, if the chances were fairly submitted to his choice; the operation was undertaken in contradiction to sound judgment, and to any humane feeling for the patient. In support of what I assert, I may appeal to the opinion and practice of any experienced Surgeon, or Oculist, throughout Europe; but to offer a practical comment, it only remains to be told, that out of the limited number of patients treated at so great a charge to the country, and with such informality to the service, *no less than five individuals, after being brought a distance exceeding 400 miles, and admitted with partial and useful vision of one eye, have been consigned to irremediable blindness through the failure of an injudicious operation*, and have either received, or are now applying for, an increased rate of pension for the injury they have sustained!

* Vide Sir William Adams's Report, No. 6, 8, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26, 31, 32, 42.

As it is an established rule, both in private and hospital practice, that no operation should be undertaken, without a previous consultation, where circumstances will permit; it is difficult to imagine, on what just view of humanity, an individual is thus permitted, by the single decision of your Lordship, to risque the future comfort and happiness of a class of unfortunate men, who cannot, and are not allowed to think for themselves on so momentous an object.*

While your Lordship, on the plea of justice to Sir William Adams, withheld those papers *which your Lordship admitted to militate against him*, your Lordship *has done me the injustice* of withholding those which would have shewn the strong grounds on which I rest my claims to the attention of your Lordship.

As I am still anxious that these claims should be made out by public and official testimony, rather than by any statement of my own, I shall here confine myself to a very brief notice of their nature and extent:—

Having been the first to ascertain and to establish that the infection of Ophthalmia was exclusively conveyed by the contact of the discharge from the diseased eye, and that the healthy state of the lining of the eyelids was the indispensable criterion of the recovery from the danger of relapse, and from the power of communicating the disease to others—I am indisputably entitled to whatever merit may attach to the early adoption of these conclusions. In verification of this point, I can refer to the testimony of every

* In the case, as detailed in the following affidavit, *the performance of the operation was objected to by both the army medical officers then employed as assistants to Sir William Adams.*

Alexander M'Callum, Out-Pensioner of Chelsea Hospital, and late of the Tenth Regiment of Foot, maketh oath that he was attacked with Ophthalmia in Egypt in the year Eighteen Hundred and One, by which he lost his right eye, so as to occasion his Discharge from the Service in Eighteen Hundred and Two. The sight of his left eye was also impaired, but not to such a degree as to prevent him from working and earning his Bread. He was employed at a Priestfield for the space of thirteen years, he then carried a Pack, until ordered to go to York Hospital in the year Eighteen Hundred and Seventeen by Staff Surgeon Dease. On arriving at York Hospital, he was inspected by Sir William Adams, who said he would perform an operation on him, to which he objected; but he afterwards submitted, in consequence of a threat, held out by Sir William, of losing his Pension should he prove refractory. Before this operation he could see the smallest print, on a medicine, which he understands was Bella Donna, being dropt into his eye; but after the operation and treatment in Hospital for ten months, he was discharged with his vision totally destroyed, which he attributes entirely to the operation to which he was forced to submit by Sir William Adams, as above stated. He now is unable to travel about the Country, and is left destitute, without either friends or money, having nothing to depend on but his pension, and having received no addition to it, nor any other sum, except five shillings, which he got from Sir William Adams on leaving the Hospital.

ALEX. M'CALLUM,

—|—

his mark.

Sworn before me, at Berwick upon Tweed, this 25th day of June, 1819,

DAVID STOW, J. P.

individual patient admitted under my care, and to that of every officer who served along with me, from 1806 to 1812, inclusive.*

Secondly. When upwards of 4000 men had been lost to the service in other places, by this painful and afflicting disease—out of 3000 who were treated under my immediate care at the Ophthalmic Hospitals of Selsea, Aldwick, and Bognor, not one man admitted in an early stage of the disease was disabled from military service; while from 500 to 600 cases of blindness were recovered and rendered fit for active or garrison duty, as far as depended on the state of their vision: thus effecting an immediate alleviation of human suffering, and a saving to the country, which, by the average loss at other places, cannot be estimated at less than £20,000. per annum.

In addition to this result of my immediate and personal treatment; by my official correspondence with the surgeons of various corps, and by printed tracts, I materially contributed to the amelioration and eradication of the disease in other places; and, while so much was effected by medical treatment, the whole expense was not only defrayed out of the usual stoppages deducted from the pay of the soldier when in hospital, but an actual and available surplus of £2000. carried over to the public account.

Thirdly. So fully had I considered the various aspects of the disease, both as it regarded the army and the nation at large, that while I took especial care, so far as my controul extended, that no man should be discharged on account of blindness in whom there was any vestige of remaining disease, or any prospect of ultimate recovery,—I addressed a representation on the subject so far back as the beginning of 1808, through General Lord Charles Somerset, and which I repeated from time to time, on the mischievous effects of sending blind men to their homes, instead of detaining them for farther treatment; a precaution which, if then adopted, would have saved the doubtful and expensive policy on which your Lordship is now acting, of calling these persons from their homes at so distant a period, and when, from the recently printed statement of Sir William Adams, it appears that only one man has been admitted in an infectious state of the disease.

The return which I have now met with, for the conscientious discharge of the laborious duty of combating this destructive disease, both with respect to its cure, and eradication from the Army, before the appearance of any one who even pretended to understand its management, is the public declaration of your Lordship, that my success in some cases was not so rapid as could have been expected. What your Lordship expected I know not;

* The importance of this stage of the disease, as it regards the propagation or eradication of Ophthalmia, was never alluded to by Sir William Adams, until after I had largely insisted upon it, in a printed memoir addressed to the Army Medical Board, in the Spring of 1812, and the existence of which, Sir William Adams has, with becoming consistency, affected to deny; until then, he had only considered the affection of the eye-lids as connected with the opaque state of the cornea, pointed out to him by the late Mr. Saunders.

but in justice your Lordship should have also stated, that those cases were the dregs of the whole number which had been received from the first establishment of the Hospital, and were men who, under the care of any other person, would have been deemed incurable; and who, from immoral habits, or constitutional debility, rendered any efforts very unavailing. I ask your Lordship, if any opportunity was ever afforded me of vindicating the apparent want of success in these individual cases alluded to; and if on their being placed under the experimental treatment of Sir William Adams, after my sudden and unlooked for removal from the charge of the Ophthalmia Hospital to foreign service, these men were not officially informed, that in the event of their cure under Sir William Adams, they would receive a free discharge, or a bounty of thirty-six guineas. I ask your Lordship, if after all the means employed by Sir William Adams, to detect any cases in which I may have appeared to have failed among the numerous list of blind pensioners; if any, and how many have been found to have been improperly discharged by my recommendation. I also call upon your Lordship to substantiate the success which attended Sir William Adams's treatment of those cases, which, under the circumstances stated, he selected from the whole number I left in the Ophthalmia Hospital. From any other testimony than what he himself has given, I apprehend your Lordship will have little reason to boast either of the rapidity of their progress, or of the ultimate benefit they have received.

Besides the various printed misrepresentations, which have been circulated, with incredible industry, among all whose influence has been deemed essential to the interest of Sir William Adams, I find that to certain copies he has ventured to affix a *manuscript* note, with the grave assertion that the loss of men in the 52d regiment of foot, which I have detailed in an account of Ophthalmia published in 1807, took place under my immediate care and treatment. A result which he desires the reader to contrast with his treatment of the children of St. Pancras Workhouse. For the correct information of your Lordship, and those who may have given credit to such statements, I am alone induced to notice it, and to say that from my publication of 1807, quoted by Sir William Adams, he knows as well as I do, that *when the great loss occurred in the 52d regiment, I had not even seen the disease in question; that I never had the medical treatment of that regiment; and that I only arrived in time to observe the effect of the treatment, which instantly arrested the destructive progress of the disease.*—A treatment, which as afterwards matured, has hardly been equalled for the certainty of its success, in the history of any disease whatever.

To support the general truth of the statement I have here submitted to your Lordship, I subjoin two special reports on the state of the patients under my care, drawn up after a minute and personal examination of the Hospitals, then under my directions; the first by Mr. Knight, Inspector General of Army Hospitals, dated 15th August, 1808; and the other by Sir James M'Grigor, then Deputy Inspector of Hospitals

of the district: I beg to refer your Lordship to a similar report from Mr. Keate, then Surgeon-General, addressed to Sir James Pulteney, dated 8th August, 1808.

I shall only add, that, if before Government thought proper to entertain the pretensions of Sir William Adams, a due investigation had been held into the practice at the Ophthalmia Hospital, the only proper reference to ascertain the merits of army treatment, either as it regarded the acute or the secondary stage of the complaint, the occasion for this address would not have existed, and I should have been spared the difficulties which have been since opposed to all retrospective enquiry.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient and humble Servant,

14, Edgeware Road,

May 15, 1819.

JOHN VETCH, M. D.

Physician to the Forces.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

(Extract.)

Army Medical Department,
August 15, 1808.

Sir,

I RETURNED on Saturday from a Circuit of Inspection along the Coast of Kent and Sussex, and have many objects of notice for the consideration of H. R. H. the Commander in Chief; but as the Ophthalmia Depôt at Selsea is a more immediate and leading point of consideration, I hasten to report separately on that subject.

In the several Barracks of Selsea, Aldwick, and Bognor, I found 781 patients: of these I made an accurate and individual examination; and as I was detained three days on the duty of these stations, a second inspection was had at the two latter establishments before I left the place, and nearly forty of the number were discharged to their regiments.

These 781 patients are at present crowded into *double births*.—This, indeed, is a temporary pressure, arising from a sudden influx of patients from the armies in South America, Mediterranean, &c. who, as irretrievably blind, should be discharged, and no longer occupy the space that might be more usefully employed.

In the superintendence of these concerns, I had great reason to be pleased with the skill, arrangement, and extreme attention of Dr. Vetch; and I should ill discharge my duty, if I did not report the same to H. R. H. the Commander in Chief.—Indeed, he seems to be so well qualified for this peculiar duty, that I cannot avoid recommending him for the appointment of Staff Surgeon to the Forces, to be specially attached to this duty; for it appears that he has been remarkably successful: and of the many cases sent to Selsea, very few have lost their sight at that place.—It is much to be regretted, that more Hospital Mates cannot be sent to him, for he is in great want of such assistance; but I have been repeatedly obliged to recall them from this duty, for the pressing exigencies of foreign service, and have not been able to replace them temporarily from civil life.

I have the honor to be,

&c. &c.

Lieutenant Colonel Gordon.

&c. &c.

(Signed) F. KNIGHT.

No. 2.

Portsmouth, 5th April, 1810.

Gentlemen,

I HAVE just returned from an inspection of the three stations of the Ophthalmia Depôt, and enclose a copy of my report to Major-General Hugonin.

Dr. Vetch deserves no less credit for his successful and scientific treatment of Ophthalmia, and the various diseases of the eye, than for his economical and proper management of the different stations into which the Depôt is divided. I hope soon to be able to present you with specific returns on these heads. I will at present only state, that of 800 admissions during the last year, in only three cases has vision been lost, and in these cases, which were shewn to me, Dr. Vetch is not without hopes of sight being recovered. At this Depôt many of the most delicate operations have been performed on the soldier, with a degree of success which does not always fall to the lot of the first oculists.

When every expence is included at this Establishment, the total is rather under 9*d.* a day per man, under the disadvantage of the three stations being separate, the markets being nine miles distant, and when hospital servants, the purchase and repair of boats, wages of watermen, &c. are included.

The present state of the Depôt is as follows:—

At Selsea,	222 of the severest cases:
At Aldwick,	210 cases:
At Bognor.	137 cases:

The Ophthalmia Depôt is under the superintendence of Staff Surgeon Vetch, who has under him a Deputy Purveyor, and a Clerk.

I re-enclose the returns of the Depôt which were transmitted to me, and

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,

J. M'GRIGOR,

Inspector of Hospitals.

*To the Director-General, and the Members
of the Medical Board.*

No. 3.

Portsmouth, 7th April, 1810.

Gentlemen,

IN addition to my letter of the 5th, and as further explanatory of the state of the Ophthalmia depôt, I now forward from Dr. Vetch—

- 1st. A representation regarding men who have become blind from Ophthalmia.
- 2nd. A return of the state of the Ophthalmia depôt for the last year.
- 3rd. A statement of the expence to the country of the soldier at this depôt.
- 4th. The amount of the contingent expences for last year.

From a thorough conviction of the necessity of taking some measures with respect to the blind men, I beg leave to recommend the adoption of Dr. Vetch's proposal, which in another shape I submitted to Lieutenant General Lord Charles Somerset, two years ago, and who recommended it to the Secretary of State.

I hope that the returns No. 3 and 4, will be satisfactory, and will shew, that at the same time the soldier labouring under diseases of the eye, derives every advantage in the treatment at the Ophthalmia Depôt, that the establishment is conducted with a due regard to œconomy. By a reduction which is to be effected in the price of meat, and some other articles, the subsistence of the soldier will appear still lower in future returns.

Since the establishment of the depôt in this neighbourhood, I have had the satisfaction to see a very considerable number of men discharged cured to their regiments, or sent for duty to veteran battalions, who were sent blind to the depôt; for this, the service is indebted to the skill and zealous exertions of Dr. Vetch.

In consequence of the defalcation of the Paymaster at the depôt, a serious loss is likely to be sustained by the public. If it meets with your concurrence, it might be taken into consideration, whether Government might not be saved the expence of retaining a Paymaster on this duty. As there is now a Deputy Purveyor appointed to the depôt, he might do this duty, the same as in all general and detachment hospitals; he could draw the stoppages direct from the District Paymaster. I beg to add, that Mr. Usher is willing to undertake this duty. I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

J. M'GRIGOR,

Inspector of Hospitals.

To the Director General
and Members of the
Medical Board, &c. &c.

The following Letters are selected as proofs of my undeviating attention to that state of the Chronic, or secondary stage of Ophthalmia, from the year 1806, and of which Sir William Adams claims the merit of discovering in 1812.

No. 4.

Depôt, Selsea, 1st April, 1809.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter of the 30th, enclosing an extract from observations made by the Surgeon of the 89th Regiment, before a Military Court of Enquiry, held at Guernsey, on the 21st of March.

The two men sent from Basingstoke, as stated in Mr. Rice's observations, are the only ones that have ever been returned to the Depôt, after having been discharged from it; and I have particularly to request the attention of the Inspector General to the following extract of a letter from Mr. Rice, which I received along with them.

"I beg leave to acquaint you, that I am under the necessity of sending two relapsed cases of Ophthalmia, viz. Thomas Jones and James Rush, who have both been under your care for a considerable time. *They remained pretty well for some time after they joined*, but have been in the state you shall find them for several months; indeed they are becoming worse every day, I hope you will have them discharged."

On seeing these men on their arrival, they did not appear to me to have had any considerable return of what I would call active disease. Thomas Jones was a man who formerly evinced a very great indisposition to leave the Depôt, and I intimated to Mr. Rice, in my answer to the letter above quoted, my opinion of his character, and added my suspicions, that he had been in some measure the cause of his eyes getting worse.

In James Rush, the vessels of the cornea had been formerly inflamed, an affection which is liable to recur without being attended with the original purulent disease. With respect to their being fit subjects to be discharged, I am happy to say, that the vision of the former is perfectly unimpaired, and I have little doubt of being able very soon, to give you the same account of the latter.

Since I have had any charge of Ophthalmia Patients, there has been no part of my duty, in which I have been more studiously correct, than in the discharge of convalescents to their corps; it is a trust which in no single instance have I ever delegated to those under me; there is no part of the disease which I have considered with more attention, or on which I am prepared to act with more decision.

Although I believe, that after a long and perfect recovery from the disease, it may
be

be reintroduced by violent irritation, yet there is a state of recovery, to which the membrane will arrive, when the chance of such a return, without the application of a fresh infection, is very slight indeed, and beyond which there is no farther criterion. *Until this perfect recovery has been established, I never discharge any man, no matter how long he may have been detained, or however urgent the solicitations may be to have him dismissed.*

I wish to observe, that there may be relapses of two kinds, one of the original infectious disease; the other, merely a return of the consequences induced by that disease. When the patient has been once affected by inflammation, and an opaque state of the cornea, by exposure to cold or intemperance, the vessels of the cornea from debility are again liable to carry red blood; against this it is impossible to provide,—but as it is not necessarily accompanied with any return of the infectious state of the disease, it cannot endanger the safety of the corps in which it occurs.

The very few men that have ever returned to the Dépôt, have been of this description, and although they may have apparently made against the precautions I have adopted for the discharge of men, are precisely the ones in which I take the most credit, (if any was due) in having been able to discharge at all, many of them having been received, and long considered as totally blind, and who would, with a less patient trial, have been finally discharged from the service.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

*Dr. Borland,
Inspector General's Office.*

Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN VETCH, M.D.
Surgeon to the Forces.

No. 5.

23, Cecil Street, 9th August, 1819.

My dear Sir,

In reply to your note of yesterday, I beg to say, that I have the most perfect recollection, that on one of the visits I paid you at Selsea, between the month of October, 1807, and the month of June, 1808, you particularly (and for the first time I ever heard the observation made) called my attention to the more or less granulated appearance of the conjunctiva lining the palpebræ, as the criterion by which to judge of the progress of recovery in each individual case; and of your saying, until we get rid of this, the disease is not cured.

Believe me always,

most truly your's

J. STRACHAN, M.D.

Deputy Inspector of Hospitals.

No. 6.

London, May 28th, 1818.

My dear Sir,

In compliance to your request in your letter of the 23d, it is with pleasure I assure you, that the mode of examination for the detection of Ophthalmia, as pointed out by you at Ospringe in 1806, by carefully inspecting the conjunctiva lining the palpebræ, has very frequently led me to discover the disease long before it otherwise would have been observed; and that notwithstanding the difficulty at times, of convincing those unacquainted with the disease, of the necessity of removing such cases, by a steady perseverance in such examinations, and the caution of not allowing any to return to their duty, *as long as this*, or the slightest portion of purulent matter could be observed floating in the lachrymal secretions, which if not attended to, is liable to produce relapse, however healthy the general appearance of the eye might have been upon inspection,—I feel no hesitation in saying, it has been attended with decided advantage in eradicating the disease in the 54th Regiment.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your's sincerely,

GEORGE REDMOND,

Surgeon to the 54th Regiment.

No. 7.

London, March 16th, 1819.

Dear Sir,

I have read your publication respecting Sir William Adams's claims on the treatment of Ophthalmia, and I can say, and that upon oath, if necessary, that during the time I did duty under you, at Selsea and Aldwick, which was from December, 1807, until July or August, 1808, it was your constant practice to examine the state of the eye-lids, and such state was the criterion by which you decided whether those who had been affected with Ophthalmia were, or were not cured of the disease. I can well recollect that I was much astonished when at Aldwick, at your refusing, on looking into the state of the linings of the palpebræ, to send men to join their regiments, whom I had considered to be perfectly free from the disease; whether you then mentioned to me the

reason

reason of your decision, I do not remember, but I had so many instances of such practice daily that I cannot forget it; and trusting that you, and not another, will enjoy the reward of your own discovery—

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient humble Servant,

DAVID GORDON,

Assistant Surgeon 20th Foot.

No. 8.

Bayswater, 1st June, 1818.

Sir,

Having seen Sir William Adams's representation, that until you had witnessed *his* operations, you neglected to examine the state of the inner lining of the upper eye-lids; I feel great pleasure in being able to come forward, as one to contradict such an assertion, and to state, that when I was placed by you, in charge of a select number of convalescents, at Bognor, in the year 1810, your particular instructions were to pay great attention to the inner lining of the palpebræ, and undeviatingly to apply the blue stone, where even a suspicious part appeared; for the disease could not be pronounced secure from dissemination, till the entire of that membrane had worn its natural white appearance.

I beg leave further to state, that I have perused your pamphlet, dated Aldwick, 30th March, 1812, and that the practice of 1810, for the cure of Opaque Cornea, corresponds in every point of view, with what is there inserted, viz. "The application of blue stone and caustic."

And with all due respect, believe me to be, dear Sir,

sincerely yours,

JOHN PERKINS,

late Assistant Surgeon,

12th Light Dragoons.

To John Vetch, Esq.

No. 9.

Letter from James Alexander, Esq. Assistant Surgeon 2d or Royal North British Dragoons, in reference to Dr. Vetch and Sir William Adams—to the Editor of the Edinburgh Medical Journal. Belturbit, Ireland, 12th December, 1818.

You will confer on me a very great favour, by inserting the following letter into your valuable work. The worthy purpose for which it is intended will be my excuse for troubling you. When we see genuine merit attacked, and wronged by the insidious machinations of an enemy, we are naturally awakend to a sense of its wrongs, and are inclined to give it the support justice demands.

I am led to this observation from the perusal of a pamphlet lately published by Sir William Adams, oculist, in reply to one by Dr. Vetch, physician to the forces, on the subject of the granular state of the eyelids, consequent to purulent ophthalmia, and principally with a view to establish his pretensions to priority in describing the state of the disease, and promulgating the mode of cure now in general use. That Dr. Vetch has been long acquainted with this termination of the complaint, and treated it in the most successful manner, is the point on which, I think, my evidence is required, and which I feel it my duty freely to give.

In the year 1811, I served as hospital mate under Dr. Vetch, at the Dépôt, where I remained about five months, till the autumn of the same year, when I came to town to do duty at the York Hospital. During my stay at Bognor, the treatment of the granular state of the lining of the palpebræ, chiefly as connected with the opaque state of the cornea, formed a prominent part of the duty we had to perform. At that time the Doctor's practice was, as it had been for years before, to remove the rough lining of the lids either with the knife or scissors; but generally nothing more was requisite than the application of the *argentum nitratum*, or *sulphas cupri*, having first everted the lids. This mode of practice is explained most clearly in Dr. Vetch's publication of 1812, presented to the Army Medical Board in the month of March in that year. This pamphlet, Sir William most unequivocally in his late work denies the existence of, and asserts the ignorance of Dr. Vetch on the point in question, and even goes so far, as to declare that he knew nothing of this state of the lids, till the arrival of Dr. O'Reilly, then hospital mate at the Dépôt. Now, it appears that I can speak to this point also; for in the years 1811-12, and posterior to the appearance of the pamphlet, Dr. O'Reilly and myself were at the York Hospital, Chelsea, when Sir William Adams's attendance there was permitted, for the purpose of exhibiting, what he would have considered his new operation for the granular state of the palpebræ; but this we have seen was in fact with

with a little modification, that which Dr. Vetch had, for some years before, been in the habit of performing, and with a degree of success, which does him honour. At this time (the beginning of the year 1812) I received from Dr. Vetch, a copy of the pamphlet in question, which I gave to my most intimate friends to read; it was in the hands, sooner or later, of many of the junior surgeons at the York Hospital. Dr. O'Reilly and myself, were then intimate companions. He was resident hospital mate, and assisted Sir William in his operations; but it would appear by this statement, that not one of them gave him the least hint that he was anticipated by Dr. Vetch. May I ask, whether he ever saw this pamphlet, or did he decline seeing it? Certain it is, that it was read by others at this period. Soon after, I joined my regiment, and *Dr. O'Reilly was sent to Dr. Vetch*. Even after this lapse of time, the circumstances here stated are as clear to my recollection as if they had occurred but yesterday.

I now come to this conclusion, that Dr. Vetch treated the granular state of the lids, long before the career of Sir William Adams, on the same principles as now generally established, and of course he did so *before the arrival of Dr. O'Reilly at the Bognor Dépôt*. Sir William, in his pamphlet has betrayed himself into an acknowledgment, that Dr. Vetch knew that the granulations were formed in the lower eyelids, but not in the upper, and he even grants that he describes their effects on the cornea. Can we imagine the Doctor to have been unacquainted with their existence in the upper, when he describes them so clearly in the lower lids? No, the fact is, he was aware of this circumstance, and directed his applications accordingly.

Dr. Vetch, I can solemnly aver, never discharged any man as cured, before he ascertained by repeated inspections, that the lining of the lids was quite smooth, as in the natural state, and invariably regarded the destruction of the granulations as the *sine qua non*, in forming a criterion of the perfect recovery of the eyes.

Thus, Sir, I have given a faithful account of what has come under my observation, and if the evidence contained in it prove of any use to Dr. Vetch, my purpose will be fully answered.

RETURN OF THE OPHTHALMIA DEPOT,

While under the direction of Dr. VETCH,

From the 17th Nov. 1807, to the 14th of March 1812, by Order of the Army Medical Board.

ADMITTED.	Labouring under Ophthalmia but with organ unimpaired.....	2277
	More or less blind of both eyes	500
	With the loss of one eye	137
	With the total loss of vision of both eyes	391
	Total admitted	3305
DISCHARGED.	Cured to their Regiments	2231
	Cured, with one eye perfect, to Garrison duty	121
	Ditto, but in consequence of having suffered blindness from Opaque Cornea, transferred to Garrison duty.....	247
	From length of service, or other disqualifications.....	76
	Blind—sent to the York Hospital to afford room at the Depôt..	290
	Deserted	10
	Total	2975
DIED.	Of Disease contracted at the Depôt or under which they laboured when admitted	44
Remaining 14th of March 1812.	In a state of recovery for active service	86
	Ditto with one eye perfect	8
	* In a state of recovery for Garrison duty	127
	Blind without chance of being recovered for the service	46
	Blind with some chance of amendment	6
	Unfit for service by other disabilities	13
	Total remaining	286

* From this Class Sir William Adams, in the presence of Dr. Franklin, Deputy Inspector Albert, and Mr. Usher, selected five cases after my removal,—that they were not considered incurable by me must appear from the head under which they were regularly returned to the Army Medical Board, and that they were cured by Sir W. Adams remains to be proved.

J. V.

REPORT

SUBMITTED TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF,

UPON THE SUBJECT OF

THE OUT-PENSIONERS OF CHELSEA HOSPITAL,

THAT HAVE BEEN UNDER TREATMENT

FOR DISEASES OF THE EYES;

Also, the Reports made by the Medical Officers of Chelsea Hospital,

UPON THE CASES OF THOSE PATIENTS.

Army Medical Board Office,
3d May, 1819.

Sir,

WE have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th ultimo, inclosing a note from Sir William Adams, with the Report accompanying it, detailing the Cases of all the Pensioners who have been treated in the Ophthalmic Institution, under various diseases of the Eye; and conveying the command of the Commander in Chief, that this statement may be compared with the minutes of the Officers of this department, as well as with those of the Medical Officers of Chelsea Hospital, who have from time to time attended at the examinations of those patients, and a Report made upon the subject for His Royal Highness's information.

In obedience to His Royal Highness's commands we have the honour to submit the required Report; and, referring to the several Reports which were transmitted after those respective examinations, as likewise to the Letter we had the honour of addressing to you on the 24th of March, 1818, when it had been proposed to order all the invalids in Hospital at Chatham, to be inspected by an Assistant of Sir William Adams, for the purpose of selecting those labouring under Diseases of the Eye, for treatment by Sir William Adams, at the York Hospital, we beg leave to offer a few remarks upon the result of Sir William Adams's practice.

It appears to us that his treatment of diseases of the Eye may be divided into two classes.

1st.—Operations for Cataract and Artificial Pupil.

2nd.—Treatment of Opacities of the Cornea, and Granulations of the Lids.

He

He has performed operations for Artificial Pupil and for Cataract, the result of which operations are noted in a table at the foot of the report.

Without intending to undervalue the operative talents of Sir William Adams, we feel it to be our duty to observe, that we cannot consider him to have succeeded in a larger proportion than might be fairly expected from many Surgeons and Oculists in civil life; or from those Surgeons of the British Army who have turned their Attention to operations for the relief of Diseases of the Eyes; we firmly believe, that had these patients been treated in the General Hospital at Chatham, or in either of the Public Infirmaries in the metropolis, or at many others in the country, the results would have been, at least, equally favourable.

In regard to Sir William Adams's treatment of Chronic Diseases of the Eyes; such as Opacities of the Cornea; or the granular state of the membrane lining the Eyelids; after having given much attention to the subject, and after having compared the results of his practice with that of the General Hospital at Chatham, and with the Army of Occupation in France, we are unable to discover that he has adopted a more successful mode of treatment than other persons; on the contrary, we consider his practice to have been in the main unsuccessful, and we have little doubt that, if a certain number of cases of Chronic Ophthalmia, and particularly Opacities of the Cornea and Granulations of the Lids were to be placed under Sir William Adams, and an equal number of similar cases under the charge of Medical Officers of the Army, that the Medical Officers of the Army would cure, or benefit, a larger proportion of them than Sir William Adams. This opinion is not meant to imply any disparagement of this Gentleman,—it arises from the superior experience of the Medical Officers of the Army in these diseases. It may also be attributed to another cause, which is, they can give the whole of their time and their undivided attention to public duties, while an Oculist, employed in extensive practice in civil life, can afford only a small portion of his time; and the operations for the successful treatment of these cases is tedious; and the applications require caution and care.

Indeed Sir William Adams seems to have been aware of the benefit he might derive from the experience and skill of the Medical Officers of the Army; for, immediately after this duty was assigned him, he solicited from the Secretary at War, and obtained the aid of a Staff Surgeon of much talent and great experience.

In some former Reports we expressed doubts how far the amendment in the vision of several of those persons who had been treated by Sir William Adams would be permanent; and we were induced to entertain these doubts, in consequence of having learnt, by experience, that whenever soldiers have suffered repeated attacks of Ophthalmia, and particularly when the Cornea has become opaque, or the Conjunctiva lining the Eye-lids has become granular; although by good air, proper diet, restriction from intemperance, and judicious medical treatment, the vision may be much improved; yet after
being

being discharged, if the patient be guilty of intemperance, or be exposed to cold winds, or damp or cold weather, a relapse will almost certainly take place. We are concerned to add that the results of some re-examinations of the Eyes of men who were lately under treatment by Sir William Adams, made by Medical Officers of professional skill and experience, since these men have returned to Scotland, have proved our doubt to be well-founded.

We therefore beg leave to suggest that all the out-pensioners who have been under treatment by him at York Hospital, and hitherto not seen, may be re-examined by a competent Board, and a report made on their present state.

If our view of the subject be correct, the utmost that has been accomplished by Sir William Adams is, that by means of certain operations long known and practised, but which never can render one man fit for military service, some out-pensioners have had their vision improved. Should it be the intention of Government to continue to afford this humane aid to blind pensioners; it appears to us that it may be effected at much less expence to the public, and with less trouble and inconvenience to the out-pensioners, if a ward or wards were appropriated for their admission in the General Hospital at Fort Pitt, or at the Detachment Hospital at the Isle of Wight, and at Edinburgh; at each of which places a medical officer is retained quite as competent as Sir William Adams to perform all operations for the Eyes.

We trust we shall neither be deemed to out-step the bounds of our professional duties nor of decorum, if we suggest that medical aid ought equally to be extended to other out-pensioners, who, perhaps, have an equal claim to the compassion and bounty of the country.

We allude principally to those who are suffering under other complaints, particularly to men discharged on account of wounds received in action, or for brokendown, constitutions, induced in consequence of disease contracted on service in unhealthy climates. Among the wounded will be found many whose wounds have broken out since they were discharged, either from injuries to the bones or other causes, and who, from the tedious and painful process of exfoliation of bone, which often continues many years, must suffer considerable pain and inconvenience, and often require the aid of an experienced and skilful surgeon, with a better diet than their scanty means can procure.

It having been promulgated, that new and successful modes for the treatment of Diseases of the Eyes had been discovered by Sir William Adams, which were to be evinced in the treatment of out-pensioners placed under his care in December, 1817, and to witness which Medical Officers of the Army were invited to attend—We, although experience had taught us to doubt the promises of Medical Men professing to possess secrets, anxiously waited the display of this treatment; and many Medical Officers attended

attended his operations; but as far as we have been able to learn, the operations performed were such as have been taught at public lectures, described in books (both English and Foreign) and practised in public hospitals, more particularly of late years, at the Infirmary for Diseases of the Eyes.

It is true, that in the year 1812, in an interview with the members of the Army Medical Board, Sir William Adams did impart, as a secret, the removal of the granulations of the conjunctiva lining the eye-lid by the knife; which he then considered as an improvement on the practice of Mr. Saunders, the late Surgeon of the Eye Infirmary in Charterhouse Square, who had recommended their removal by the scissors. We shall not here enquire which of these modes is most advantageous; but may observe, that so far as we can learn, he has used this mode of treatment in very few cases of the men now reported upon. But we are, however, of opinion, that this mode, although by no means so generally successful as Sir William Adams once represented it to be, is, when judiciously performed, frequently eminently useful; but it is a tedious, and not very easy operation, and requires great care and caution in the performance.

It appears to us, that the desertions have been unusually numerous; which may probably in part be attributable to the inexperience of Sir William Adams, of the habits and feelings of soldiers, and in part to their dislike to submit to hazardous and painful operations at the discretion and on the judgment of one person: it being the invariable rule, and positive orders of His Royal Highness The Commander in Chief, that no operation shall be performed without a Consultation. Under the impression that this regulation is highly proper, we cannot refrain from submitting it as our opinion, that in future Sir William Adams should be restricted from performing any operation without previous consultation.

We observe in page I. of the Appendix to his Report, Sir William Adams states, that he proposed in 1810 to Sir David Dundas the formation of an Institution for the exclusive Treatment of Pensioners dismissed the Army, blind, from Egyptian Ophthalmia, asserting that many men might thereby be restored to the service, and large sums of money annually expended in pensions be saved to the country.

We cannot consider this assertion as being borne out by the results of his treatment, either in the cases now reported upon, or in those placed under his care in 1812, 1813 and 1814.

We are not aware that any of these persons had their vision sufficiently improved to be considered fit for duty, as soldiers; those examined by us we can state with confidence, had not. Some of them may, it is true, have been deemed by him fit for duty, and may have been reported as such, but on rejoining their Regiments they were either considered to be unfit for duty, or, relapsing shortly afterwards, were discharged. Two men

men of this description (*Philips* and *Pike*) are to be found in this Report, who were reported by Sir William Adams as fit for duty, and were ordered to join their Regiments at Gibraltar; but, on arrival at the Depot in the Isle of Wight, they were deemed unfit for duty and have subsequently passed the Chelsea Board.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servants,

(Signed)

J. M'GRIGOR,

W. FRANKLIN.

To Major General

Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

&c. &c. &c.

Report made by Dr. Moseley, Physician to Chelsea Hospital, Thomas Keate, Esq. Chairman to the College of Surgeons, and late Surgeon-General to the Army, and William North, Esq.

Royal Hospital Chelsea,

17th March, 1818.

Sir,

WE beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th inst. and we have accordingly re-examined thirty-four of the Out Pensioners whose names we reported on the 5th January last, and to each man's name we now add their present appearance, as the case was separately offered to our inspection.

From a considerable number of men in Scotland, sixty-four were selected as most likely to receive benefit from the present treatment; of these sixty-four, thirty are still unfit to be shewn after three months treatment; and the other thirty-four, supposed to be cured, have not (in our judgment) their organs restored to such an healthy state as to be applicable, for the most part, to any useful purposes of life, consequently are liable to relapses.

We submit therefore, whether it might not be expedient to wait a little, till time has confirmed the good effects supposed to be received by the sixty-four men selected; and not to send more (as we understand, to the amount of two or three thousand) until experience shall have sufficiently justified the practice. Possibly it might be advisable that the thirty-four men whom we have already re-examined, should remain three or four months longer at the York Hospital.

Dr. Franklin and Sir William Adams having intimated to us their intention to send their separate reports to His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, and to the Secretary at War; we beg leave to suggest the expediency of withholding our report

D

from

from the inspection of those officers, until their several reports shall be received at the offices of the Commander in Chief and Secretary at War.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servants,

(Signed)

BENJAMIN MOSELEY, M.D. *Physician, Chelsea Hospital*,
T. KEATE,
W. NORTH.

Royal Hospital, Chelsea,
29th April, 1818.

Sir,

IN conformity to your letter of the 25th inst. we have the honor to send for the information of the Lords Commissioners the names of fifteen men and their cases, with the changes we have observed to have taken place since their admission in December, 1817. And we have nothing farther to offer upon this occasion than was submitted to their Lordships after the former examination of thirty-four men, "that, although in a few instances, there appeared to be some amendment, we are led to apprehend, from analogous cases, that the improvement, even of those few, will be but temporary; and that relapses will frequently occur; whilst, in by far the greater number, there does not appear to be any change for the better."

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

Very humble Servants,

(Signed)

B. MOSELEY,
T. KEATE,
W. NORTH.

Royal Hospital, Chelsea,
24th Aug. 1818.

Sir,

IN answer to a note from Mr. Lynn, by your direction, we beg to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners, that we have re-examined thirteen men at the York Hospital; and that the result of this examination furnishes little more information for the Commissioners than is contained in our former reports.

In a few cases it should seem, from the contradictory and inconsistent statements of the patients themselves, that there has been some amendment; but, in these cases the
men

men are still liable to the effects resulting from long marches, sea voyages, and the vicissitudes of season, on returning to their own homes.

In one case, the right eye of the patient had been entirely lost before he was undertaken; the left eye was therefore inappreciable to this man, but unfortunately he is now totally blind, in consequence of an operation having been hazarded on the left eye.

Hence it should seem to us, that it were well, as we have already observed, to let these men remain quietly at their homes, rather than subject them to the inconveniences of long marches, and sea voyages, in addition to the uncertainty of unusual treatment, and hazardous experiments.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servants,

(Signed)

B. MOSELEY,

T. KEATE.

W. NORTH.

Richard Neave, Esq.

Secretary, &c. &c. &c.

Royal Hospital, Chelsea,
15th Feb. 1819.

Sir,

IN obedience to the commands of the Lords Commissioners, we have the honor to report upon the fifteen following Out Pensioners, who have lately been re-examined, and discharged to their homes. We regret that our present report will be found still more unfavourable than those that have preceded, finding as we do, an increased proportion of those unfortunate cases, wherein the patients have been rendered totally blind by operations. Of the men included in this report, one has been discharged to his home under the influence of an active inflammation and incipient opacity on the globe of his eye, caused by the operation, whilst he was a patient in York Hospital.

One has received benefit in one of his eyes, while the other eye became disordered from the operation performed on the opposite eye.

A few have been somewhat improved in one, and some in part, in both eyes. Some have received benefit from rest, and some from operations not altogether new. When we had the honor of attending the board, in pursuance of an order, on Wednesday, the 3rd inst. the Secretary at War mentioned an Out Pensioner, who had been reported as blind, and who, in His Lordships opinion, was able to see; we beg leave with all respect to say that we have endeavoured ineffectually to obtain the name of that man, but we hope

hope, we may be favored with it, in order to rectify any mistake which may have occurred; and if in any case, it should be supposed we have given any erroneous judgment we humbly request we may have the opinion of the court of examiners of the Surgeons' College, the highest Surgical tribunal in the world.

At the same time we think it our duty to inform the board, that (although the Secretary at War in reading his statements, very properly employed such terms as are familiar to persons not professional) there is not a single case on His Lordship's list, which is not replete with the most abstruse questions in the art of Surgery, and such as would necessarily occupy a considerable time, if the Board should think proper to have them fully discussed in their presence.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servants,

(Signed)

B. MOSELEY, Physician.

T. KEATE.

W. NORTH.

Richard Neave, Esq. &c. &c. &c.

Chelsea Hospital.

Royal Hospital, Chelsea,

March 19th, 1819.

Sir,

IN conformity with your letter of the 5th instant, we have the honor to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners, that we have examined the eight following Out-Pensioners, who have been reported by Sir William Adams, as fit to be discharged to their homes. And we regret that we are under the necessity of repeating in this seventh report, our conviction of the trifling comparative advantages, and the great real disadvantages, derived to the men, submitted to our inspection, from the long journies of some, and the experiments others have undergone.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servants,

(Signed)

B. MOSELEY, Physician.

T. KEATE,

W. NORTH.

Richard Neave, Esq. Secretary,

&c. &c. &c.

Army Medical Department,
16th October, 1818.

Sir,

I have the honor to transmit a report on the state of vision of sixteen Out Pensioners, who, by order of the Right Honorable the Secretary at War, have been under the care of Sir William Adams, at York Hospital, and were examined on the 7th inst. by order of Lord Palmerston, by the medical officers of Chelsea Hospital, and by Dr. Gordon and myself, with a view of ascertaining what degree of improvement had taken place in their vision; the improvement or deterioration of vision in each case is placed against each man's name, by which it appears that nine operations have been performed, three of which have been successful, one has been unsuccessful, three have derived some trifling benefit, and two have entirely lost their sight; of the remaining seven men who have been under Sir William Adams's treatment, the vision of one man has been much improved, four have had their vision somewhat improved, and two have derived no benefit whatever; one of the last mentioned is Andrew Blair, whose eye-lids have been improved, and thereby he has been rendered more comfortable.

It is proper here to remark that in no instance does it appear, that the amendment in vision has been sufficient to render the men fit for any military duty.

The case of John Honeyman seems particularly unfortunate, as he states that previously to being selected and sent up to Sir William Adams, he enjoyed a sufficient portion of vision to guide himself in known places, but from the unfavorable result of a hazardous operation he is now totally blind.

It may not be irrelevant here to mention, that the vision of the last man on the list, Brian Smith, 68th Regiment, (who has been ten months under Sir William Adams, and is now brought forward as fit to be sent to his home) is in my opinion susceptible of some amendment; I beg leave therefore to recommend, that he may be placed under the care of medical officers at York Hospital.

(Signed)

W. FRANKLIN.

Major General

Sir Henry Torrens, K. C. B.

&c. &c. &c.

And, finally, I have

to mention the fact

that the present

state of the

country is such

that it is

impossible

to do

anything

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for

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I

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your

obedient

servant,

W. F. Felt

W. F. Felt

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