In 1811 Dr. James Frank, the Inspector-General of the Medical Department of the Army engaged in the Peninsular War, was incapacitated by illness, and Lord Wellington, in a despatch dated Grenada, October 3rd, 1811, asked that he should "have the most active and intelligent person that can be found to fill his station." The importance of the services to be rendered by the required officer was evidently not undervalued by the General.

In response to this demand the Commander-in-Chief sent orders to Dr. McGrigor, at that time Inspector-General of Hospitals at Portsmouth, to proceed to the headquarters of Lord Wellington and take up the appointment, at the same time assuring Lord Wellington that from personal knowledge he was confident that in Dr. McGrigor he would find all he could desire.

At the conclusion of the campaign, perhaps the most arduous in which British troops had ever been engaged, the Duke of Wellington, in appraising the services of Dr. McGrigor, wrote: "I have every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which he conducted the department under his direction, and I consider him one of the most industrious, able, and successful public servants I have ever met with."

Praise in such terms from the Duke of Wellington, who was proverbially not lavish in his encomiums, is more than ordinarily expressive, and when it is further noted that Dr. McGrigor, on his
Sir James McG1'igor return to England, was spontaneously presented with a costly service of plate by all the medical personnel who had served under him through the war, it must be evident that the work he performed could have been of no common order. This record in itself would be sufficient to render the study of his career attractive to any military medical officer. But his service in the Peninsula was only the culmination of a long period of active service in many quarters of the globe, ranging over Flanders, Walcheren, the East and West Indies, and Egypt; and the prelude to his long and eventful tenure of the post of Director-General of the Army Medical Department, a position which he held to the great advantage and advancement of the Service for a period of thirty-five years.

Of his service prior to his succeeding to the Directorate of the Department he has fortunately left us an account written by himself. This Autobiography¹ is a book which no military medical officer can afford to leave unread. It is written with the most engaging simplicity, modesty and candour. Packed with incident as a boys' book of adventure, it keeps the reader's attention rivetted until the last page is reached; and it is only then that he begins to realise what a fund of experience and solid information is contained in its pages, so easily has the narrative flowed and so absorbing has been the subject. It is only possible in a sketch such as the present to give the mere outlines of this distinguished soldier's career, and to touch but lightly on his high ideals and the deep debt owed to him by the Service he worked for so faithfully and well. He raised the Medical Service from a very slough of despond to a plane such as it had never seemed likely to attain, a position only lost by the neglect, in time of a prolonged peace, of the lessons taught and learned at bitter cost in the course of a lengthy and hard-fought series of wars. His was no mean conception of the duties and value of the Medical Service. He realised to the full that the efficiency and fighting value of an army were closely interwoven with the efficiency of its medical branch, and he laboured incessantly, and not without success, to perfect this branch and to bring its true function home to the minds of those in authority. It was said by Sir William Napier, the eminent historian of the Peninsular War, that he thought the extraordinary exertions of the medical officers of the Army might be said to have

¹ "The Autobiography and Services of Sir James McGrigor, Bart., late Director-General of the Army Medical Department, with an Appendix of Notes and original correspondence." London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1861.
M. W. Russell

decided the day at Vittoria, for their exertions had undoubtedly added a full division to the strength of Lord Wellington's Army, and without these 4,000 or 5,000 men it is more than doubtful if his lordship, with all his unrivalled talents, could have carried the day. Of the Duke of Wellington's own opinion he has left us in no doubt.

Sir James McGrigor was the eldest son of Colquhoun McGrigor, a merchant in Aberdeen. He had two brothers, one of whom followed his father's occupation and the other, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles McGrigor, served with distinction in the East and West Indies, America, and other places. James was educated at the Grammar School, Aberdeen, and was evidently possessed of more than ordinary industry and ability, as he relates, with great glee, that after examination, at the end of his five years' course, the first prize was awarded to him. From the Grammar School he proceeded to Marischal College, where he graduated M.A. in 1788.

Not being inclined to follow a mercantile career, and having been thrown much amongst men reading for medicine, he decided to take up that profession, and entered on his studies accordingly. For three years he pursued his studies in Aberdeen, then went to Edinburgh, where he applied himself so closely that his health suffered and he was obliged to take a rest and return home. He had become enthusiastic in the pursuit of his professional knowledge, and was at this date mainly instrumental in the foundation of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Aberdeen, a society in which he ever afterwards took a keen and kindly interest, and which bears his name in grateful remembrance to this day.

During the course of his studies at Aberdeen, one of the senior students obtained a commission as assistant-surgeon in a regiment quartered in Jamaica, and immediately exchanged his ordinary headgear for a smart cocked hat and cockade. "He attracted the attention of all and the admiration of some," McGrigor naively admits that he was amongst the latter. At the same time the splendid Highland uniform of a friend, an ensign in the 42nd Regiment, did not diminish the impression made by the smart appearance of his fellow student. But he did not think seriously of a military career at this stage. This was the period of the early days of the French Revolution, and McGrigor's warm sympathies and generous nature were stirred on its behalf, though his opinion subsequently, as he tells us, underwent a complete change.

Having completed his medical education, the course he should now pursue was much debated, and it was finally decided that he
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should start as a general practitioner in London. Equipped with many letters of introduction he proceeded thither. But the letters of introduction were of little service; patients did not flock to him, the war against the French Revolutionaries had commenced, the times were stirring, things military were much in evidence, and at the back of McGrigor's head was the memory of the smart hat and cockade of his fellow student, and the handsome uniform of his friend, Ensign Stewart, of the 42nd. The wonder would have been had he followed any other course, and in September, 1793, he induced his father to purchase for him, for the sum of £150, the surgeoncy in a regiment which General de Burgh, afterwards Lord Clanricarde, was engaged in raising. The regiment had then neither name nor number, but became, when raised, the 88th, or "Connaught Rangers." With the exception of the major commanding, an Englishman, and McGrigor, all the officers were Irish, and many were closely connected by ties of relationship. They were noted for their regular and orderly conduct at a time of general riot and licence.

As an instance of the manners of the time, McGrigor mentions that early in the morning after his arrival at Chatham, where his regiment was forming, he was awakened by a great noise, and on enquiry found that two young officers, not belonging to his regiment but who, like him, had arrived the day before, had been "out" in consequence of a dispute, and one had killed the other, the noise being due to the bringing in of the body!

Shortly afterwards McGrigor was himself in trouble, and had to challenge a personal friend for a trivial and almost entirely imaginary offence, which was construed as a slight to the regiment. Explanations were useless, and an encounter was only averted by an abject apology from the individual who was deemed to have transgressed. So many of these troubles were due to the universal habit of wine-bibbing that McGrigor determined early to avoid that danger, and became noted as one of the most temperate members of the mess.

As soon as formed, the regiment was sent on service to Jersey. It was in the height of the Terror, and the island was thronged with French exiles and occupied by a large garrison. The 88th had already become infected at Chatham with "typhus," which was a veritable scourge, and soon became overwhelmed with it in Jersey. McGrigor remarks that the loss to the British Army from this disease during the first year of the war must have amounted to some thousands. He soon fell a victim himself and
had a most severe attack, through which he had the advantage of the attendance of Dr. Robert Jackson of the Buffs, one of the most able military medical officers of the day, whose writings on military medicine and administration and the organisation of armies are still of value.  

His regiment was ordered to embark for Ostend before he was yet convalescent, and it was proposed to leave him behind in Jersey with others unfit to go; but his entreaties prevailed, and the colonel consented to allow him to be carried on board one of the transports, where the sea-air and the excitement of going on actual service quickly renewed his health and vigour. After a long journey the force landed at Bergen-op-Zoom, where there was a strong garrison, which it was expected the French would soon besiege. Typhus, which had been quiescent on the transports, quickly broke out again with increased violence amongst the troops on land. The sick of the regiment soon amounted to not less than 200 cases, of whom half were typhus, and the utmost difficulty was experienced in finding accommodation for such large numbers. The British regiment alongside suffered not less severely. "Our sickness increased, our mortality was frightful, and both myself and my only assistant, Mr. Nichol, became severely ill."

Meanwhile the attacks of the French developed fresh energy, which seems to have afforded some distraction for the sore-tried troops. The 88th was withdrawn by water one dark night, and proceeded to Nimeguen to strengthen the garrison there, which was invested by the enemy. Here McGrigor gained further experience of the military side of his work. The surgeon of the 78th being ill, he had the wounded of that regiment to attend to as well as his own.

There were daily encounters, most activity being displayed after dark, when sorties and counter-attacks were frequent. "By and by, at my hospital (a church), where I was in readiness to receive the wounded of the 78th and 88th, many poor fellows were led or carried in to me." The cannonade became heavier, "the large church, in which my sick and wounded with those of other corps were placed, was not spared, although a hospital flag was displayed on the steeple. While engaged in dressing the wounded, I saw several cannon-shot go through the walls and some shells burst into the church." It is interesting to observe that a hospital flag was at that time a recognised emblem.

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1 "Dictionary of National Biography," xxix., 105  

The situation got worse, and again the 88th had to escape under cover of darkness, masking the retreat of the rest of the garrison across a bridge of boats. The French pressed in pursuit and the retirement became a retreat. "Our troops, raw, and composed in a great measure of new levies, gave way under the harassing marches, bad quarters and the toil to which they were exposed. They not infrequently committed excesses and outrage on the inhabitants, and no small animosity existed between them. The Dutch, wishing for the advance of our pursuers, afforded them, as it was said, frequent aid. Disease, particularly typhus fever, became general. Our hospitals were filled to overflowing, and the mortality amongst the medical officers in particular was great. The want of system in our hospitals and the inexperience of medical officers in the duties, in which in after years they became so expert, were at this time very striking." Once more McGrigor was stricken down with fever and lay unconscious for many days. His companion officers died, and he himself was only saved by the devotion of his warm-hearted Irish servant and the kindness of a poor old Dutch couple in whose hovel of a farm he had been left for shelter. When sufficiently recovered, he was taken in a country cart, well stuffed with straw, to the neighbouring port, where his regiment was embarking for England. After many difficulties, he was rowed by a crew of naval seamen to the boat on which his regiment lay, where his friends, who had given him up for lost, were overjoyed to see him again, though much shocked to observe his death-like appearance. His own remark was: "I know not from whom I received the kindest attention on my getting on board—from the officers or the men." At sea he again quickly gained strength, and on reaching England was nearly himself once more.

The Connaught Rangers now went to Norwich, in company with several other regiments returned from abroad. Typhus fever, which had dogged their footsteps throughout, broke out again in a virulent form, sparing no corps in the garrison and laying many low. A large building was hired as a hospital for the worse cases of each corps, and McGrigor, as senior surgeon present, received orders to superintend the whole, a task which he carried out to the satisfaction of all. The position, being his first acting appointment on the staff, was no small gratification to himself. It lasted but a short time, as the regiment soon marched to Southampton to form part of an expedition to the West Indies then being mobilised.

The following extract from the autobiography gives a good indication of McGrigor's character at this time:
"The 88th was under a new commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Beresford, afterwards Field-Marshal Beresford, who became one of the ablest and most distinguished officers of the British Army. By his order I waited on him every morning with a report of the sick of the corps; he was always discontented with it. One morning, when I found the adjutant and quartermaster of the regiment with him, he appeared unusually out of humour; he neither noticed the bow I made on entrance, nor desired me to be seated. After remaining standing for a few minutes I helped myself to a chair and sat down. Soon after he took the sick report out of my hand, and perusing it, said: 'This state of things must not continue; I will not have such a number of sick in my regiment, and I am sure the greater part of them are not sick.' I felt strongly at that moment the contrast between him and my former commanding officer. I was much moved, and said in reply, that it 'was not my fault there were so many sick in the 88th regiment; all I could do was to cure them as fast as I could,' and as to not one-half of them being sick, I affirmed that every one in the report in his hand was sick. In the sharpest manner, and with an oath, he said they could not be, and that malingerers were deceiving me. I, as positively, and in warm terms, denied this; and I added that so long as the regiment continued in its present state the sick would increase and they would soon be doubled. He asked what I meant. I said that the irregularities which prevailed would occasion an increase, and from the filthy state of the temporary barracks—which at the same time were not weather-proof—they were a nursery for disease. He desired me to make good my words, and, hurrying out with the quartermaster and adjutant, he went through all the barracks, cooking houses, &c., making a minute survey of each, loudly and angrily calling as he passed through each for the officers of each company, and giving no small amount of abuse to most of them for not having strictly reported the state of things. When, after hours of this unpleasant duty, he had gone through the whole, I begged that he would now accompany me and see the only place over which I had jurisdiction—the hospital. He passed in silence through the different wards, but this I felt I could not permit. I called upon him to say if he found fault with the condition of things here; he confessed he could not. He did more, for when he went out he desired the officers commanding companies to go in, as he had done, and view the comfort men could be placed in, and mark the contrast. Still he did not express himself satisfied, and I fancy he felt my
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discontented, cool manner towards him. Seeing the different kind of life I was likely to lead under such a man, I determined to exchange into another regiment.”

About this time his brother, who was then lieutenant in the 90th regiment, came on a visit, and Colonel Beresford took a great fancy to him and told McGrigor he would like to have him as one of his officers. McGrigor then informed him of the steps he had taken to effect an exchange into some other regiment, where, he hoped, his exertions would be better appreciated.

“Nothing further passed; but in an hour or two after he sent for me to his quarters, took me by the hand on entering, and expressed his sorrow if, in the dissatisfaction he felt at the state in which he found the corps on his joining, he had spoken warmly to me, for that really my department of it was the only one of which he could say anything favourable, and that he had so reported to the Horse Guards. In short, we became friends, warm friends, and continued so ever after.”

Minutely careful, conscientious and assiduous in the performance of his duty and glorying in his work, McGrigor keenly resented any imputation on its quality, and would brook no reprimand which he thought unmerited. He asked, however, for no more recognition than he was prepared to grant to others who deserved in like degree; and his temper was as generous as it was hot, whilst straight dealing and straight talking were ever the quickest way to his affections.

The chapter of accidents which led to his sailing alone to the West Indies, so escaping capture and imprisonment by the French, being mourned as dead by his regiment, and his subsequent rejoining them on active service in Grenada, must be read in the original to be appreciated. Incidentally, he gives a vivid account of the condition of the troops in action and of the medical service in the West Indian campaign; of the feelings of personal enmity and exasperation which prevailed, and of the implacable severity, not to say cruelty, with which the rebellion was quelled. Active operations were immediately followed by an appalling outbreak of disease. Yellow fever and dysentery ran riot, and when the conditions under which the troops were housed is realised, there is little room for astonishment. But quiet having been restored, the 88th were ordered home. The hurricane season was approaching, so to save the insurance they were hurriedly embarked on a crazy ship, with insufficient provisions and no comforts of any description. Notwithstanding a minute preliminary inspection
yellow fever broke out on board. The captain and a number of the crew died, whilst daily some of the soldiers succumbed. There was neither bread nor biscuits, a little rice only, and salt and fresh pork. The weather was stormy, the ship unseaworthy, and the acting captain incapable and usually drunk. Such were the conditions under which our troops at that time travelled at sea. Yet in time they reached Cork.

A short period at home—part spent in aiding to suppress the naval mutiny at the Nore—intervened before the 88th were ordered to India. The headquarters embarked on Christmas Day, 1798, reached Bombay about the middle of May, and were quartered at Colaba, where McGrigor immediately built himself a commodious bungalow, became immersed in the study of the local diseases, and "quickly accumulated an hospital full of sick, the prevailing diseases being dysentery and hepatitis."

In less than a year came another move—this time to Ceylon—for special service and an unknown destination. A force was gradually concentrated there; it was thought, to proceed to Batavia and Manila, but to the great joy of those concerned their orders were changed and they were directed to form part of an expedition to expel the French from Egypt. This meant returning to Bombay, whence the expedition was to sail. McGrigor was appointed head of the Medical Staff, and as the force was a mixed one of British and Indian troops, he required a commission from the Hon. East India Company. This was bestowed upon him, and he thus became the first Principal Medical Officer of a force composed of King's and Company's troops.

In this capacity he was presented to Colonel Wellesley, who was to command the expedition. This was McGrigor's first meeting with the Chief whom he was subsequently to serve so well in the Peninsula. But Colonel Wellesley was then in very bad health, and was unable to go with the force, the command being given to Brigadier-General Sir David Baird.

The expedition sailed from Bombay; beyond the extreme prevalence of Guinea worm amongst the men, there is little of medical interest to note until the disembarkation at Cosseir. Here McGrigor's duties as Principal Medical Officer became very exacting. He was obliged, having no assistant, to retain the medical charge of his own regiment, in addition to performing the multifarious work of a superintending medical officer, in the midst of disembarkation, in exceedingly hot weather, at a place with none of the usual resources. His duties were not lightened
by the covert opposition of some of his medical brethren, who resented his having been given such a prominent position. However, by his usual persistence and kindly tact he was able, as on other occasions, to obtain co-operation and support without sacrificing friendly relations.

His position of seniority was, however, only a temporary one. With the troops sent from the Cape to join Sir David Baird came a medical staff from England, with Dr. William Randle Shapter as Inspector of Hospitals. This gentleman took over the appointment of Principal Medical Officer on arrival, but as his knowledge of the ways and organisation of the Indian troops was scanty, it was arranged that McGrigor should continue to supervise the medical arrangements of the latter, until the force should join with the English Army in Lower Egypt.

It is in anomalous positions of this kind that McGrigor seems to have shone in his younger days; his innate courtesy and ready tact disarming opposition and reconciling even those who thought themselves aggrieved by his advancement. His devotion to duty and high professional attainments helped to consolidate a position which was not altogether based on the claims of seniority.

On Sir David Baird reaching Lower Egypt and combining with the English Army, McGrigor was obliged to resign the medical superintendence of the Indian portion of the force and return to his regiment. But after a very short space of time, the greater part of the English Army received orders to return home, and, at the earnest request of Sir David Baird, Dr. McGrigor resumed the medical control of the Indian forces.

His first endeavours were to meet the onset of plague, which was prevalent in the neighbourhood, though it had as yet spared the troops. McGrigor knew such immunity could not be long lived, and had all his arrangements for isolation hospitals, segregation of infected troops, quarantine, and the formation of a Board of Health, ready for the coming of the pestilence, when come it did. Its period of prevalence was one of long, strenuous, unremitting exertion on the part of the Principal Medical Officer, and is described in a report which he subsequently published entitled "Medical Sketches of the Expedition from India to Egypt."

Only by the strong impression of his individuality on the General Commanding was such intelligent appreciation of coming events made fruitful. McGrigor deserves the credit of getting done what others under like circumstances only got talked about.

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1 Died at Bath, November 2nd, 1888.
On the cessation of hostilities with France the Indian contingent was ordered to return from Egypt to India, and McGrigor, to his great satisfaction, went with it as Superintending Surgeon. In this capacity it became his duty to make the medical arrangements for the return march across the desert and for the re-embarkation of the Army. The latter was complicated by the reappearance of plague, necessitating steps for a period of quarantine before the troops could be permitted to land again in India. “Butcher's Island,” just outside Bombay, was designated as the chief quarantine station, through which every returning body of troops was obliged to pass. The Medical Board in Bombay appointed McGrigor Superintendent of Quarantine, a lucrative but lonely post, involving solitary residence on the island so long as the period of quarantine should last. For several weeks he lived among his books, his one visitor being the captain of a sloop of war, who came on shore daily for a walk.

On the break-up of the quarantine establishment, he returned to Bombay and plunged at once into medical work and study, resuming his position in the front rank of the profession in that city, and maintaining it until the two companies of his regiment there were ordered to rejoin headquarters in England.

It is passing strange to think that in those days, when it took some four months or more to get from England to India, two companies of a regiment should be on detachment in Bombay, the headquarters being at home.

Once more at home McGrigor returned to his regimental duties, and found the position a little irksome after the wider responsibilities he had borne. He had now been eleven years in the Connaught Rangers, the only Scotch officer in the regiment, and was held by all ranks in high affection and esteem, feelings which were fully reciprocated by him. It was, therefore, with profound regret, that in February, 1804, he took leave of his old comrades, and was gazetted to the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards Blue, in which he thought he would have greater professional opportunities and scope for advancement. He joined them in Canterbury, whence they moved to Windsor.

During his sojourn at Windsor, as an officer in the “Blues,” he was brought into personal relations with the King and Royal family, including the Duke of York, then Commander-in-Chief, who had not forgotten their previous meeting at Nimeguen, and who had now an opportunity of observing at first hand his exceptional capabilities, an opportunity which was not neglected, as subsequent events will show.
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At this time it was proposed to institute a fourth Presidency in India, to include all the Eastern islands, the seat of Government to be at Palo Penang. Mr. W. Dundas was to be the head, and he was anxious to obtain Dr. McGrigor as Chief of his Medical Service. An offer of the appointment was accordingly made and, as the post was a very lucrative one, was accepted by Dr. McGrigor, but was subsequently prudently declined when it was made plain how unjust it would be to supersede the whole body of the Company’s medical officers. McGrigor was not to remain much longer at Windsor. How he came by the knowledge of the change in his circumstances is sufficiently quaint to be told in his own words. “One morning, whilst I was at breakfast, the adjutant of the Blues came into my room and surprised me with a most unlooked-for piece of intelligence. By the desire of the King, instead of a commissioned officer to attend His Majesty as orderly officer daily at the castle, a corporal of the regiment had been substituted for that duty. The non-commissioned officer was daily relieved about breakfast time, and after His Majesty had dressed. The corporal who had come off duty had just arrived and reported himself to the adjutant. The news he brought was that the King, while he was being shaved, addressed the corporal (a very respectable and intelligent man, as all the non-commissioned officers of the corps were), and among other things said: ‘You are about to lose your surgeon in the Blues; I have this morning signed a new commission for him on his promotion.’ As this intelligence greatly surprised me, the adjutant sent for the corporal, who related to me what had passed between him and the King.”

When the Gazette appeared it was found that McGrigor had been promoted to be Deputy-Inspector from July 2nd, 1805, a very unusual, though not an unprecedented, rise.

To understand the significance of the appointment it is necessary to know how the medical concerns of the Army were then administered.

At the head of the Medical Department was a Board consisting of the Surgeon-General to the Forces, Mr. Thomas Keate, who had been surgeon of one of the regiments of Foot Guards, the Physician-General, Sir Lucas Pepys, Bart., a civilian, and the Inspector-General, Mr. Francis Knight, who, like the Surgeon-General, had been a surgeon in the Guards.

3 Inspector-General, December 27th, 1801.
These gentlemen divided amongst themselves the patronage of the Medical Department of the Army—the Physician-General and Surgeon-General appointed to all offices of the hospital staff, the regimental medical appointments being the province of the Inspector-General. It may be remarked that not one of the three had any experience with troops in the field. Mr. Knight owed his appointment to the very excellent system of economy and supervision which he had instituted in his regimental hospital, a system which was afterwards extended to the Brigade of Guards and which the Duke of York wished to see introduced into the regimental hospitals of the whole Army.

In order to introduce this system generally and to keep it on the right lines, inspectorial officers were appointed—"inspectors of hospitals" for the larger commands and "deputy-inspectors" for those of less extent. McGrigor was appointed one of the latter. It is his merit to have seen how an appointment, which was instituted to keep a rigorous check over expenditure and hospital supplies, could be utilised to stimulate the professional zeal of medical officers and excite their interests in the scientific side of their duties. He had long noticed that the Board in its communications with its subordinates was much more interested in questions of economy than in subjects of professional importance; medical officers were degenerating into accounting clerks, and "he was most applauded who was the most correct in accounts and the greatest economist in oatmeal, salt, barley, &c." From the first he determined to redress the balance so far as lay in his power.

His first charge was the Northern District, where he joined the staff of General Vyse at Beverley. The position he held was not rendered easier by his having superseded many of his seniors, but he behaved with such tact and consideration as to win their regard. He exerted himself to gain the confidence of every medical officer in his district, and helped each as he knew. Soon the visit of the Inspector was no longer dreaded but welcomed and looked for. Severity he reserved for those who were negligent or wilfully ignorant, and to those he could be stern, but it rarely happened that he had to resort to harsh measures. A bond of fellow-feeling sprang up in the command, and the medical officers responded readily to his efforts to excite their professional enthusiasm. He constantly directed their attention to novelties and improvements in medical practice, which they took up with zest. The standard of medical work in the military hospitals was immeasurably raised, and the example so set was such as to hasten the introduction
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of similar improvements into civil hospitals, dispensaries, and poorhouses; so wide was the influence of one earnest enthusiastic worker.

The conspicuous success of his efforts had the inevitable result of removing him to a wider sphere, and at the instance of the Duke of York he was sent to superintend the medical arrangements in the south-west district, one of the largest in England.

His new General was H.R.H. The Duke of Cumberland, a most rigid disciplinarian of the old school. It is interesting to note that his Adjutant-General, Major, afterwards General, Thomas Foster, entered the Army as a medical officer and had attained the rank of apothecary to the Forces when he commenced his career as a combatant. By additions his district gradually grew until it became the largest in the kingdom.

McGrigor had now full scope for his energies. At Portsmouth he had to supervise all embarkations and disembarkations, to fit out all expeditions with their medical requisites, to pay all medical officers proceeding on service and to overlook a large general hospital in the Isle of Wight, as well as the great depot for ophthalmia and other eye diseases, often containing as many as 1,000 patients.

His travels extended from Portsmouth to Pembroke and from Brighton to Dorchester and Weymouth.

His predecessor had been slack, and discipline in his hospitals was lax. By hard, strenuous, unremitting labour he in time mastered his task, and established the same friendly relations between himself and his medical officers as had previously existed in the northern district.

On the top of these multifarious duties came a stupendous task. The battered and shattered remains of Sir John Moore's victorious army from Corunna was landed at Portsmouth, and it fell to McGrigor to find accommodation for their sick. Crowded on board the transports, with no attempt at order, weak from the privations of their cruel retreat, they fell easy victims to the typhus which they had embarked with them.

By the time they reached Portsmouth the number of cases of fever amongst them was appalling. After occupying all the ordinary hospital accommodation and converting barracks into hospitals, McGrigor applied for the use of the naval hospital at

1 Apothecary to the Forces, April 9th, 1794; Lieutenant-General, November 23rd, 1841.
Haslar, which was granted. Still the fever cases overflowed into floating hospitals, made up of transports and prison ships, and other unsuitable hulks. To find medical attendants for this large number was in itself no mean task, and even McGrigor's insatiable appetite for work must at this time have been gluttoned. Typhus fever spread to the militia and other troops quartered in Portsmouth and the surrounding country. It was long before the hospitals could be cleared and restored to their normal condition. McGrigor's organising powers shone out in coping with an emergency which would have daunted many another man, and his reputation grew as the foundation on which it was based became better known.

His services now were in great request. War was being waged in the Peninsula on a large scale. Lord Beresford had been appointed to the command of the Portuguese Army, and being fully alive, from old regimental associations, to McGrigor's value, applied for him as Inspector-General to reorganise the Portuguese medical service. The request was granted, but before McGrigor could take up the appointment he was required in another and even more urgent and important sphere. Our army in Walcheren was in a parlous condition. It was prostrated by malarial fever of such severity as had never previously been experienced. The Army was paralysed. The camp was one vast hospital and Sir John Webb, the Principal Medical Officer, was reported dead. In these circumstances McGrigor received orders to proceed with all possible speed to the spot and take over the direction of medical affairs.

Once more he had a stupendous ordeal to face, but his powers were now ripe, he had confidence in himself, and knew full well what he wished done and how to do it. Overcrowded hospitals, insufficient staff, depleted stores, and disordered accounts, were what met him. Gradually he evolved order out of chaos, redistributed his sick staff, replenished his stores by purchase and requisition, and took steps to rescue his accounts from the almost inextricable confusion into which they had fallen.

But the sick rate did not diminish, and at length Government decided that, owing to the great mortality, one of the members of the Medical Board should personally visit the scene to investigate the condition of affairs and report to the Government. The Physician-General, Sir Lucas Pepys, was ordered to proceed thither, but he declined, on the plea that he was unacquainted with the diseases of the soldier in camp and quarters. Neither of his colleagues volunteered to go. This completed the discredit of the Board as then constituted. It had incurred the ridicule and
contempt of those it ruled as well as of the public, and Parliament gave expression to the general feeling of indignation.

In default of a member of the Medical Board the Government appointed a Commission consisting of two old and experienced military medical officers, and Sir Gilbert Blane, an old naval medical officer, and at that time an eminent physician in London. These three gentlemen paid a visit to Walcheren and remained a few days. They saw the pitiable plight the Army had been reduced to and the vast amount of sickness and high mortality, and, recognising the pestilential nature of the country, could make no recommendation other than the withdrawal of the troops from such a death-trap. As it was apparent that the value of the Army as a fighting machine was utterly broken, the necessary orders were issued from England and the troops were sent home.

This campaign is one of the classical examples of an army being destroyed by disease through a want of knowledge and a consequent neglect of sanitary precautions. It was attended with the usual Committee of Investigation, as we have seen, and followed by a Parliamentary Enquiry, before which McGrigor had to give evidence. As a result of this Enquiry the old Medical Board was broken up. It was, at last, realised that gentlemen, however eminent, engaged in private practice in London, with little or no knowledge of the Army, and none of foreign service with troops, could not satisfactorily manage the affairs of a military department; especially as appointments on the Board were chiefly sought for the valuable patronage they carried with them and for the opportunities they gave for extending the holder’s personal acquaintance and private practice. The time given to the deliberations of the Board was the scanty leisure allowed by busy practice. It was therefore decided that the members of the new Board should be persons of extensive first-hand knowledge of the Service and who had served abroad with troops.

McGrigor returned to his position of Inspector-General of Hospitals in the Southern Command, and at this time married the sister of his old friend Sir James Robert Grant.1

Marshal Beresford was still anxious for his services, but under his new circumstances the Portuguese Army seemed less attractive and he exerted himself to get a friend appointed in his place.

In May, 1811, his son was born, and he looked forward to a

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1 Inspector-General of Hospitals, K.H., 1816; Knight Bachelor, 1819; C.B., 1849, Principal Medical Officer at Waterloo.
spell of domestic quiet and comparative rest. But it was not to be. As stated in the commencement of this paper, there was now need of a strong and capable medical administrator with the Army in the Peninsula, where Wellington was engaged in his epic struggle.

McGrigor's special qualifications for the post were too obvious to be overlooked. Our readers will agree that the Commander-in-Chief took no risks when he made the appointment and assured Lord Wellington that he would be well satisfied. At any other time the chance would have been welcomed with enthusiasm, but under his altered circumstances McGrigor could have wished it delayed. But he set himself at once to collect such information as the records afforded concerning the state of the Army with which he was to serve and the duties he was to undertake. His wife was anxious to accompany him to the seat of war, a practice not uncommon in those days and not unknown at a later date, but he had seen enough of ladies in the field to veto the arrangement. "I knew full well that with the care of my wife and child I could not do my duty in the way I had determined it should be done while I remained in the Service."

In company with his secretary, Dr. James Forbes,1 staff-surgeon, and four clerks, McGrigor arrived in Lisbon in January, 1812, and at once attacked his work with characteristic energy.

A close investigation of the store accounts brought to light great irregularities, to remedy which immediate steps were taken.

Lisbon was choked with an immense number of sick men from the Army, with a vast number of sick, or reported sick, or wounded officers, requiring an undue number of medical officers to look after them. The condition of affairs was a scandal, had provoked most unfavourable comment in England, and was depleting the Army in the field of personnel who should have been sharing the duties. The drain was most serious from the military point of view, as the fighting force was being weakened by the passage of such large numbers to the base, from which it was exceedingly difficult to get them sent back to the ranks. In fact, a state of things had arisen which inevitably must arise in any campaign where the medical service is inefficient and its supervision and discipline lax.

McGrigor took time to complete his survey and then submitted his report to Lord Wellington. It "related to the very great

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accumulation of sick and to the still greater accumulation of officers, their ladies and the wives of soldiers at Lisbon, which detained a disproportionate part of the medical officers of the Army. My repeated inspections of all the hospitals, and of a great many of the officers, convinced me that Lisbon was so very agreeable a residence that many officers and soldiers would be slow to resume their duties in the field, and that it was a much more attractive station for the medical officers themselves than the divisions of the Army about Ciudad Rodrigo in an inclement season of the year.” He made three proposals:

(1) That in future only special cases of wounds or sickness should be sent to the rear, and such only as should be approved by himself. That each corps should have a small hospital of its own, where all slight cases should be treated by the regimental medical officers under the supervision of the principal medical officers of the divisions.

(2) That all sick and wounded officers should be treated in like manner.

(3) That no sick or wounded should be sent to Lisbon except those to be ultimately sent to England; that all the medical officers should be ordered up to the Army except the small establishment indicated for the Lisbon duties.

A statement of the number of sick in Lisbon, with proposals to send all the inefficient to England and the remainder back to their regiments, completed his recommendations.

On receiving the report Lord Wellington immediately sent McGrigor a cordial letter of thanks and desired him to join headquarters with as little delay as possible, inspecting the hospitals at Coimbra and Celerico and others on the line of route.

This McGrigor proceeded to do. But Coimbra and Celerico were extensive hospital establishments, neither in the best condition, and time was required to investigate them thoroughly and indicate the necessary measures of reform. Meanwhile Wellington was impatient to meet his new Medical Director and kept sending messengers to hasten his arrival. McGrigor complied with the best speed he could, and finally reached headquarters. Wellington, who had not forgotten meeting him in Bombay, received him most kindly, kept him to dinner, chaffed him about the predatory exploits of his old regiment, and before letting him go said he would be glad to see him on business in the morning.

On his first interview Wellington expressed his great pleasure with what had been done in the hospitals at Lisbon and Coimbra,
and stated that he had much wanted an officer such as he had now
obtained, who thoroughly understood the duties and was acquainted
with the habits of soldiers and who would prevent the malingering
propensities of both officers and men at the hospital stations, where
all sorts of irregularities prevailed, and he promised his utmost
support, which from that moment was fully given.

"His Lordship dwelt on the little support he received from
some of the heads of departments, whom he freely named, saying
he had to do their duties as well as command the Army. I replied
that it would be my endeavour to prevent his having that trouble
with the medical department of the Army. We parted on the best
of terms, and he desired me to come to him every morning at the
same hour, with the other heads of departments, the Adjutant-
General, Quartermaster-General, and Commissary-General.

"On my appearing the second morning, I found in the
outer apartment the Commissary-General, Sir Robert Kennedy,
and Adjutant-General, Brigadier-General Stewart (the late Lord
Londonderry, with his book under his arm), who, coming up to
me, said it was unnecessary for me to come to Lord Wellington,
that I might come to his office and he would transact my business
for me with his Lordship, whom it was unnecessary for me to
trouble. I replied that I preferred doing business directly with
Lord Wellington, and that it was by his lordship's desire I came
there. At this moment the door of his little inner apartment was
opened by Lord Wellington, who, nodding to me, desired me to
come in.

"After this I daily made my appearance to take his orders
and to make my reports on the numbers of sick and wounded, with
all the details of their movements. These reports I made to his
lordship ever afterwards, whether in the field or in quarters, imme-
diately after his breakfast, which was the time he fixed for seeing
the Adjutant-General and Quartermaster General, the Commissary-
General, myself, and occasionally the Paymaster-General and the
head of the Intelligence Department, when at headquarters. At
this time he gave me notice of movements and after my giving
him a statement of the total sick and wounded of the Army, I
gave him the total in each hospital station in Portugal, Spain, and
afterwards in France, and the total number of dead; the number
fit to be marched to their regiments or convalescent, the cases or
diseases, with the causes of these, and in fine everything relating
to the health department of the Army."

To enable McGrigor to give the above information, it was
necessary for him first to institute a simple but regular system of returns, which had been neglected by his predecessors.

He took an early opportunity of discussing his reports from Lisbon and Coimbra. Wellington entirely approved of the breaking up of the great depot of sick officers at Lisbon. Orders were issued that no wounded or sick officers or men should be sent to the rear except on the proceedings of a Board of Medical Officers, which were to be submitted for approval.

It was further ordered that after the arrival of officers or men at Lisbon they were immediately to appear before another board, and if not recovered within a limited time were to be embarked for England. Lord Wellington at once saw the great advantage of this proposal, in the additions it would make to his none too crowded ranks, whilst in addition it cut at the root of the great abuses then existing at Lisbon.

But the suggestion that each regiment should have its own hospital for the treatment of the lighter cases of illness did not meet with the General's acquiescence. He saw its advantages, but did not think they were sufficiently great to outweigh the drawbacks, which he feared, of diminishing the mobility of his column. For the time the suggestion was dropped.

The interval before the advance on Badajoz was spent in slowly consolidating the new régime. Stringent investigations were made into the provision and issue of stores, the material of all corps was replenished, and depôts were established at suitable places. When the movement began the medical preparations were complete. McGrigor inspected each division as it passed. He made himself acquainted with his personnel and the way in which they were disposing of their sick. Regimental Commanding Officers as well as Medical Officers deplored the necessity of sending their light cases to the rear, but having no authority they feared to incur censure by carrying any along with them. It must be remembered there was no medical organisation at that time between the regimental surgeons and the stationary hospitals on the line of communication. McGrigor gradually encouraged the use of local transport, where it could be obtained, for the carriage of men likely to rejoin the ranks in a few days, and where such transport would not delay the forward movement.

Arrived before Badajoz, McGrigor established his office at Elwas and rode over daily to see and report to Lord Wellington, but the latter was anxious to have him in closer touch and ordered a tent to be pitched for him contiguous to his own. McGrigor's earliest
steps were to establish field hospitals in touch with the besieging force, and he induced Lord Wellington to attach to each corps employed in the siege two spring wagons for the daily transport of their sick.

The momentous night of the final assault approached. On April 6th the breach was pronounced practicable, and those at headquarters knew the attack would take place that evening. McGrigor determined to post himself near his chief so that he might at once receive any orders given, and also that he might be on the spot should any mishap occur to the General. His description of that night, with its alternation of fear and hope, and its accumulation of horrors, has become a classic. As one reads the whole terrible scene is brought vividly before him. There are few more clearly-cut literary pictures than the one of Wellington, his countenance lurid in the light of the torch held by his A.D.C., jaw dropped and visage lengthened, but with firmness still written on his face as he peered through the darkness and strained his ears to catch how the fate of the fight was faring.

When the castle was won McGrigor followed Wellington through the main breach in the wall, and was a witness of the horrible excesses of our infuriated soldiery, mad with drink and with the recent rage of battle, seeing red, and oblivious to all the calls of discipline and humanity. It is a picture one would gladly blot out, as unlikely ever to recur, were there not more recent instances to show that human nature has not vastly changed with the flight of years.

McGrigor's object in entering the fortress was to ascertain so far as possible the number of wounded, and the nature of their wounds. Gradually he got reports from the regimental surgeons, who were working at high pressure. After visiting many of the wounded officers he returned to camp “not a little exhausted” to make his report to Lord Wellington. What follows is of sufficient importance to be textually quoted:

“I immediately made my way to Lord Wellington and found him in his tent writing the despatch. He received me most cordially, and after I had given him my detail thanked me much. He was in excellent spirits; I therefore said: ‘I trust, my lord, you are satisfied that the medical officers during last night did their duty, as well as the military officers, and that you will receive my testimony that they discharged their arduous and laborious duties most zealously, and often under circumstances of personal danger, of which they were regardless.’ He replied that he himself
Sir James McGrigor

had witnessed it. I then added: 'Nothing could more gratify those officers, nothing could be a greater incentive to their exertions on future occasions than his noticing them in his public despatches.' He added, 'Is that usual?' My reply was: 'It would be of the most essential service,' and I ventured to add that really their extraordinary exertions gave them, in justice, a claim to this. He rejoined, 'I have finished my despatch; but, very well, I will add something about the doctors.'

When the Gazette appeared the medical officers in the Army in England saw with delight that the merits of their brethren had been publicly acknowledged in the same manner as those of the military officers. This was the first time that their merits had thus been publicly recognised, and the example of Lord Wellington has been followed after every great action that has since been fought; some time afterwards the Navy followed the example.

It is services such as this, typical of the intense pride he took in the work of his department, of his full appreciation of the exertions of his officers, and his constant solicitude that their trials and labours should be adequately recognised, which endeared McGrigor to those who were privileged to serve under his direction. He was no light taskmaster, but his officers grudged no work on his behalf, conscious that it would be generously acknowledged, and that nothing was exacted from them which was not for the glory of their calling and the benefit of the Army at large. This visible but intangible bond of sympathy was the mainspring of the unusual state of efficiency which the medical service admittedly reached during the later phases of the Peninsular war, an efficiency which, during the disorders of the retreat from Burgos, wrung from Wellington the exclamation: "The medical department is the only one which will obey orders; on them I can rely for doing their duty."

A lull, in which military operations were at a standstill but in which the stress on the medical service was severe, intervened between the capture of Badajoz and the campaign culminating in the decisive victory of Salamanca. After the latter Wellington entered Madrid, which Joseph Bonaparte had just quitted, and was received with boundless enthusiasm.

In the "Life of Wellington," by R. G. Gleig, M.A., Chaplain to the Forces, and a close friend of Wellington, we read: "McGrigor had remained behind after the battle of Salamanca to provide for the wants of the sick and wounded, which he did
zealously. He arrived in Madrid some time after the first burst of exultation had subsided, and proceeding to make his report to the Commander of the Forces, found him sitting to the artist who had been commissioned to paint his portrait. The Marquis listened in silence until McGrigor began to describe how he had ordered up purveyors and commissariat officers from the rear with supplies, and then the suppressed volcano burst out. The Marquis sprang to his feet and demanded what right Dr. McGrigor had to do that. The Doctor's assurance that nothing else would have saved many valuable lives seemed to make no impression upon his auditor. Neither was the Marquis mollified by a reference which McGrigor made, with doubtful discretion, to the outcry which had been raised in England when the wounded were abandoned after the battle of Talavera. 'I shall be glad to know,' exclaimed the angry Marquis, 'who commands this army, you or I? I establish one route, one line of communication, and you establish another, and order the commissariat supplies to move by that. As long as you live, sir, never do that again; never do anything without my orders.' 'But, my lord, the case was urgent; there was no time to get your orders.' 'That don't signify; never act again without orders, be the consequences what they may.' So spoke the great man in his anger, unreasonably as angry men always do; yet such a fit never lasted very long with him, and on the present occasion he soon showed, in his own peculiar way, that he was conscious of his error. He sat down, and almost before the painter could resume his task, said to McGrigor in a tone more than usually kind, 'Come and dine with me to-day. You'll meet the guerrilla chief "El Medico"; who knows but what you may get something out of him in your own profession worth remembering.'"

Retribution followed swiftly. Wellington's next exploit was the ill-starred siege of Burgos. He was unable to make any impression on the Castle, and a month spent in futile attacks resulted only in a heavy loss of men and great discontent in the force. Wellington was himself fretted and anxious, everything seemed to go wrong. Let us again quote from Gleig. "He (Wellington) was dissatisfied with himself and with everybody else, and spoke harshly to all who approached him. Dr. McGrigor, among others, came in for his own share of sharp words, which the Highland pride of the Chief of the Medical Staff bore with difficulty. This was early in the day preceding the commencement of the retreat, and McGrigor returned to his quarters sick and sulky. By and by a message came that Lord Wellington
desired to see him that evening; but the Doctor was still in high
dudgeon, and feeling really unwell he made the most of his illness
and refused to attend. At an early hour next morning, however,
he proceeded to Lord Wellington’s house and found that about
3 o’clock the Marquis had mounted his horse and ridden off to the
front; McGrigor followed. The English Army was under arms in
the expectation, as it appeared, of being attacked, and Lord
Wellington stood on a hill with a numerous staff about him
searching the French lines with his telescope. No sooner was
McGrigor’s name pronounced than the Marquis put up his
telescope, and, taking the Doctor by the arm, led him out of the
crowd. What followed can best be told in the words of one of
the actors in the scene. He said, ‘We can’t keep Madrid; Hill
is overpowered and marching to join me, and I must be off this
very night. But what is to become of the sick and wounded? I
fear they are very numerous, and there are many wounded who
can’t be moved. What do you propose to do?’ I replied, ‘I was
happy to inform him that our sick and wounded were not numerous,
that seeing how his mind was occupied with the siege I had taken
it upon myself to get carts from the commissariat and to employ
them, and the mules which brought up provisions, in removing the
sick and wounded to Valladolid.’ ‘Very well, indeed,’ was the
reply; ‘but how many have we in Burgos?’ ‘Not more than
sixty, and those mostly too bad to move.’ ‘Admirable! I shall be
off to-night; let nobody know this from you and make your own
arrangements.’”

Gleig adds: “Did the Marquis remember then what had passed
between him and Dr. McGrigor when they discussed at Madrid
a question somewhat similar, or was he like all really great men
able and willing to contradict himself when an occasion arose that
demanded that sacrifice?”

It was said at the time by many officers who had taken part in
both that the retreat from Burgos was little if any less disastrous
than that of Moore to Corunna, in the losses it entailed. The
number of sick became enormous. Further, medical officers were
demanded from England, and, as a stop-gap until their arrival,
McGrigor took into employ all the Spanish medical officers he
could find, and as many of the French medical officers, our
prisoners of war, as would accept service at the English rates
of pay. As these rates were considerably higher than their own,
few refused; but both Spanish and French proved but poor
substitutes for his own officers. Accommodation was found by
instituting regimental hospitals in cantonments, under the super-
vision of the principal medical officers of divisions, a step
McGrigor had long wished to be allowed to take. At the same
time he arranged with Lord Wellington for the despatch from
home of a number of hospital huts in readiness for erection for
the coming campaign.

Slowly the Army recuperated, but before the next campaign
opened, to Wellington’s delight, the number of convalescents to
rejoin their regiments from the hospitals was greater by thousands
than he had from previous experience expected. This was
attributed to the extraordinary exertions and unusual efficiency of
the medical service, whose zeal had been further stimulated by
the free promotion of deserving officers which, on McGrigor’s
recommendation, Wellington had successfully pressed on the
authorities at home. It was to this great addition to Wellington’s
force that Napier alluded when he said that the fortunes of the
day at Vittoria might be truthfully ascribed to the exertions of
the medical service, it having added a full division to the strength
of Lord Wellington’s army, without which he might not have risked
an action. What greater reward could any military medical admin-
istrator ask for than the expression of such an opinion by one well
qualified to form it?

Altogether the picture of medical affairs in the later phases
of the Peninsular War is one a medical officer likes to dwell on: A
capable chief, in intimate relations with and possessing the entire
confidence of the supreme commander, with a body of officers
devoted to him and to their work, eager and able to second him
to the full in his endeavours to promote the fighting efficiency of
the Army. That much of the success was due to the personality
of McGrigor cannot be gainsaid.

The long campaign was now drawing to its victorious close.
Vittoria started the French in full retreat, Wellington followed,
driving them over the Pyrenees, and storming his way to St. Jean
de Luz. Bordeaux fell, and on Easter Sunday was fought the
sanguinary battle of Toulouse, followed by the surrender of the
town.

These events threw a vast number of wounded on McGrigor’s
hands, numbers which were increased by the marked preference
shown by our Spanish and Portuguese allies for the ministrations
of the British surgeons, and by the great proportion of wounded
prisoners. He distributed them in two great divisions throughout
the city, placing one under the charge of the celebrated George James Guthrie, then Surgeon to the Forces.

Speaking of the technical skill of his officers at this time, McGrigor says: "After none of the previous battles were more operations performed than after Toulouse, and on no former occasion was more skilful surgery displayed. Great experience and reflection had at this time created among us a body of operators such as never were excelled, if ever before equalled in the British Army."

When peace was declared, McGrigor sought and obtained introductions to Marshals Soult and Suchet, dining with them at Wellington's table. His object was to enlist their interest in getting facilities for him to visit the French military hospitals, which he was anxious to compare with his own. They readily promised their good offices, but, although McGrigor made many attempts and was provided with excellent credentials, he was never able to gain admittance. This confirmed him in the impression which he had formed from common report, as well as from their regulations which he had studied, that they were markedly inferior to his own. One feature in the French organisation, however, he envied, viz., the "ambulance" for the transport of their wounded. He once proposed the adoption of a similar system to Lord Wellington in Spain, but the latter would not hear of it, nor would he give the credit of humanity to Napoleon as the motive for his introduction of it into the French Army. In this Wellington was undoubtedly right. Napoleon was little inclined to hamper his military freedom for the sake of humanity. He adopted the "ambulance" because he found it a help, not a hindrance, to his military operations, increasing, not diminishing, the mobility of his troops. It is strange that Wellington should not have grasped its military value in the same way.

The campaign was over, and McGrigor was preparing for a move homewards, when he received a communication which he describes as the most gratifying incident of his life. It was to the effect that the medical officers of the Peninsular Army, whom he was now about to leave, begged his acceptance of a parting gift from them of a service of plate. What made the gift the more valuable were the terms in which it was offered and the fact that it was made when the donors had no longer any favours to expect, the tie between McGrigor and themselves being about to be broken.

The gift, of the value of nearly £1,000, was subsequently handed to him in London, and is eloquent testimony of the relations which had existed between himself and his officers.

Passing through Paris on his way home, McGrigor renewed his acquaintance with Baron Larrey, whom he had previously met in Egypt, and met also Baron Percy, who had recently been occupying a similar position to his own in the French Army in the Peninsula, and who, with Larrey, was largely instrumental in the formation of the flying "ambulances" which had excited McGrigor's envy.

From Paris he came home to receive the welcome awaiting him from the Commander-in-Chief and his own immediate superiors. The Duke of Wellington immediately claimed his services, and desired him to continue to see him every morning in connection with Peninsular affairs, which he was then engaged in winding up. He shared in many of the public expressions of gratitude given to the Duke and received the honour of knighthood. Always jealous of the dignity of his profession and of the branch of the Army to which he was proud to belong, he considered the latter recognition inadequate to the services he had rendered, saying quite simply and plainly that if any honour were conferred on him he thought it should be the permanent one of the baronetage. The Duke evidently sympathised with him, but recommended his "taking the knighthood meanwhile."

One morning, after the usual business, the Duke said: "Mac, we are now winding up all arrears with the Government. I have asked them how you are to be disposed of, and I am told you are to be placed on half-pay; but I consider your peculiar services will entitle you to specific retirement."

McGrigor was accordingly placed on half-pay, or rather "retired on an income given for special service," and his future in life became again a question for consideration.

His first step was to resume the study of his profession, and he joined classes in anatomy and chemistry at the Hunterian School in Windmill Street. Two courses were pressed upon him: one, to enter on the practice of his profession as a physician in London, in which his prospects of success were very promising; the other, to submit his name as a candidate for a position on the Medical Board, the senior member of which was then in very indifferent health. The question was early solved for him by his nomination direct to the senior position on the Board. The appointment was one which did credit to the Commander-in-Chief, and gave wide satisfaction in the department.
For the first time an officer in the prime of life, of proved ability, with unrivalled experience and definite ideas of reform, was to preside over the fortunes of the medical service of the Army. An officer who was in every way identified with the interests of that service, who had given it the best years of his life, knew it by heart, and commanded in a degree hitherto unequalled the trust of those who belonged to it. McGrigor accepted the position, not without misgivings, it is true, but with the quiet confidence born of complete knowledge.

Here we must take leave of the fascinating pages of the autobiography which has hitherto been our guide. I make no apology for having followed it as closely as the necessity for compression would allow, and have indeed striven as far as possible to reproduce the *ipsissima verba* of the author. The book is probably now scarce and many may be unable to obtain it. Those to whom the opportunity occurs will, I trust, not miss it.

The record of the remainder of McGrigor's official life is written in his achievements. From the day he first took the chair, slowly but steadily the great work began. "Without haste, without rest," it unfolded itself through the long years of his Director-Generalship. His first great care was to raise the standard of professional education throughout the Service. To enable this to be done on a sure foundation he gradually collected full statements of the education and services of every individual medical officer in the Army, which were drawn up and signed by each.

During the long series of wars in which the country had been engaged great difficulties had been encountered in providing a sufficiency of medical officers of suitable education, and many had perforce been taken whose standard fell far short of McGrigor's ideal. He laid down a minimum standard and intimated to all who did not attain thereto that promotion was barred to them until they had adequately qualified themselves. At the end of the war many medical officers were reduced and many placed on half-pay. The former were chosen from those least qualified for their duties; the latter were informed that their return to the full-pay list would depend on the use they made of their time and on their professional qualifications. They were advised to betake themselves to colleges, and schools of medicine at home and abroad, which they did in large numbers. Further, to many of those officers retained on full pay periods of study leave were given, ranging from six to twelve months, to enable them to proceed to some of the schools and add to their qualifications. The effect on the professional
The efficiency of the Army Medical Service was immediate and immense. A spirit of emulation was set up which was attended with the happiest results.

The subject next nearest to McGrigor's heart was the collation and use, for the advancement of knowledge, of the enormous mass of clinical and professional material at the disposal of the medical officers of the Army in their widespread stations. He instituted a system of exact returns and reports which laid the foundations of our present statistical records.

A matter which touched him to the quick now that he was the head of the Board was the reputation which the latter had gained for harassing, cheeseparing and unreasoning scrutiny of the smaller details of hospital accounts, at the expense of subjects of professional interest. Of economy in administration he was a master and a warm adherent; of red tape and niggardliness he was the sworn foe. He gradually freed the governing body from the reproach it had justly incurred, and encouraged medical officers to devote their best energies and talents to the professional side of their duties; at the same time insisting on adequate but not unreasonable attention being paid to fiscal interests.

An all-important step which he early took for the professional advancement of medical officers was the foundation at Fort Pitt, Chatham, of the "Museum of Anatomy and Natural History bearing upon Military Surgery," and used his influence with medical officers all over the world to induce them to send specimens to it. Before his retirement it had acquired between 30,000 and 40,000 specimens of different categories, many of them of great value. The collection of human crania exceeded 500 examples, and was held by many competent to judge to be unrivalled. It is still a feature in the museum of the Royal Army Medical College at Millbank, and has recently been commemorated as the "Williamson Collection," to perpetuate the name of Surgeon-Major Williamson, who was mainly responsible for its formation. Within a few years McGrigor attached a library to the museum, to which he himself on one occasion made a donation of 1,500 volumes. All his life he had been a voracious reader and collector, and the library benefited largely from his generosity. Not many years elapsed before 10,000 books had found place upon its shelves, many of which are now to be seen round the walls in the present College.

The exact information he gathered concerning the health conditions of different garrisons enabled him to introduce many sanitary reforms of great importance, and to arrange for the much more advantageous distribution of his personnel than had hitherto ruled.
It also enabled him to fight with success for the maintenance of an establishment of medical officers adequate to cope with the work which, he was able to show, lay to their hands. A reform of far-reaching importance, and to which he attached great weight, was the system which he adopted of selecting men for the higher appointments according to the special qualifications they possessed. He found no trouble too great which enabled him to ascertain with greater accuracy the special attributes of officers, likely to fit or unfit them for particular posts. He recognised to the full that the success of the policy he represented depended in large measure on the suitability of the instruments chosen to carry it out, and spared no pains to guard his selections by every possible precaution.

His deep interest in the personal welfare of his officers is evidenced by the steps he took to found and foster the Army Medical Officers' Friendly Society. By means of a comparatively small subscription to this Society the Army Medical Officer was, and is, able to safeguard his widow from the danger of destitution. By example and precept he induced the whole of his medical officers to join this Society, to which the great majority of them continued to subscribe for many years. At the time of his retirement the Society was distributing incomes to 120 widows, and was possessed of a capital of nearly £80,000. Such a thing as an Army medical officer's widow being in dire financial straits was at that time unknown, thanks to this Society and its general support by the officers of the department.

It may be remarked that the Society, under the name of "The Army Medical Officers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund," still exists, has now a funded capital of £120,000, and is able to offer annuities for medical officers' widows on terms with which no outside insurance offices can compete. It is earnestly commended to the attention of medical officers now serving, who do not appear to adequately recognise its advantages.

Instances of distress amongst the orphans of medical officers were still, however, not uncommon, and to help them McGrigor was instrumental in founding the "Army Medical Benevolent Fund." This fund has helped many orphans to complete their education commenced under happier auspices in the lifetime of their parents, and has thus fitted them to take up the position in life to which they could legitimately aspire. The Society was liberally supported by McGrigor and his officers, and when he left office had a capital of £15,000 and distributed an annual income of £500 in grants to suitable cases. The Society still exists
and is doing most excellent service. It cannot be too warmly pressed on the notice of serving and retired officers of the Corps.

These two societies are enduring monuments to the warm human sympathy of McGrigor with those of his brother officers less fortunate than himself. What better tribute to his memory can we make than to keep them alive and active?

McGrigor stuck to his post with the tenacity of his race, but had no wish to "lag superfluous on the stage." After thirty-three years of office, at the age of 78, he began to feel the need of rest, and expressed his wish to retire. But his old friend the Duke of Wellington, then Commander-in-Chief, a youngster one year older than Sir James, would have none of it: "No, no, McGrigor, there is plenty of work in you yet," and McGrigor had perforce to stay. But two years later he renewed his request, and this time with success.

In the letter announcing the acceptance of his resignation the following passage occurs: "The Duke of Wellington has directed me to draw your attention to the expression by the Lords of the Treasury of their high approbation of your long, able, and most meritorious services, and to the testimony which Mr. Fox Maule is desirous of bearing to your merits, and further I am to convey to you his Grace's congratulations on receiving so unqualified an acknowledgment from such high quarters of your unceasing and successful application of your best energies to the discharge of your duty during a long course of years."

In presenting the Army Estimates in the year 1851 the Minister made the following remark: "In the Army Medical Department the service has lost, by the retirement, not, I am happy to say, by the death, of Sir James McGrigor, an officer to whom the public is much indebted," an allusion which was received with the cheers of the House.

When the impending retirement became known to the officers of his department they determined to present him with a costly testimonial, as a token of their regard and regret; but Sir James was altogether unwilling to accept another gift, and, being baulked in this respect, they presented him with a valedictory address, in which they expressed their appreciation of the many benefits Sir James's rule had conferred on them and on their service.

During his tenure of office Sir James McGrigor was the recipient of many honours. In 1814 he received the honour of knighthood, in 1831 he was created a baronet, and in 1850 a K.C.B. He was also a Knight Commander of the Tower and Sword of Portugal;
while for his services in Egypt he wore the Turkish Order of the Crescent.

Upon the institution of the London University he was made a member of its Council; he was elected F.R.S. and member of many learned societies in the United Kingdom and on the Continent.

The Marischal College and University of Aberdeen, from which he had obtained the degree of M.D. in 1804, thrice elected him Rector; and the Town Council of Edinburgh conferred on him the freedom of that city.

For seven years longer McGrigor enjoyed the rest he had earned and longed for, happy in the possession of troops of friends to whose number he had been adding every year of his life. He passed away, full of years and honours, in London, in the 88th year of his age, on April 2nd, 1858, having survived the Duke of Wellington five years.

When Wellington College was founded, to McGrigor was assigned one of the niches in the building reserved for the reception of statues or busts of the principal officers, contemporary statesmen, and personal friends of the Duke.

Aberdeen boasts a stately granite obelisk to McGrigor's memory, and opposite the main gate of Chelsea Barracks, in the old Ranelagh Gardens, stood his statue, erected by his many friends and admirers: a statue which we, his successors in the Corps he loved and served, have now claimed the privilege to guard and bring to its rightful home, that college on the Embankment the foundation of which he foreshadowed, and the existence of which is the logical sequence of the policy initiated by him, when he presided over the destinies of the Army Medical Service.
Obelisk to the memory of Sir James M'Grigor, Bart., erected in the quadrangle of Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1860, and removed to its present site in the Duthie Park, Aberdeen, in 1906.