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## EDITORIAL.

### A VOICE FROM THE DEAD.

*I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
The best and the last!*

When it became known that Sir Victor Horsley was in Mesopotamia we realized that the right man was in the right place, that his clear insight, logical argument and fearless exposition of shortcomings would do much to obtain better conditions for the sick and wounded.

The eloquent, incisive, sympathetic voice, marshalling facts in convincing array, to which it was always a delight to listen, is, alas, silent for ever in this world, but, under the heading "A Voice from the Dead," the *British Medical Journal* reproduces the facts and opinions expressed in a letter written to the editor by Sir Victor Horsley from the front on July 5th—some ten days before his death.

The three main points of the letter, says that Journal, are first that it was written so that the case of responsible medical officers in Mesopotamia should not be prejudiced, as he feared it might be, through the report of the Vincent Commission; secondly, that the appalling failures in the medical arrangements were due to the utterly defective transport; and, thirdly, that the failure was bound up with the question of the present extremely unsatisfactory relations between the Financial Department of the Indian Government and the Medical Services.

Sir Victor Horsley stated in his letter that last March the Commander-in-Chief in India told him that he had appointed a "Medical Commission." This, says our contemporary, turned out to be this commission of three—a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, with judicial experience, an Indian staff officer, recently appointed Quartermaster-General of the Army in India, and a London business

man. . . . "Must it ever be in the case of medical matters that only those who know nothing about them should be appointed judges? But this is what first the Government of India and now the Imperial Parliament has done."

Our contemporary emphasises the fact that when considering allegations of defects in the medical arrangements of a military force it must be remembered that the Medical Service does not supply its own transport. It is, in fact, responsible only for personnel—surgeons, orderlies, and nurses—and for the supply of drugs. . . . As to the work of the executive officers, the medical officers actually engaged in the treatment of the sick and wounded and in minimizing their sufferings during the purgatory of their transport down the Tigris, there is only one opinion expressed by all the officers and men who have passed through their hands—namely, that they have worked in the most splendid way, entirely forgetful of self, constantly striving not to be discouraged by the want of drugs and appliances, the absence of anticholera outfits, or the need to give an intravenous saline injection out of a teapot—deficiencies all due, as Sir Victor Horsley wrote from Amara on June 7th, to "financial terrorism in times of peace."

As to the failure of the transport arrangements Sir Victor Horsley wrote that the whole of the terrible failures in Mesopotamia "are due to the non-provision of transport. There never has been in this country adequate transport for food, and there never (until March, when our solitary hospital steamer arrived) has been any medical transport whatever; nothing but the foulest store barges and steamers used on their return journey to the base to carry the sick and wounded."

Let us hope that his letters offered to Parliament by Lady Horsley will be submitted to the Statutory Commission.

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