

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## PROFESSOR PACINI ON THE CLAIMS OF HARVEY AS THE DISCOVERER OF THE CIRCULATION.

SIR,—I have recently had the honour to receive from Professor Pacini of Florence, a letter, of which I enclose a copy, together with a literal translation which I have made, omitting only the complimentary Italian superlatives.

I do not doubt that you, Sir, and your readers, will feel an interest in the verdict of this eminent Italian professor, with regard to the relative claims of Harvey and of Cesalpino to be considered the discoverer of the circulation of the blood.—I am, etc.,

11, Saville Row, Oct. 7th, 1882.

GEORGE JOHNSON.

[COPY.]

“*All' Illustrissimo Signore Professor Johnson.*

“Ho letto con grandissimo piacere la sua bella Dissertazione (*Harveian Oration*), che Ella si è compiaciuta mandarmi circa la grande scoperta della circolazione del sangue; e dietro questa lettura ho dovuto riconoscere che la gloria di avere dimostrata questa scoperta con ogni sorte di argomenti e di fatti, appartiene incontestabilmente ad Harvey. Ella però non deve meravigliare che attualmente i più rumorosi sapienti Italiani pretendano attribuarla a Cesalpino. Che se Cesalpino ed Harvey fossero tuttavia viventi è certo che i nostri sapienti si farebbero un dovere di attribuarla ad Harvey. Ma essendo ambedue morti, è naturale che i sapienti Italiani pretendono rivendicarla per Cesalpino; ed ecco perchè l'Italia è detta ancora *la Terra de' Morti*.

“In prova di ciò potrei citare più d'un esempio in cui non sempre si è lasciata parlare la verità dei fatti; come si è visto ancora ultimamente nella R. Accademia dei Lincei quando questa Accademia ebbe a giudicare il famoso concorso per le Scienze biologiche, nella seduta solenne del Dicembre, 1881.

“Pubblichi pure questa lettera se vuole, purchè sia pubblicata tutta integra; e intanto profitto di questa occasione per mandarle, con i miei ringraziamenti, alcuni miei opuscoli mentre mi confermo con tutto il rispetto.—Suo affettuosissimo Collega,

FILIPPO PACINI.

“Firenze, Settembre 28th, 1882.”

[TRANSLATION].

*To Professor Johnson.*

I have read with the greatest pleasure your beautiful dissertation (*Harveian Oration*), respecting the great discovery of the circulation of the blood, which you have been pleased to send me; and, having read it, I am bound to acknowledge that the glory of having demonstrated that discovery by every kind of argument and of fact, belongs unquestionably to Harvey. You ought not, however, to wonder that actually the most clamorous of the scientific Italians endeavour to attribute the discovery to Cesalpino. If Cesalpino and Harvey were now living, it is certain that our scientists would consider it a duty to attribute it to Harvey; but, both being dead, it is natural that Italian scientists should attempt to claim it for Cesalpino; and thus it is that Italy is still called “The Land of the Dead.” In proof of this, I could cite more than one instance in which, to speak the truth with regard to facts has not always been permitted, as was seen recently in the Royal Academy of Sciences, when the Academy had to decide the famous competition in Biological Science at the ceremonial sitting of December 18th, 1881.

You may, if you please, publish this letter, provided that it be published entire; meanwhile, I avail myself of this opportunity to send you, with my thanks, some of my pamphlets; and remain, with all respect, your most affectionate colleague,

FILIPPO PACINI.

Florence, September 28th, 1882.

## THE MILITIA MEDICAL SERVICE.

SIR,—With reference to your letter of May 26th last, containing further statements with regard to the claims of militia surgeons to pensions on retirement, and adverting to the article of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL of June 24th, 1882, in which it is stated that the militia surgeons have had the opinion of “two eminent Queen’s counsel as to

their being justly and legally entitled to this pension, and this view has been further confirmed by the legal investigation which we have caused to be made of the case,” I am directed to acquaint you that Mr. Secretary Childers, after giving full consideration to those statements, and having taken the opinion of the law officers of the Crown upon the whole correspondence, sees no reason for altering the decision on the subject communicated to you by the letter from this office of April 17th last, A/ Militia /3,819.

1. You state that in none of the statutes relating to militia surgeons is there anything to imply that they belonged to the permanent staff; but I am to point out that the Acts before the 10 Geo. IV distinctly treat surgeons, as well as adjutants and quartermasters, as part of the permanent staff. Taking 9 Geo. IV, cap. 67, for example. By Section 1, the surgeon’s pay is provided for among that of the rest of the permanent staff; and by Section 3, every adjutant, paymaster, surgeon, quartermaster, and every non-commissioned officer, drummer and fifer on permanent pay of the regular militia when disembodied, is to reside in the city—i.e., where the arms of the corps are—or within a reasonable distance thereof; and, when absent from such residence without leave, they forfeit their pay. By 10 Geo. IV, cap. 10, sec. 3, the permanent staff was reduced, in accordance with the circular dated War Office, December 24th, 1828; and by 10 Geo. IV., cap. 10, the surgeon’s pay, and that of other reduced officers, is no longer provided for among the rest of the permanent staff; nor (see Section 2) are the surgeons, or the other reduced officers, any longer required to reside (as under former Acts) near the arms of the corps, though the rest of the permanent staff is required to do so.

2. You quote the 20th section of the Pay and Clothing Act, 31 and 32 Vict., cap. 76, which provides that, “whereas certain allowances have been granted in pursuance of former Acts to adjutants, surgeons, and quartermasters of regular militia, who have by age or infirmity been rendered unfit for further service, such allowances shall be issued and paid during the continuance of this Act”, and infer from the wording of this section “that other surgeons than those employed before 1829 were receiving allowances and pensions, and that it was intended by these statutes that they should still be paid.” This is not the case. The only allowance granted to militia surgeons retired on account of age or infirmity “in pursuance of former Acts” is the pension of six shillings a day granted from year to year to militia surgeons of twenty years’ service (formerly three shillings a day after thirty years’ service) by the annual Pay and Clothing Acts up to 1829, the year when the “permanent staff” was reduced. The Pay and Clothing Act of that year (10 Geo. IV, cap. 29) distinctly states (section 23) that the above pension is to be given to surgeons who shall have been rendered unfit by age or infirmity “previous to the 25th June, 1829”; and no subsequent Act gives this pension to any surgeon who had not retired previously to the above date, or any other retiring allowance to any militia surgeon appointed since 1829.

3. You urge that it is inequitable that militia surgeons “should be forced to retire without pension, by virtue of a rule issued years after their appointment,” and that they “were told, on accepting service on the departmental medical list, that they would forfeit no rights they previously enjoyed by so doing, one of these rights being that they were not compelled to retire on account of age.” No such right was ever possessed by the militia surgeons. The Crown has always had the power to decide at what age militia officers should cease to serve, and the decision that all militia surgeons must retire at sixty-five was a boon to them, considering the age at which other militia officers are compelled to retire.

4. You draw attention to what you describe as a slight inaccuracy in the statement that a complaint was made in the petition presented by you on the 15th February last, that the pay of the militia surgeons is very inadequate, as compared with that of the medical officers of the regular army. The words used in the petition were: “Your petitioners would point out that they have rendered services to the country for very inadequate pay, as compared with the medical officers of Her Majesty’s forces,” thereby challenging a comparison between the pay of the militia surgeons, and that of the surgeons of the regular army.

5. Finally, you refer to various Acts of Parliament, by which provision was made up to 1874, for the payment of pensions at six shillings a day to militia surgeons; but, as has been shown in paragraph 2 of this letter, the pension referred to was payable only to such militia surgeons as had retired before the 25th June, 1829.

Under these circumstances, Mr. Childers cannot admit your plea that the militia surgeons have a claim, either in equity or in law, to pensions on retirement.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

RALPH THOMPSON.

Pall Mall, S.W., October 7th, 1882.