

BENEVOLENT FUND.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—It may be remembered by the members who attended the last annual meeting of the Association, which was held at Leeds, that Dr. Cowan gave notice of his intention to propose, at the following annual meeting, a motion to the effect that the subscription to the society should be £1 10s. instead of the present subscription of £1 1s.; and that 9s. thereof should be applied to the Benevolent Fund.

Notwithstanding that such notice was given, and that such was duly intimated to the members of this society, through the Journal, several letters appeared thereafter upon the subject in question, and the resuscitation of one of these in your last week's number revives in me opinions then formed.

Dr. Cowan having taken the constitutional mode of giving due notice of his intention to propose the alteration of a fundamental rule of the Association, nothing ought, in my opinion, to have appeared in the Journal, either for or against Dr. Cowan's proposition, until the period of the annual meeting. This, however, appearing not to be the opinion of others, many letters on the subject have been published, and I trust that now I may be excused in presuming also to offer a few remarks thereon.

The Provincial Medical Association, when formed, had no Benevolent Fund attached to it; the latter bore no share, nor does it yet bear any, in its constitution. Members are enrolled as subscribers of £1 1s. to the Provincial Medical Association, for which subscription they receive the weekly Journal and the annual volume of the Transactions. If the subscriptions should ever be insufficient to defray the expenses of the Association, *then* there would be a legitimate right to make a further call upon the subscribers, but not until such a state of affairs is shown.

The Benevolent Fund is an after-growth; it is attached to, and yet distinct from, the Association; it arose out of it, but although still in connection with it, these two institutions are supplied with the means of subsistence from very different sources—the subscription to the society is fixed and obligatory—the donations to the Benevolent Fund are, as they ought to be, voluntary offerings. It appears, therefore, that a compulsory subscription to the Benevolent Fund would alter greatly the nature of the Association; it would convert it into a "benefit society" rather than tend to keep up its character as a promoter of medical and surgical science.

But, further, in a benevolent point of view, I consider, with many others, that to allow the society and the Benevolent Fund to remain in their present bearing with respect to the members, is an act of much greater benevolence or charity than if we acceded to the proposed increase of subscription for the benefit of the surviving relatives of the subscriber; for I know, and am sorry to say so, that several, even in this neighbourhood, would reluctantly be compelled to cease subscribing were the annual subscriptions to be raised, and thus the present great advantages of the Association would be lost to them. Without the projected alteration, the Benevolent Fund is at present open for the offerings of all who can afford and who

feel inclined to give, whilst "every member of the Association," I am glad to think, "is not "called upon to do likewise."

Such opinions as those now offered cannot, I presume, be supposed to arise from any deficiency of benevolent feeling, for I believe them to be the opinions held by most of the members of the "West Riding Medical Charitable Society," and to be such as were openly expressed at the Association's annual meeting, by our excellent and highly benevolent secretary, Mr. Garlick, of Leeds; and here I may further add that many of our members not only subscribe their guinea to the above-named charity, but also add their mite to your Benevolent Fund.

In conclusion, wishing all prosperity to the Benevolent Fund, I would at the same time recommend the formation of local or county medical charitable societies, similar in essentials to the one just alluded to; for I feel persuaded that a much greater amount of good may be done by such societies, and much more efficiently, than can possibly be effected by any wide spread and unattached charity.

I have the honor, Gentlemen, to remain,
Your obedient servant,

JAMES INGLIS, M.D.

Halifax, Jan. 16, 1844.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

On the Nature and Treatment of Tic Douloureux, Sciatica, and other Neuralgic Disorders. By Henry Hunt, M.D., &c. &c. London: Churchill, 1844.

Diseases of the Lungs from Mechanical Causes; and Inquiries into the Condition of Artisans exposed to the Inhalation of Dust. By G. Calvert Holland, Esq., M.D., &c. &c. London: Churchill, 1843.

Glossology: or the Additional Means of Diagnosis of Disease to be derived from Indications and Appearances of the Tongue. By Benjamin Ridge, M.D., M.R.C.S.L., &c. &c. London: Churchill, 1844.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Subscribers to this Journal are recommended to ORDER FROM THEIR BOOKSELLERS, without delay, any Numbers required to complete sets, as the first 79 are quite out of print, and but few copies remain of many of the later Numbers.

We have received several letters about the controversy between Dr. Eager and Mr. Barrett, of Manchester. But we cannot afford room in our pages for personal squabbles. Each party has been heard, and the profession must now form their own opinion. It is right to add, that Mr. Fleming has sent us a letter, stating that he cannot be certain that it was Captain Dudley Byrne who called on him, as he asserted in our last Number. This we publish, lest we may have implicated the name of a gentleman who was a stranger to the whole transaction.

* * * Communications, journals, and books for review, to be forwarded (carriage paid) to the Publisher, 356, Strand, London. Letters connected with the Provincial Association, to Dr. Streeten, Worcester.