In the first branch of the Society, that of granting deferred annuities to members, one feature, altogether peculiar to this Society, presents itself—viz., that should the subscriber become permanently incapacitated from following his profession, before attaining the stipulated age, he shall be entitled to a proportionate annuity, to commence at the period of incapacity.

The annuities to widows, under the second branch of the Society, to commence immediately on the death of the subscriber, but that one half of the annuity be deducted in case of the widow's marriage.

Annuities to children, individually, to be granted on the same principle of survivorship, but to cease entirely on the marriage of the females, or the coming of age of the males.

Family annuities to be also granted to all the children of a family conjointly, and with similar limitations, to terminate when all the daughters are married, and all the sons are twenty-one years of age.

In illustration of the importance of the sickness fund, various examples were adduced, of a most satisfactory character, beyond which the managing committee thought little need be said, in recommending so obvious a benefit to the adoption of the meeting, and to the profession at large.

With regard to the fourth branch of the Society, the relief fund, its main objects are, to administer relief in cases where the provision made through the medium of the provident branches have failed, through inability to be carried out, or, if carried out, have proved inadequate to the necessities of particular cases; and also to extend relief, under peculiar circumstances, to the widows and orphans of members who have not been subscribers of annuities.

It is intended to form this fund out of annual and life subscriptions of members, and from donations, bequests, and all other means whereby such institutions are usually supported, and that amongst the various objects contemplated by this branch of the Society, the following had been particularly considered by the managing committee.

1. To grant advances to such of the subscribers for annuities as might be unable from sickness or other causes to pay their premiums when due.
2. To make donations to members who might be disabled, from disease or otherwise, in reduced circumstances.
3. To grant relief under peculiar circumstances, in special cases, to the widows and orphans of members.
4. To augment by annual grants the annuities of widows and orphans when, from particular circumstances, they are found inadequate.
5. To grant loans to members of a certain standing at low rates of interest, or even without interest, under special circumstances.
6. To grant sums for building, or otherwise to assist in procuring cottage retreats for decayed members or their families.

It was stated that the last two measures could not be contemplated until the fund had attained a considerable amount of capital, unless special gifts or bequests should be appropriated for these purposes.

The managing committee stated that they were in possession of all the necessary tables, which, although they were highly favourable to subscribers, were of such a character, that, should any difficulties at any future period arise, the interests of the subscribers could be readily secured by transferring them to other and long established institutions, and that it must not be forgotten that in the subscriptions from life and annual members, the Society would possess a guarantee fund, the contemplated use of which would amply secure the interests of every subscriber for annuities.

After stating that it was intended to submit an outline of the plan to every member of the profession individually, and that a body of rules and regulations for the government of the Society was in preparation,

The following resolutions were put and carried unanimously:—

Proposed by Dr. TWEEDIE, and seconded by Dr. SIEVEKING—

That the report of the managing committee now read be approved and adopted.

Proposed by Mr. CURLING, and seconded by Mr. LORD—

That a detailed plan, drawn from the Report, be prepared, printed, and sent to the members of the profession at large, and that the names of the provisional and managing committee be circulated with the same.

Proposed by Mr. WICKHAM, of Winchester, and seconded by Dr. WOODFALL—

That the managing committee be requested to continue their labours, with full discretionary powers in the application of the present funds, and all other matters for taking whatever steps may be necessary for the establishment of the Society, and that they be empowered to fill up any vacancies which may occur in their own body.

Proposed by Mr. LEET, of Thrapston, and seconded by Mr. DOUBLEDAY—

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the managing committee, the designation of the Society shall henceforth be "THE BRITISH MEDICAL FUND," a provident and relief society for medical men, their widows and orphans.

Proposed by Mr. WICKHAM, of Winchester, and seconded by Mr. BULLEN, of Ipswich—

That the best thanks of the meeting be offered to the managing committee for their indefatigable exertions in promoting the objects of the Society.

Proposed by Dr. BUSHNAN, and seconded by Dr. SIEVEKING—

That the thanks of the meeting be given to Dr. Forbes for his very able and gentlemanly conduct in the chair.

Some conversation followed, in which several gentlemen expressed their wish and determination to aid the Society in every way; and it was remarked by one influential provincial surgeon, that he never recollected a more gratifying circumstance than the perfect confidence which every one evidently felt in the managing committee. Altogether, the meeting was most cheering, and we trust that it may be the first step only in a most extended and successful career.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS AND THEIR POWERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In THE LANCET for March 16th is a letter, signed "Alpha," who inquires, "whether in reality he possesses the power of ordering such necessities for his pauper patients as their cases require; also, in the event of a refusal to obey such order, what course he had better adopt?"

If "Alpha" will refer to the General Consolidated Order, issued by the Poor-law Commissioners on July 24th, 1847, with commentary and notes by William Cunningham Glen, Esq., he will find, at p. 129 to Article 206, No. 1, the following note:—"A medical officer is not empowered by the orders of the poor-law commissioners, or by his contract with the guardians, to order food or articles of diet, as meat, milk, wine, or porter, for his pauper patients. Any direction which he may give to that effect will only amount to an expression of opinion on his part, that relief in food or other necessities is required. The medical officer's opinion so expressed is, however, entitled to the greatest weight, and the relieving officer would, in the intervals of the meetings of the board of guardians, incur serious responsibility in refusing to supply food or other necessities so recommended by the medical officer."

From the above, it is evident that "Alpha" has not the power to enforce his order for food, &c., but should at any time his written recommendation not be attended to by the relieving officer, the most proper course to adopt would be to report the case to the board of guardians; but I would first advise that he should learn from the relieving officer his reason for refusing to attend to his recommendations, as it is very desirable that poor-law officers should, if possible, work amicably together, and when practicable, to settle their little differences amongst themselves; in the event of the guardians not supporting the medical officer, then, as an ulterior step, an appeal might be made to the poor-law board, who will promptly inquire into the case; and from which board every medical officer who does his duty will meet with that respect and protection to which, both by his education and profession, he is entitled: of this I can speak most confidently, as I have been long in communication with the board, in consequence of some differences which have existed between the governor

of the workhouse and myself, and subsequently with the guardians, who supported the governor, and ultimately requested me to resign. Without occupying your pages at present with my difficulties, I may simply state that they arose, because I would not reduce the dietary to the starving point.

In answer to that question of "Alpha" respecting the relieving officer not visiting the patient, at p. 153, art. 215, No. 5, of the order above referred to, it says, "In every case of a poor person receiving medical relief, as soon as may be, and from time to time afterwards, to visit the house of such person, and until the next ordinary meeting of the guardians, to supply such relief (not being in money) as the case, on his own view, or on the certificate of the district medical officer, may seem to require."

Hoping that what I have written, may be satisfactory to "Alpha," I have to subscribe myself,

Yours, most obediently,

Bury, Lancashire, March 23, 1850. H. J. HINXMAN, M.D., &c.

TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS A YEAR FOR AN OPERATING SURGEON.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I beg leave to send you a copy of an advertisement taken from the *North British Advertiser*, of Saturday last:—"Medical.—Wanted in the North of England, a Surgeon who can amputate and manage accidents. Salary, *twenty-five pounds* per annum, the engagement to be for two years certain; no inexperienced young man need apply. For particulars, apply *free*, to No. 673, Office of this Paper, in Edinburgh." This advertisement surely never came from a medical man; if so, he must have certainly forgot the cares, toil, and trouble of a medical education, to say nothing of the expense attending it. If from the managers of a public work, I consider it a disgrace to them, even to offer such terms to any inexperienced young man, far less to an experienced one. Much has been said in your valuable publication regarding the condition of naval assistant surgeons, but when such advertisements as the one I now send you a copy of appear in our public prints, I think that even the inexperienced young men belonging to the profession have good reason and cause to seek for a reformation in the state of affairs ashore. Trusting you will be kind enough to insert these few remarks,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Edinburgh, March 18, 1850. A TEN YEARS L.R.C.S.E.

ADMISSION OF SURGEONS IN GENERAL PRACTICE TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I must confess that it appears to me a most inconsistent proceeding, that the College of Surgeons should rest its refusal to admit surgeons in general practice to the Council, on the ground, that being exclusively devoted to pure surgery, any "impure" admixture would have the effect of materially detracting from their dignity, and the eminent position they occupy in the estimation of the profession. They profess to be actuated by one spirit alone, that of preserving immaculate the speciality of the College; but how they can reconcile with this spirit their undisguised anxiety and determination to maintain in association with themselves a body of men, who confer no manner of honour upon them, but rather the reverse, it is exceedingly difficult to comprehend? Would it not be more rational, and more likely to promote their grand object, if, instead of labouring to retain their hold over an obnoxious and inferior class, they should exert themselves to devise some means by which to shake off, for ever, so objectionable a yoke, and be enabled to enjoy, in unmolested peace and independence, their exclusive privileges, and their exclusive honours. The College of Physicians are at least consistent in this respect; they permit no contaminating element to sully their fair fame, and offer an example that one would imagine the Surgeons would be only too glad to emulate. But, no; strange as it may appear, the College of Surgeons are not only willing to preserve an undignified and distasteful connexion, but they even offer, in a spirit of self-sacrifice, which is scarcely of this world, to attach the surgeons in general practice altogether to themselves, to provide them with an examination on any subject, however remote from pure surgery, they may desire, and to do away with the disagreeable necessity of a connexion with any inferior institution! On the one hand, they declare that no consideration shall induce them to diminish

the exclusiveness of their character; on the other, they offer to do what it is impossible to suppose will tend very much to promote that exclusiveness; for I will put it to any man, whether, supposing the proposed arrangements to be acceded to, from that moment the College would not be considered a college devoted as much to surgeons in general practice as to pure surgeons? But is it possible that the Council can suppose that such arrangements would in any way diminish the eminence of their position, or the cause of pure science, which I suspect rests on higher ground than that supplied by the existence of a college; or is it not altogether irreconcilable with such a supposition, that professing, as they do, an exclusive devotion to scientific surgery, they should adopt a course which is in such perfect opposition to their ambition. And can it be imagined that the admission of a few surgeons in general practice to the Council could detract half so much from their exclusive character and scientific purity, as would the close and intimate connexion which they now offer to afford to that body? The College clearly acknowledges the importance, the talents, and the position of the surgeons in general practice, by the propositions they have made; they profess not to think it an indignity to connect them wholly and exclusively with themselves, and yet they refuse to allow them to exercise the slightest influence over the management of a college they voluntarily offer them as their own, and think them unworthy of a single seat at their council table. Why, such a course is neither more nor less than absurd! The admission to the Council, whose business it is to superintend the management of the College, appears to me to have no connexion whatever with distinctions of rank, and cannot in any way imply an equality of position. I would venture to assert that there is no surgeon in general practice who is not quite willing to acknowledge and respect the superiority of rank of the pure surgeons, or who would deny that the influence of pure surgeons should predominate at the College. No one, I think, would desire that surgeons in general practice should be allowed to be in the board of examiners; and let me ask whether this distinction alone is not sufficient to mark the position which the pure surgeons occupy at the College;—but that they should be allowed no voice in the management of the College, and in the superintendence of their own examinations, is at once unreasonable and unjust. A place at the Council would most certainly give the surgeons in general practice a *status*, commensurate with their rank, numbers, and character, but could in no way detract from the dignity of the College, an effect which the surgeons in general practice would deplore as cordially as any class of the profession.

Representation, then, should be a *sine quâ non* with the surgeons in general practice, whatever institution they may attach themselves to, for without it they may rest assured that their position can never be improved, and they will for ever remain to be trampled on, and despised, by men, too, whose ambition is alone for themselves, and not for the general advancement and progress of the profession. E. W.

THE LONDON AND PROVINCIAL MEDICAL DIRECTORY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Observing a letter signed "Tamesis" in your last number, drawing the attention of the profession to three errors in the *Medical Directory* for this year, I trust you will allow me to state, through the same medium, that I have already discovered in that work no less than fifty-three blunders. I shall be happy to give you a list of them, if it will not encroach too much on your valuable space.

I may mention that I have not even searched for them, but that they have all occurred to me in the course of business as a medical agent. Nor have I included such trivial mistakes as substituting "M.D. London," for "M.R.C.P.," to which your correspondent has referred.

It is scarcely credible, but I lately discovered that the editor does not even possess a list of the members of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

It was in a most important case where the issue of a law suit depended on whether a practitioner had misrepresented himself or not: the *Medical Directory* said he had not, but after some trouble (increased by another error in the same work) I found the contrary to be the case.

I have, indeed, every reason to believe that this is by no means a solitary case, but that both Irish and Scotch—and not unfrequently English—qualifications from "LL.D." down to "Lic. of