

THE LANCET RELIEF FUND.

THIS Fund, which came into operation on the 1st of February, 1889, has for its Almoners the President of the Royal College of Physicians of London (Sir WILLIAM SELBY CHURCH, Bart., K.C.B., M.D. Oxon.), the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (Mr. JOHN TWEEDY), the President of the General Medical Council (Sir WILLIAM TURNER, K.C.B., M.B. Lond., F.R.C.S. Eng. and Edin., F.R.S.), Mr. THOMAS WAKLEY, F.R.C.S. Eng., and Mr. THOMAS WAKLEY, jun., L.R.C.P. Lond., with Sir HENRY PITMAN, M.D. Cantab., F.R.C.P. Lond., as Honorary Auditor.

FOR the guidance of those seeking assistance and of those desirous of recommending deserving cases, it may be useful to record that THE LANCET Relief Fund is sustained solely by the Proprietors of THE LANCET, who provide every January the sum of at least £300, which is administered free of cost, with the object of affording immediate pecuniary assistance to registered medical practitioners, or to their widows and orphans, in cases of distress and emergency, by the grant of money by way of loans free of interest, or gifts, as the circumstances of the various cases may require. In the case of widows and orphans, in order to come within the scope of the Fund, the death of the Husband or Father must have been of recent occurrence.

WHEN the Fund was inaugurated considerable misapprehension existed as to the precise objects for which it had been established, and, as a result, the majority of the earlier applications, being cases of *chronic* distress, and not coming, therefore, under the designation of *emergency*, could not be entertained. As the Almoners still receive applications for assistance for cases which are obviously of a *chronic* character, it is thought advisable to append a statement concerning cases of this nature which appeared in THE LANCET of Feb. 16th, 1889:—

“We are requested by the Almoners to state that, from the character of a number of the applications received, both personally and by letter, for relief, it is evident that in many cases the object for which this Fund has been established is not quite clearly understood; and if relief had been afforded in the cases of those who suffer from chronic distress the Fund would have been completely exhausted within the first few days of its existence. They would therefore be greatly obliged if those readers of THE LANCET who may be asked to endorse applications would carefully peruse the Application Form and explain the precise object of the Fund to those applicants whose cases do not seem to come within the scope of the purpose for which the Fund has been established, which is to afford prompt aid to registered medical practitioners, or to the widows or orphans of members of the profession, who, in consequence of the superintention of some unexpected emergency, which is not likely to recur, have pressing need of immediate and temporary pecuniary relief”—

And who, it may be again pointed out, are likely to be permanently benefited thereby.

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT of the ALMONERS.

For the year ending December 31, 1903.

IN presenting their Fifteenth Annual Report the Almoners have to record that the balance in hand on Dec. 31st, 1902, was £303 2s. 11d., to which, on Jan. 1st, 1903, the Proprietors of THE LANCET added the sum of £300, making a total sum of £603 2s. 11d. available for grants during the year 1903.

The number of applications for assistance received by the Almoners during the year was 76—a slight increase as compared with those received in the previous year—of which 21 were so obviously outside the scope of the Fund that they were rejected by the Secretary by virtue of the discretionary power conferred upon him by the Almoners at their meeting on Jan. 1st, 1890; six were rejected by the Almoners after due consideration; three were withdrawn by the applicants; two were uncompleted at the close of the year; in eight cases Forms were sent but were not returned—probably the applicants recognised that their cases were outside the scope of the Fund; and 36 applicants were relieved by gifts or loans of money ranging from £2 to £35. The relief of the 36 cases, a detailed list of which is given in the accompanying Statement of Accounts, involved the expenditure of the sum of £442 16s. 8d.—a sum considerably above the normal income of the year, omitting balances brought forward and

possible receipts from repayment of loans, and the largest sum voted in any one year since the inauguration of the Fund in 1889.

Letters continue to be received by the Almoners from some of those whom they have helped, expressing their gratitude for the relief which has enabled them to mitigate, and in not a few cases to overcome, their difficulties, and thus testifying to a pleasing feature in the administration of the Fund.

The promptness of the relief afforded to applicants is also a feature to which the Almoners continue to give their particular attention; in this connexion it may not be uninteresting to record again the fact that on several occasions the Almoners have been able to consider cases and to grant relief on the actual day on which the application was received.

There continue to be far too many applications received for assistance for what are obviously “chronic” cases, a large proportion of the 21 cases rejected by the Secretary coming under this heading. It cannot be too emphatically reiterated that THE LANCET Relief Fund exists to meet cases of *sudden emergency*, where timely help will tide the practitioner over unforeseen difficulties, or afford his widow

and orphans a few weeks' respite from the more pressing financial cares of their unhappy position.

Mr. John Tweedy having succeeded Sir Henry Howse as President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in July last, thereupon became an Almoner of the Fund and consented to act as such. The present Almoners desire to record their appreciation of Sir Henry Howse's excellent services to the Fund.

In conclusion, the Almoners desire to state that they will at all times be glad to have their attention called to any cases of genuine distress coming within the scope of the

Fund, but they trust that those recommending cases or giving testimonials will first take steps to satisfy themselves of the *bona fides* of such cases before endorsing them. In the administration of such a Fund as this the Almoners are of necessity largely guided in their decisions by the testimonials accompanying the applications.

(Signed) W. S. CHURCH. JOHN TWEEDY.

WM. TURNER. THOMAS WAKLEY.

THOMAS WAKLEY, Jun.

January, 1904.

THE LANCET RELIEF FUND.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 31st, 1903.

DR.	£ s. d.	By Loans :—	CR.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Balance at the London and Westminster Bank, Limited (Westminster Branch), Jan. 1st, 1903	... 333 2 11	Case No. 566	35 0 0	
		" 591	10 0 0	
		" 596	6 14 6	
		" 599	25 0 0	
„ Proprietors of THE LANCET, Jan. 1st, 1903	... 300 0 0			76 14 6	
		By Gifts :—			
		Case No. 565 (voted 1902)	10 0 0	
		" 567	5 0 0	
		" 568	10 0 0	
		" 569	10 0 0	
		" 570	20 0 0	
		" 571	6 0 0	
		" 572	5 0 0	
		" 573	5 0 0	
		" 574	15 0 0	
		" 575	25 0 0	
		" 576	5 5 0	
		" 578	15 0 0	
		" 579	5 0 0	
		" 580	20 0 0	
		" 581	20 0 0	
		" 582	5 0 0	
		" 583	10 0 0	
		" 584	15 0 0	
		" 585	10 0 0	
		" 586	15 0 0	
		" 587	10 0 0	
		" 588	15 0 0	
		" 589	10 0 0	
		" 590	4 17 0	
		" 592	25 0 0	
		" 593	5 0 0	
		" 594	10 0 0	
		" 595	10 0 0	
		" 597	20 0 0	
		" 598	5 0 0	
		" 600	10 0 0	
		" 601	5 0 0	
		" 602	3 0 0	
		" 603	2 0 0	
		Cheque Book	366 2 0	
				4 2	
		Balance at Bank, Dec. 31, 1903	160 2 3	
	<u>£603 2 11</u>			<u>£603 2 11</u>	

I find by the Bankers' Book that the actual Balance on Jan. 1st, 1903, to the credit of the Fund was £333 2s. 11d., to which the sum of £300 was added by the Proprietors of THE LANCET on Jan. 1st, 1903.

The balance at the Bank on Dec. 31st, 1903, was the sum of £160 2s. 3d. I have also checked the receipts for disbursements and find the above account strictly accurate.

January 4th, 1904.

HENRY A. PITMAN, Hon. Auditor.