

at any moment they may be called upon to face danger or death.

In the pages of the JOURNAL you have already announced the fact that a society has been started for the express purpose of assisting in the education and starting in life of orphans whose fathers have died in the present war without having had the opportunity of making provision for their families. The president of this society is Sir Alfred Keogh. It has a representative body of vice-presidents and a strong working committee. Many donations have already been received, varying in amount from one to fifty guineas, and annual subscriptions from one to five guineas.

It is quite clear that a great deal of money will be required if adequate help is to be given, and especially valuable will be annual subscriptions.

The secretary of the Auxiliary R.A.M.C. Funds, to give it its proper title, is Lieutenant-Colonel F. W. H. Davie-Harris, R.A.M.C., 124, Victoria Street, S.W., who is ready to give all information.

In conclusion, I would ask any member of the profession who reads this letter not to dismiss the points raised at once, but to ask himself whether the support of the Fund does not make a strong appeal to him as a personal duty in the great struggle in which we are all engaged, a duty the fulfilment of which should give him much satisfaction in the thought that although he himself is not called to enter the danger zone, he may by some personal sacrifice of his own comfort contribute in removing a great anxiety from those of his younger brethren who may be called upon to make the supreme sacrifice of their lives.—I am, etc.,

WILLIAM COLLIER,

A Past President of the British Medical Association.

Oxford, Nov. 13th.

#### AUXILIARY R.A.M.C. FUNDS.

*First List of Donations for the Officers' Benevolent Branch to September 30th.*

*Sum of £100.*—From a Friend (per Sir William Osler).

*Sums of £52 10s.*—Lieutenant-Colonels W. Collier and W. Hale White, and Major W. F. Brook.

*Sum of £50.*—Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. Barling.

*Sums of £21.*—Lieutenant-Colonel F. W. Westmacott and Major Ewen Maclean.

*Sum of £20.*—Major A. C. Farquharson.

*Sum of £15.*—Captain A. A. Young.

*Sums of £10 10s.*—Lieutenant-Colonels Sir James Barr, T. Gowans, and G. S. Middleton; Majors T. W. Buckley and T. K. Monro; Captains Cholmondeley Webb, H. H. Weir, and Hugh Wickens.

*Sums of £10.*—Surgeon-General Sir G. H. Makins, K.C.M.G., C.B.; Captain D. Douglas Crawford, and per Sir William Osler.

*Sums of £5 5s.*—Colonels Sir J. Rose Bradford, K.C.M.G., C.B., and W. Coates; Lieutenant-Colonels H. B. Angus, G. A. Bannatyne, T. Beattie, Norman Dalton, Claude Douglas, W. F. Haslam, D. L. Hamilton, A. M. Martin, W. Pasteur, and W. G. Richardson; Surgeon-Colonel Atwood Thorne, V.D.; Majors J. W. Leech, H. H. Littlejohn, A. Parkin, D. W. Patterson, R. P. R. Tyle, and J. D. Wardale; Captains A. Blackwell, E. F. Buzzard, Edgar Grey, V. Rich, R. P. Rowlands, H. R. Vachell, W. B. Warrington, F. W. Wilson, and Dr. A. Duke.

*Sums of £5.*—Colonel D. J. Mackintosh, M.V.O.; Lieutenant-Colonels H. P. Hawkins and W. F. Roe, D.S.O.; Captains H. H. Elliot, H. H. Kendrick, and H. Gordon Oliver.

*Sums of £4 4s.*—Lieutenant-Colonel Mansell Moullin; Captain Ed. Mackay.

*Sums of £3 3s.*—Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Bolam; Majors W. D. Arnison and F. C. Pybus; Captains W. T. Harkness, T. H. Livingstone, T. V. Mills, H. J. Slade, and L. H. Walsh; Lieutenant A. P. Gibbons.

*Sums of £2 2s.*—Major G. Newton Pitt; Captains G. F. Armstrong, V. H. Blake, C. E. Droop, W. B. Gourlay, W. Seymour, and Robert Thompson.

*Sums of £1 1s.*—Majors W. W. Jones and T. S. Toogood; Captains Lickley, Menzies, and Slater; Lieutenants W. B. Anderson, P. E. Murray, and H. O. Wheeler; Lieutenant and Quartermaster Gibbs.

The subscriptions recorded above amount to a total of £736 6s.

#### FEEES OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.

SIR,—In the paragraphs quoted from a letter of the late Sir Lauder Brunton (BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, November 11th, p. 661) there are some statements which call for comment.

He says in regard to abdominal operations, "The question, Shall an operation be performed or not? has been left entirely in my hands, and on the correctness of my answer the life of the patient has depended." It strikes me that, if Sir Lauder advised operation, the life of the

patient then depended upon the skill of the surgeon. If the reverse, the responsibility was then Sir Lauder's.

In the statement about this enormous "disproportion between the values of mere mechanical skill and trained brain work," it is indicated that the surgeon who has mere mechanical skill gets 100 guineas, and the physician who has a monopoly of trained brain work only gets 3 guineas. (Lucky surgeon who always gets 100 guineas.)

Surely a surgeon is not called in as a mere mechanic. He must confirm the diagnosis or disagree with it. He may refuse to operate, or perform some totally different operation to that advised by the physician. So far as abdominal operations are concerned, I may be wrong, but it has seemed to me that one who is constantly opening the abdomen has a better opportunity of correcting his opinions, and building up his diagnostic powers, than one who has not the same advantages, and that a little "trained brain work" may be allowed to the surgeon.

Finally, as the patient's life really does depend upon the surgeon, the fee must be in some proportion commensurate with the responsibility.—I am, etc.,

London, W., Nov. 10th.

JOSEPH CUNNING.

SIR,—I have long been of the late Sir Lauder Brunton's opinion that the fees paid to members of the different branches of our profession are reckoned on a most absurd manner and require drastic revision. It has frequently happened to me to give evidence in court in cases of probate. The expenses of such a trial are very heavy. There are court fees, counsels' retainers, solicitors' costs, expenses, not only of collecting the evidence, but also of bringing the witnesses, perhaps from Wales or Northumberland, to London, and maintaining them at hotels until the trial comes on and their evidence is given. These expenses may easily run into thousands of pounds, and have in fact reached four figures in cases in which I have been engaged. The whole of this expense would have been saved if the testator had been brought to me at the time of making the will, and had obtained or failed to obtain my signature as a witness. This measure has been adopted in several cases. I have examined a testator with respect to his disposing power, and determined the matter, a far more difficult task than that of determining whether he is mad or sane, for a man may be mad and yet have a disposing mind, and be competent to make a will. For this feat, one of the most difficult that can be proposed to a physician or anyone else, a feat which may save the estate of the testator thousands of pounds, I have received a fee of three, or perhaps of five guineas. The surgeon who scratches the back of a child's throat with his finger-nail receives thirty for the operation! The fees of surgeons are as excessive as the fees of physicians, the higher branch of the profession, are inadequate. The surgeon is a person employed by the physician to carry out his instructions, and it is anomalous that the servant should be remunerated on a higher scale than the master. In some cases the physician is his own surgeon, and instructs himself; and then he realizes how much more onerous, responsible, and difficult is the task of the former, and on how much higher a plane is the work of a physician than that of a surgeon. The surgeon is a mechanic who works to perhaps half an inch, in very special cases, perhaps, to an eighth of an inch, but never, except in eye surgery, to less than a sixteenth of an inch. The watchmaker works to a thousandth of an inch, but we do not give him a hundred guineas for an hour's work in repairing a watch.

I am old enough to remember the sensation produced in the profession when Sir Andrew Clark and Sir William Gull raised their fees from one guinea to two, and not only were the two guineas cheerfully paid to them, but what was at first an extraordinary exception soon became the rule. The remuneration for work ought, I suggest, to bear a relation to the gravity of the issue determined, the time occupied, and the skill required. In none of these is the work of the surgeon so superior to that of the physician or of the anaesthetist as to warrant the immense disproportion of their fees. I suggest that, as a beginning, physicians who have attained to the consulting staff of their hospital should fix the fee for a consultation at five guineas, and that for a consultation lasting an hour a physician should charge not less than ten. His fee would then be only the tithe of that of a surgeon for the same time, and his task may very likely be ten times as difficult, and require ten