

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

The fifth annual meeting of this association opened in Montreal, on Wednesday, the 11th September, in the Building of the Natural History Society. The attendance of members from the Province of Quebec, was fair, but the other Provinces of the Dominion were sparingly represented.

A letter was read from the President of the Association, (Dr. Sewell, of Quebec,) stating that up to the last moment he was in hopes of getting away, but that the critical condition of one of his patients made it impossible for him to leave.

Dr. C. C. Hamilton, Vice-President for Nova Scotia, was called upon to preside, and Dr. McNab, from New-Hampshire, was requested to take a seat upon the platform.

Dr. David, drew attention to the fact that at the last meeting, a resolution had been passed rendering the proposer and seconder of any new member, liable for the subscription.

Dr. Marsden, of Quebec, then read the following address of the President :

GENTLEMEN,—The next thing in the order of proceedings is the address of the President. Last year Dr. Parker extended his observations over such a very large field, embracing almost every possible subject, that I really find but little left to comment upon or suggest. There are, however, one or two points upon which I would like to touch briefly. It is to be regretted that little or no progress was made last session with the Medical Bill. It will be again submitted to-day for your consideration, and in its discussion it is very much to be desired that all sectional or private interests may be laid aside. The question is not this Province or that, this school or the other. We are here to discuss and adopt such a "Bill" as will conduce most to public good and the elevation of our own profession. Let me, therefore, bespeak from the members of this Association that reciprocal kindness of feeling, which will tend greatly to the peace and harmony of the meeting, while it will expedite the business in which we are all so interested. Medical education is, without doubt, the most important subject that can occupy the attention of a body like this. No argument of mine is necessary to show that this must be the foundation of the professional character in every country. I trust, therefore, that the Bill now to be considered and which has for its object the advancement of medical education in this country, will be sufficiently advanced at this session that it may be laid before Parliament at its next meeting. On looking over the curriculum to be enjoined on medical students I am struck with the small amount of time given to clinical instruction. Although two courses of three months upon clinical medicine and clinical surgery are all that is required at most of the recognized schools, still a moment's reflection will satisfy any one that this is far to little. Clinical instruction, as

now conducted, is made subordinate, and, as it were, a secondary branch, instead of being put forward as one of the most important and most indispensable subjects of professional instruction.

The importance of demonstrations in lectures, upon all subjects, medical or otherwise, requires no proof, and surely no demonstration can be so effectual, to the medical student as the illustration of the remarks of the professor, by an exhibition of the patient in all the different phases of the disorder. Again, not only should the number of clinical lectures in the different schools be increased, but greater facilities should be afforded to the student to prosecute his studies at the bed-side. For this purpose the Hospital Fees should be much reduced, or, if possible, entirely abolished. With regard to this matter I am happy to say that in Quebec we have taken a step in the right direction. Our hospitals are almost free, while the number of clinical lectures on medicine and surgery, apart from those given on diseases of the eye, amount to 360 per annum—240 only are required by law. I believe the student cannot too soon commence his attendance at the hospital, and although his medical education may not be sufficiently advanced to enable him to profit by this attendance, to its fullest extent, still if he is observant, he will pick up much which will be invaluable to him hereafter, and he will learn much which will render the lectures he will receive later on in the College far more intelligible, and therefore far more profitable than they would otherwise be. To the same effect is the language of the great Trousseau. Addressing his class he says: "Clinical instruction should not be deferred till near the end of the student's curriculum. From the day on which a young man determines to be a physician, he ought to attend the hospital. It is essential to *see—to be always seeing*—sick persons. The heterogeneous materials, though amassed without order, are nevertheless excellent materials. They may be for the present useless, but at a later time he will find them stored in the treasure house of his memory." And they will become of incalculable service to him. Let me here throw out a hint which, if acted upon, might be of advantage to our students in all the different schools. I allude to the situation of house surgeon in our various hospitals. Hitherto, I am of opinion, these officers have retained their appointments too long, to the exclusion of others from those advantages, which they themselves (it is to be presumed) no longer require. In each hospital I would like to see a house surgeon and an assistant house surgeon. The former should be a licensed practitioner, the latter a student in his fourth year, who, if found qualified, should succeed his chief the following year on being received. By this arrangement each house surgeon would spend two years in the hospital, a rotation system would be established, a stimulus would be given to the students, and a larger number of them would benefit by the advantages thus afforded. I do not hold positively to the periods here laid down, but I believe the hint here thrown out might be acted upon, or modified, to the great advantage of our students. Again, in the interest of the students, there is yet