

To the Medical Public.

The two communications to the *Montreal Gazette* now published were sent to that paper and returned on the ground of "pressure on its columns." The one to the *News* was refused insertion because "it could do no good." Subsequently the whole press were sent to the *Toronto Lancet*, and returned by the Editor, with the accompanying note:—"I regret to say that the pressure on the space in the *Lancet* is so great that I cannot find room for your letters." As these letters are more calculated to do good to the profession than any matter by which they have been "pressed" from the columns of the papers to which they were sent for publication, they are now given publicity, for the benefit of the profession. They are intended, the intelligent portion of the profession will observe, to check the illegitimate and quackish means, so common now-a-days, by which practitioners attempt to bring themselves into public notice.

CANADA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

(To the Editor of the Montreal Gazette.)

Sir, Your issue of the 26th contains the "Annual Address" of the President of the Medical Association. The fifth of the seven columns occupied by said windy compound of blue ink and stealings from addresses of other professors to lay before the Association the President's notions on Medical Literature and Expert Testimony. Under these headings, he relates a case which he says occurred in his neighborhood, in which "the unfortunate surgeon in attendance, a well educated experienced man, paid three hundred dollars and costs to stop a prosecution against him, because old practitioners were willing to swear that a case of second stage of hip disease was a thyroid dislocation." As, sir, I am one of the "old practitioners" who was "willing to swear" that said case was one of "thyroid dislocation," and Michael O'Sullivan, M.D., President of the Canada Medical Association, was the person "willing to swear" that the case was "a second stage of hip joint disease," I charge the said Michael O'Sullivan, M.D., with having impudently stated to the Association what he knew to be untrue. In making this charge, sir, I am supported by the "unfortunate surgeon and experienced man" himself, Herbert James Saunders, a "graduate" of 1859 of the private School of Medicine in Kingston, ludicrously termed a "Royal College," and indignantly termed a "Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons," who was compelled to admit, under oath at the Fall Assizes of 1883, Thomas Horace McGuire, Esq., Q.C., being the counsel examining for plaintiff, that both he and Doctor K. N. Fenwick, a graduate of 1874 of the same "Royal College," had diagnosed and treated the case as one of dislocation. I am further supported by the fact, most important it will be admitted, that the "unfortunate" patient, Laura Miller, living on William street, Kingston, may now be seen more than two years after her falling out of bed and her right leg being caught by the bed clothes, a cripple for life, walking by aid of a crutch, with the head of the femur not in the acetabulum, but in the thyroid foramen, and the right leg an inch longer than the left.

Having been taught Anatomy by Knox Ferguson and McFarlane, his Demonstrator, teaching Operative Surgery and by Murray, with George as his Demonstrator, having had my lessons in Surgery impressed upon me by Russell Ballingall, Liston, and Syme, having taught Anatomy and Physiology in the University of Queen's College during the whole time it had a Medical Faculty; and having practised Surgery for fifty years; it may possibly be presumed, by the Canada Medical Association, that I know a little more of joints and the diseases than those into whose dense crania I have labored to hammer the amount of anatomical and physiological knowledge I considered it necessary they should possess before being entrusted with the lives of their fellow creatures.

Yours truly,
JOHN STEWART
Kingston, 25th August

* It may be explained that Michael's name Daniel O'Sullivan, written at my table, and that this caused him to send his son to me, to be converted into an M.D. In an unremembered book of 1856 his name is written O'Sullivan. In subsequent publications, however, the "O" is dropped. This led me to write his name, in his degree, without the patronimal "O."

ABDOMINAL SURGERY.

(To the Editor of the Montreal Gazette.)

Sir, The *Gazette* of the 27th has an Address on Abdominal Surgery, delivered before the Canada Medical Association by Mr Lawson Lamb. In that address Mr Lamb says:—"In 1863 I heard my master, the Professor of Surgery in the University of Edinburgh, settle this vast field of human progress in the few words 'Abdominal Surgery is abominable surgery.' Lynn, the greatest surgeon by far with whom I have ever come in contact, shared his colleague's views, and in both, these views originated far less in the merits of abdominal surgery than in their mutual dislike (almost the only sentiment they had in common) of John Lizar." I take it, sir, that Lynn is printed for Syme, and that Lizar is printed for Lazars. Permit me then to say that Mr Lamb has caused to be published an unqualified statement against "the greatest surgeon by far with whom he has ever come in contact."

In 1861, when Mr Lamb informs us he was studying at Edinburgh, I visited Europe, and I was in Edinburgh a great part of the winter, meeting almost daily my old teacher Syme, and conversing with him on surgical subjects. Amongst them was Ovariotomy, to the literature of which I had no considerable attention. I was invited by Syme to meet at dinner another of his pupils, his House Surgeon, Thomas Keith, who was then distinguishing himself by his success in Ovariotomy, and was subsequently driven around Edinburgh by Keith, to examine patients that he had operated on, patients on whom he intended to operate, and to be present at his operations during my stay in Edinburgh. To say then that Syme denounces Abdominal Surgery, because he had a personal dislike to Lazars, is to cast imputation on the memory of "the greatest surgeon by far with whom Mr Lamb ever came in contact." When and where, sir, did Mr Lamb ever come in contact with Syme, to qualify him, to be a judge either of Syme's ability as a surgeon, or of his personal dislike to Lazars?

Another of my surgical teachers, sir the world renowned Liston, whose brilliant operations I witnessed during the years 1829, 30, 31, 32, 33, at Edinburgh, used to denounce the abdominal surgeons of his day as "bloody belly rippers; the unsuccessful belly rippers of the followers of the heroic Koutoukian," justifying Liston in doing so. And, were that great surgeon in Canada today, he would find ample ground for the same denunciation; for he would have to go no further West than Kingston to see "heroic" Canadians cutting for ovarian tumors when no tumor existed, and causing death by rupturing the artery of the leg, or when a tumor did exist, cutting into its cyst, and tumbling for its pedicle until death finished the operation.

Mr Lamb attributes the smallness of the death-rate of which he boasts, to the employment of good nurses, and the abandoning of Lister's details. What need for nurses, sir, what signify details, if patients are carried from the operating table lifeless? Or if the operator mistakes the urinary bladder for the ovary? Or cuts into the ovarian cyst and tumbles for its pedicle till the patient is dead? Sir, in 1864, on my return from Europe, and when Mr Lamb was a student at Edinburgh, I, in the performance of my duty as a Coroner of the County of Frontenac, and a Governor of the Kingston Hospital, addressed a letter to

the Governors, which was published at the time, in relation to a case of "Abominable Surgery," in which I was called upon to hold an inquest. That letter concluded as follows:—"I have been told by John Blair, the brother of the woman, that his sister was induced to undergo the operation, by Dr. Yates telling her that four of every five patients operated on, for her disease, recovered. With some knowledge of Ovariotomy, and a full appreciation of the surgical qualifications of Dr. Yates, it is my bounden duty to inform you, that, in my opinion, the proportion of deaths, in his hands, is almost sure to be twice out of every three operated on. In conclusion, then, let me venture to hope that, guided by an enlightened philanthropy, you, as Governors, will endeavor to have the facts of this letter made public; so that, holding them up as lights, in the path of humanity, they may so shine, that the ignorance and recklessness they expose shall be neither repented nor imitated."

Such, sir, would in my opinion be the best way of decreasing the mortality from "Abominable Surgery;" exposing the failures and their causes, instead of vainly boasting of success.

Yours truly,
JOHN STEWART.

Kingston, 30th August, 1884.

EXPERTS.

(To the Editor of the Kingston News.)

Sir, In the *News* of the 5th we read:—"Dr. Sullivan will leave in a few days for Woodbridge to give expert evidence in a case of alleged malpractice." Permit me, then, to inform your readers who are interested in the doings of the "Experts" of Kingston, that, from information supplied by Dr Sullivan, Dr Thomas R Dupuis "will leave in a few days" for Gananoque "to give expert evidence in a case of alleged malpractice," that Dr Sullivan will be "employed" by the defendant, and Dr Dupuis by the plaintiff; and that, thus, Dr Dupuis "credits," "witty," "and humorous" President of the Medical Association, will be "willing to swear" one thing and Dr Dupuis another thing. So the President himself states in his "Address." Curiously enough, sir, both "Experts" are M.D.'s made by Dr Stewart, when Queen's College had a Medical Faculty; Dr Sullivan having been seen to be an M.D. in 1858, thus obtaining his licence to practise Physic, Surgery, and Midwifery; and Dr Dupuis in 1860.

It will be interesting, sir, to watch two of Dr Stewart's M.D.'s giving evidence, one for plaintiff, the other for defendant, and great anxiety will no doubt be felt as to their respective claims to be considered experts. Dr Sullivan is Dr Dupuis senior by two years. It may be stated however, to balance this, that Dr Dupuis attended the Military Hospital at Washington during the summer of 1864, as well as a summer course at the Medical School of Harvard University in 1870, and that he subsequently passed an examination before the College of Surgeons, England, to receive the Diploma of that College; whilst Dr Sullivan has never ventured out of this small Limestone City to supplement the knowledge of the Science and Art of Surgery he acquired in it.

Yours truly,
SAWRONES
Kingston, 8th September