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Of all the public charities of the civilized world there are probably none in which, in proportion to the number of operations performed, more cases of bad surgery are so constantly occurring as in what is termed the General Hospital in this city; and we may safely add, no place on the globe where these blunders would be so long and so patiently tolerated without murmuring, as they are in Montreal. And whilst we perfectly agree with every good citizen that this institution, on the whole, is a great blessing to the community, and that its affairs are admirably conducted by its governors and its committees of management, we must reluctantly add—in all but one thing—the appointment and control of its attending physicians and surgeons.

We will not give our opinion concerning the practice of medicine within its walls, not that we have not noticed many errors, but that it would be useless to state cases where our diagnosis could possibly be called into question: in surgery, however it is different, for carelessness in it is too palpable to be denied; we will therefore enumerate some of these.

First then is the loss of life from blundering cases of lithotomy: in one, the artery of the bulb was divided, and the patient allowed to die from hæmorrhage; in another, the bladder was entered through the trigone, the prostate remaining untouched, and death took place from infiltration of urine; in a third, after a long and unsuccessful attempt to reach the staff, the unskilful surgeon most wisely repented, and handed the knife into abler hands to complete the section. We were present at the second mentioned, and at the autopsy. We have also witnessed lately some very bad operations for cataract. In one, the iris was cut into with the knife, and the eye hopelessly ruined; in another, the vitreous humour was allowed to escape with the lens, and the patient rendered blind for life. We have been present too when the whole eye has been abstracted unnecessarily, as we thought, and without benefit to the patient. We have witnessed a case of fracture of the femur which was allowed to ossify with much shortening, and which was refractured by an elder practitioner to save the credit of the hospital, but unfortunately this excellent man has not always been at hand to shield its doings, for two of its cases have lately been rectified at the Hotel-Dieu: one, a fractured tibia was straightened that had been permitted to grow together in an angular position; the other, the case reported on page 29 of this periodical, was a fractured arm which had been allowed to go out with a piece of dead bone pressing upon the blood-vessels and nerves of the part, to the great discomfort of the patient and discredit of this charity. Not long since, in an operation for the removal of a tumour from Scarpa's triangle, the femoral vein and other important vessels were divided, and the patient bled to death from the carelessness.

Two deaths have occurred from chloroform one from the want of a stimulant before its administration, and although we do not know the cause of the other, for we were not present, we have ascertained that, as with the first, electricity has not been available for resuscitation until too late to be of any service. The spine case which bade so fair for an excellent ossification was allowed to become displaced, and the poor man thereby robbed of his only chance of recovery.

It will be noticed that we have been eye-witness of many of these misfortunes, although by no means, a constant attendant on the hospital. We cannot answer for how many similar ones have occurred in our absence, and we are afraid that these surgeons will not enlighten us in this matter. It is but a week or two since we were informed of a case of death from ovariectomy; we do not know but that the operation was well performed, but we have been refused the notes of the case on the plea that the surgeon did not desire to have it noted.

But who are these men who thus hold appointments for which they are so incompetent? With shame we confess that they are professors and clinical teachers in McGill College, or aspirants to its honours. We therefore call upon the leaders of this institution for some new rule by which to remove these blights upon its fame, or at least to adopt some energetic course to prevent such men from ever again disgracing it by like operations. Justice demands the appeal, although past experience has shown that it will be useless.

But we have other means of checking this sacrifice of human life,—these outrages on our poor. This hospital is a public institution, receiving annual grants from government, and liberal contributions from our citizens, nay more, is itself a free and noble gift to us from men whose names can never be forgotten. We have therefore a right to insist that our sick poor whom we send to it for protection and care should have the best of medical attendance. As the guardians then of these and of the public welfare, it behooves us to enquire into the causes of such accidents, and the best mode of preventing them for the future.

Let the governors remedy, then, the first and greatest error—of placing this hospital so completely, even to the very secretaryship, into the hands of medical men so closely bound together by one common interest and so incapable of managing even their own affairs—by listening no longer to their recommendations for the nomination of young physicians in preference to older and more experienced ones, whilst so many of the latter are both ready and willing to accept these appointments, and to give their truly valuable services gratuitously to the poor. And let those selected be independent men, who by their presence may act as a kind of check on the careless professors.

Let the secretaryship also be confided to some good honest citizen, who will not be interested in hiding errors of this kind, but who will afford every facility for free investigation into its affairs. We have ourselves experienced much difficulty in acquiring information on account of the secretary being a medical man, and connected with McGill University.

Let us employ no half-way measures in this matter, for, from long indulgence, these professors consider that they have a right to control our hospital, forgetful that they are but as invited guests, and