

Editorials.

CLINICAL VS. DIDACTIC TEACHING.

The methods of teaching in our medical colleges have been much improved in recent years. It is generally recognized that modern methods are more satisfactory than those that formerly prevailed. There is probably one exception to this general statement. We have nothing now similar to the old apprentice system, and that is, in some respects, unfortunate.

One of the questions which repeatedly comes up is now being discussed in the medical journals of the United States, *i.e.*, the question as to the relative merits of didactic and clinical teaching. From an article in *Medicine* (Dr. Moyer's medical journal) we learn that the editor of the *Philadelphia Medical Journal* has expressed the view that didactic teaching is quite useless, while Hirst and Hare on the other hand hold a contrary opinion.

In Canada the leading teachers of medicine are generally agreed that in former times we had too much didactic and too little clinical teaching, but we don't know that many, if any, will go so far as to say that didactic teaching should be abolished. A great deal depends on the character of the teachers. As a matter of fact some of the most learned physicians are poor teachers. A didactic lecture from one of the latter is generally absolutely useless for the average student, while a clinical lecture is often but little better.

Often, as pointed out by many, the so-called clinical lecture is little other than a didactic with a patient to look at. The best sort of teaching is probably that which is known as bedside teaching to small classes, and yet a didactic lecture may be delivered even at the bedside.

In the article referred to we find the following sentences (which we fully endorse) as to the qualities of successful teachers: "The true teacher is born, not made; he must possess that indefinable quality which enables him successfully to impart knowledge to others. If he have this, and with it enthusiasm, learning and knowledge, then he will instinctively choose the most appropriate means of imparting knowledge to his pupils."