THE CANADA LANCET.

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☞ *Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice. Address,* DR. J. L. DAVISON, 12 Charles St., Toronto.

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MEDICAL EDUCATION.

"Nature is a cruel and relentless vivisector." She carries on her experiments in the face of laws and fanatics. In her experiments upon man she teaches him lessons in physiology, which if he would but apply, would save months and years of patient labor and yield more correct and trustworthy results. Could anyone acquainted with the study of pathology, for an instant deny its value as teaching and demonstrating the truth of certain physiological theories and the falsity of others. A considerable amount of knowledge is of course necessary to apply the revelations of pathology, and these fundamental points are to be learned by every student before he can fully comprehend what is before him. Our knowledge of the development, growth, and action of healthy cell life has been largely derived from a careful study of cells invaded by disease, so that in a series of cases we can with comparative certainty determine the function, the relation and the importance of the different parts of a cell. Morbid changes associated with certain functional derangements have taught the physician the functions of organs which he otherwise never could have approached.

Nature, through disease, has given to the therapeutist, suggestions which have proven of lasting benefit to man. The compiled statistics of the careful clinical operator have taught lessons in tissue metabolism more valuable and reliable than the chemist and his laboratory equipments could have hoped to achieve in centuries of labor. It is sometimes required to assert for medicine a distinctness and an identity of her own. Every scientist is not a physician, although some may contend that if one has a thorough scientific training in the so called "natural sciences," he can have little more to learn to become a physician, and this view gains support in the fact that some of the branches, essential in the medical course, are taught by those who have no knowledge whatever of the application of these subjects to man. What could any intelligent physician think of a professor in physiology lecturing to a class of medical students upon the action of the human heart, upon its sounds, and the action of its valves, who himself had never listened to its beat, and perhaps had never seen that organ, the intricacy of whose mechanism he was attempting to explain. True enough something has been learned of the nervous mechanism of the heart's beat from experiments with the vagi of the frog, but there are other things equally important, and to the medical student far more important, as qualifying him for clinical instruction. In these days of so-called "practical scientists," we have volumes written upon the embryology of the chick, and these treatises are recommended as reliable text books for the medical student. We do not deny the high scientific character of these works, nor the high position their authors occupy as authorities upon this special study, but these are not works to be relied upon to furnish a clear exposition of the physiology of gestation as applied to man, any more than is the scientist to teach to medical students that same process who, himself, has never seen a human fœtus much less an impregnated or gravid human uterus. As the ovisac of the hen cannot be allowed to replace the uterus of the higher biped, any more than the pure scientist can be allowed (ignoring the immense aggregation of medical knowledge and in total ignorance of either clinical or pathological demands) to supply to medicine a comparative science, where one applied to man, learned of, and read in him, is demanded.

If we regard the nervous system of man we recognize in its arrangements a most special claim to marked distinction. It could not be that the functions of the nervous system of man could ever be understood until a very thorough and careful