

religious opinion. This state of things is surely to be deplored, as the evident result of clannishness and bigotry. And yet, notwithstanding the obstacles which are thus presented to the carrying out of the project, we have no doubt that means could be devised for overcoming them. What is required is that sufficient interest should be aroused in the matter, and someone found in Parliament willing to fight the battle there. In the Old Country the Universities are represented, and send some of the ablest men to the House of Commons. Why the system does not prevail in the United States we do not know, but we suppose that the same obstacles from the same cause exist there as in our own country. Should we ever have the good fortune of sending a representative to Parliament, we feel sure that we shall have no difficulty in finding a man capable in every respect of filling the position.

*The Star* has written upon the recent fracas between our medicals and the Police Court officials. Whether the reporter drew on his imagination or that of the French officials for his facts, must always remain with us a deep and unfathomable mystery. At any rate, all who were present admit they were highly instructed by the report.

Subjects in abundance could be obtained by legal means, says the editor. Our Demonstrator would be delighted to have that well-posted individual call and show him the ropes he professes to know so well. We have not half our complement of material for dissecting yet, and the session is three-fourths passed.

The fact is, while we do not think that rescuing fellow-creatures from the grave is a commendable act on the part of a medical student, we do assert that to the present state of the Anatomy laws in our Province is largely due the dimensions to which the practice of body snatching has of late years reached.

It is a well-known fact that unclaimed bodies in our inebriate, pauper, and idiot asylums, in numbers sufficient to supply the dissecting rooms of Montreal, are never given up by the officials of these Public Institutions. We have not space to reply in detail to the attack, unjust though it was, made on medical students as a class, but for the benefit of those who have not heard an impartial history of the affair, we print in another column a very fair account. Sweet are the uses of adversity, and this affair, although unpleasant for the time being, clearly proved by the number of med.'s who turned out that among them there is no lack of "*esprit de corps*".

In another part of the GAZETTE will be found a communication on the subject of written examinations. The writer's logic is defective, and he regards the question, or rather questions at issue, from a confined point of view. He condemns written examinations as unsatisfactory and proposes a remedy to prevent the evils he deplures. In oral tests he finds a boon to the mentally infirm and a device which shall do away with cramming, idleness and the temptation to use unfair instruments at the critical moment of trial. To speak with authority on the relative merits of written and *viva voce* examinations requires time, manifold experience, and sound criticism on the part of the judge, but this much may be said—that the intellectually weak class of students who, in the opinion of the correspondent, feel aggrieved at the result of certain educational work, is precisely the class which would inevitably suffer from an unwritten ordeal. A man who from carelessness allows himself to appear, on paper, in a worse light than he would do, were he reasonably careful—and he is not "right" but distinctly wrong in supposing that an examiner can disregard carelessness—will naturally shrink from an oral examination, since his fault bids fair to be clearly exposed there, and unless the examiner be endowed with a remarkable share of good temper, leniency and sympathy, and have ample leisure to boot, will find his carelessness telling rapidly and irremediably against him. The man who is slow will fare no better, since he will discover the "door of memory" bolted, by nervousness, more securely than ever. A person uniformly careless and with memory not moderately tenacious, mistakes his vocation when he enters a University. Care and mental retentiveness are qualities essential to a true student, just as skill of hand and of eye are essential to a true artificer, and an examiner not only expects these, but is morally bound to discover if they exist. Again, some examinations ought

to be tests of reasoning power, others mainly of memory, since some subjects of study appeal to reason more emphatically and persistently than to mere statements of fact. *Quis custodiet custodes*, the writer virtually asks—a difficult problem to solve, but it may reasonably be granted that an examiner knows his subject better than his pupil, and that a shorter or longer experience has brought to the questioner some skill in framing sets of questions. Details which seem trivial are often asked with as much justice as those which seem all important, but with a sound examiner they are reckoned at their true worth. The suggestion in regard to the method by which a batch of answers should be estimated is not novel, and is acted on every day. "The workers are those who take the highest places in the examinations." Precisely: they have, as a body, always done so and so will continue to do. The examiner never has any difficulty in ascertaining his best men; they are known by their fruits. The men who are justly styled "half-workers" and "crammers," cause him the perplexity he often suffers. People who are careless, whose memories are bad, who read by fits and starts, and who rely on super-heated mental processes, had better be content with written examinations, in which they are, in so far as they can be, placed at their ease, are allowed some time for marshalling their scattered thoughts in respectable order and for revising their work. "Cramming" stands, we fear, as an eternal verity, and for examinations of wide and varied scope, hasty final revision seems necessary, but if this is superadded to a fair knowledge of the groundwork of the subject, the examiner knows how to deal with it if it becomes apparent. "Cramming" pure and simple, is another thing. A candidate who was being examined in Trigonometry at one of the Cambridge "locals" in England, wrote De Moivre's theorem neatly and correctly, but from his treatment of the remaining questions, showed absolute ignorance of the meaning of the Trigonometrical ratios of an angle. His destiny was evident. Oral Examinations have their merits: if severe, they are quick and decisive. None but men who have ready mental parts, together with self-confidence, and who have read equally and steadily, look forward to them with equanimity. They have their drawbacks, too. They cannot easily be made universal and must, if searching, be disastrous to the mentally infirm; moreover, in them the peculiarities of an examiner who is at the same time a specialist are liable to have sway, since he cannot readily take a just yet comprehensive view of the field of work. This he may possibly take when he composes, at his leisure, questions that are made generally public and lie open to criticism. Examinations are deemed evils, but still they are necessary. They do, as at present constituted fulfil, in the main, the ends they are intended to serve. As to the complaints of the students who think they have been unjustly dealt with—these likewise are inevitable. In some cases we may imagine them not causeless, but the man who stands second in any competition, mental or physical, can always give excellent reasons why he should have been first.

#### NOTICE.

The MCGILL UNIVERSITY GAZETTE offers a prize of ten dollars to the writer of the best story, whether in prose or verse—the length not to exceed three pages of the journal—contributed to the March issue. The competitors must be Graduates or Undergraduates of McGill College, and each is requested to place a motto on his contribution, and the same motto on the outside of a sealed envelope containing the same. The contributions must be sent in not later than February 15th.

#### Contributions.

(We are not responsible for any opinions expressed in this column.—ED.)

The Scientific Canadian takes a new name unto itself with the beginning of the new year—The Canadian Magazine of Science and the Industrial Arts. The services of Prof. Bovey, of McGill College, have been secured editorially, and the inaugural number is one of decided promise. It opens with a short article, by Prof. Murray, on Technical Education, which is both philosophical and practical. Prof. Murray maintains, as against Mr. Ruskin and those swayed by sentiment rather than by fact, that the introduction of complicated machinery does not tend to lessen skilled manual labour, but on the contrary, heightens it. The other articles are of a purely