

THE CANADIAN MEDICAL TIMES.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF
MEDICAL SCIENCE, NEWS, AND POLITICS

KINGSTON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1873.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications and reports solicited. Correspondents must accompany letters, if intended to be printed anonymously, with their proper signature, as a guarantee of good faith.

TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

THE MEDICAL TIMES is supplied six months for ONE DOLLAR. Address orders and remittances to JAMES NEISH, M.D., Kingston.

POSTAGE ON THE MEDICAL TIMES.—The rate of postage on the Medical Times is Five Cents per quarter.

REMITTANCES.

Gentlemen who have not sent on their subscriptions for the MEDICAL TIMES are requested to remit One Dollar for the current six months without further delay. The system of advance payments must necessarily be adhered to.

We have persistently urged upon the profession in Canada the advisability of forming Medical Associations, as much with a view to the beneficial interchange of thought and experience among the members as with a view to the very practical intention of advancing the interests of the practising physician and surgeon by securing better remuneration through the means of a regulated tariff of minimum fees. Such associations are obviously calculated to promote harmony and extinguish rivalries in the profession. They should be the means of elevating the status of the medical profession in this country to a higher level—more to a status like that which prevails in Great Britain, and which we in this country are confessedly far below as regards ethics, etiquette, and even remuneration.

We have specially urged the formation of these associations in cities, towns, counties, and even in townships, because under the new Medical Bill which has been prepared for submission to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in the coming session, it is intended to give a legal position to such societies, and it is particularly contemplated to give a legal effect to the tariff of fees prepared by the branch associations, making them a scale of "reasonable charges," requiring only to be "put in" in a court of law, and so dispensing with medical testimony hitherto necessary in proving such a fact. That this must needs facilitate the collection of medical accounts is apparent; it must also cause members to adhere with more strictness to the tariff than could otherwise be expected; and, further, when the public become acquainted with the power so placed in the hands of the doctors they will be less disposed to practise those impositions under which medical men have long suffered. It therefore becomes an important object to carry out to the full extent the details of the scheme contemplated in this respect by the framers of the Medical Bill.

Those of our readers who are disposed to take this matter up and do their part towards promoting unity, harmony, the proper observance of ethical laws, and the collection of a fitting scale of fees, will peruse with interest the copy of a letter written in London and published in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, describing the origin, rise and progress of the British Medi-

cal Association—in which article it is shown how much the Association has done for the country practitioner in Great Britain, and how this elevation has been brought about. The letter also contains practical suggestions for the formation and working of similar societies, say in Canada and the United States,—suggestions which are exceedingly valuable in view of the task which the profession in Ontario have now before them.

We have pleasure in reprinting and directing special attention to this article as appropriate to the matter in hand by all those who are about to form branch medical associations under the new bill. The propriety of imparting some of the features of the British Association to the Medical Association of Ontario must also suggest itself to the reader, and the article should be fruitful of both thought and action in this province.

A MOVE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

At a meeting of the California Medical Society, the following resolution was introduced by Dr. Ira Oatman, of Sacramento:—

"Resolved, That it is the duty of, and we hereby recommend, to the Legislature of California to pass a law making it a misdemeanor of any person, for any purpose whatever, who is it not a gratitude of some institution of learning authorized by law to confer the degree of 'Doctor of Medicine,' who shall place before or after his or her name in any manuscript, label, wrapper, card, hand-bill, circular, newspaper, pamphlet, magazine, book, or any advertisement, the word 'Doctor', the abbreviation M.D. or Dr., or any other signifying directly or constructively that the person is a graduate of such an institution, or who shall authorize or sanction the same by others in his or her interests; and that any person found guilty of such misdemeanor shall be punished by a fine of not less than—dollars, or imprisonment for less than—years, or by both such fine and imprisonment."—*Western Lancet*.

A MEDICAL BLACK LIST.

An enterprising publisher in Philadelphia has provided the medical profession in that city with an *index expurgatorius*, the idea of which is very unique, and its object a very significant indication of the relations of the public and the Profession in that city and elsewhere. The publication, which is called the "Credit Guide," has just entered upon its second year of publication. It contains one hundred and four pages, and its purpose is to publish semi-annually the names of persons who employ physicians without rendering them any remuneration for their services, though able (and in many instances abundantly so) to do so, and thus to furnish the physician with such information for the transaction of his business as is furnished in another form to the merchants of the country.

Under no circumstances is it intended to publish the name of any person in indigent circumstances and who is consequently unable to pay.

Without doubt such a list would be a voluminous one, and must contain many revelations of meanness and avarice, but its object is impossible of attainment. To make it perfect it might con-

tain an appendix, in which would be found the names of medical men who are in the habit of attending any or every comer whether solvent or not, if only to keep them from consulting a rival practitioner. We are profoundly cognizant of the fact, that eighty per cent. of the recipients of so-called medical charity are entirely sympathy, and nearly as great a proportion of the money expended undeserving of on them as charity, is misappropriated. But how can it be otherwise, when medical men who will gladly work without remuneration in any or every case are legion?—*Medical Press and Circular*.

EARLY MEDICAL JOURNALISM—THE CAREER OF THE LANCET.

From the London Lancet.

With this week's issue (October 11,) the Lancet enters upon the fifty-first year of its existence—an existence that was for a period chilled by clouds and buffeted by storms, but that has long since emerged into the full sunshine of a scarcely chequered prosperity. The first number appeared on Sunday, the 5th of October, 1823, at a time when the appointments in the great hospitals were the actual property of cliques or families, or were at best confined to those who had paid large premiums as private pupils to their predecessors—when the experience and the teaching of hospitals were jealously kept from the knowledge of the profession—and when the majority of practitioners, having never experienced the benefits of publicity in matters relating to their calling, neither claimed it as a right nor welcomed it as a boon. The late Mr. Wakley, with the intuition of genius, saw something of the nature and extent of the opportunity that lay before him, and, with the pluck and pertinacity of a true Englishman, determined to seize and utilise it to the utmost. Although in advance of his time, he had the good fortune not to be too much so, and hence was spared the adverse fate by which, if his venture had been fifty years earlier still, it would in all probability have been overtaken. Even as it was, there seems no reason to doubt that many honest men, acting according to the undeveloped moral sense of the time, really regarded him as one bent upon despoiling them of their intellectual property, and thought they were protecting their own just rights when they endeavoured to confine to a party the gifts that belonged to mankind. We are wiser now; and it is difficult to read the history of the acrimony of those days, of the various and ingenious efforts that were made to exclude our reporters, and of the persistent hostility with which all who were openly favourable to the Lancet were pursued by the heads of the profession, without attributing to them a pettiness of spirit and a malignity of motive to which our happier age affords no parallel. To do so would, however, be utterly unjust; for all persons should be judged by the standard of their own actual lights and surroundings, not by those of some subsequent generation. The founder of this journal, if he were still with us, would be the first to set example of looking back upon past strife with no unkindly spirit towards the vanquished; and he would regard as his real adversaries, not the im-