

THE CANADIAN  
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TO CORRESPONDENTS.—*We shall be glad to receive from our friends everywhere, current medical news of general interest. Secretaries of County or Territorial medical associations will oblige by sending their addresses to the corresponding editor.*

TORONTO, JUNE, 1876.

COMPULSORY ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS.

That a student in medicine should not be compelled to pass annually an examination on the work prescribed for him during the winter course of lectures, when in law, arts, and divinity such examinations must be completed, is an anomaly that requires very strong reasons for its justification and continuance. When the question was before the Medical Council last year, considerable hesitation, nay, even opposition, was evinced by certain members, with regard to a reform that carries conviction on the face of it. And why was this? Simply because from the present position of our medical schools, sectional feeling caused a division of opinion upon a subject of whose utility, apart from all other considerations, no one who has studied the matter can venture to doubt. And when men are delegated from the schools to watch over the interests of those schools as well as of the profession at large, no one can find fault with them for doing their duty and looking closely after those interests with whose care they have been entrusted. We merely think it very unfortunate that the general good should be in danger of being subordinated to sectional interests. We hope, however, that it was shown at the Council last year, that these two interests need not necessarily clash, and we trust that the approaching meeting will confirm the act of last year. Surely, too, our universities must soon see the necessity and wisdom of annually testing the knowledge of medical students. When we find that for five years

past the University of Toronto, the pride of all her graduates, has been behind her sister University of Harvard in this educational reform, we must think that the Senate as formerly constituted was indifferent alike to the best interests of the University, her students and her graduates. Now that we have working men in the Senate Chamber, and especially when the medical graduates are so largely and so ably represented, further delay in the matter certainly cannot take place. At Harvard, a medical student is compelled to pass annually an examination in certain branches before he can pass on to the next year, and before he can obtain a degree. We should be sorry to see the details of the plan adopted by Harvard, substituted for the present curriculum at the University of Toronto; still theirs is a move in the right direction, which has been followed by good results. Granted that a certain number of students require no compulsion to cause them to make the best use of their time; it is well known that many others waste six months or a year in the commencement of their course, and during their second year endeavour to cram up what they consider will suffice to pass them through their primary examination, and in many cases a third session is wasted in a similar manner, to be followed again by the cramming process in their fourth year. That so large a number as sixteen out of thirty-one should be wholly or in part rejected at primary examination, shows clearly that the ambition and determination of many are not sufficient, without some compulsion, to enable them to qualify themselves for useful practitioners. In England, where they are slow to reform, Mr. John Marshall has lately brought the question of annual examination before the Council of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, and strongly urged its adoption. Mr. Marshall made the suggestion on account of the large number rejected at the primary examinations, and the unsatisfactory knowledge of many candidates who do pass. The scheme was kindly received, and referred to a committee for consideration.

Last year, at the University of Toronto, six candidates competed for the three scholarships in medicine. This year there were thirteen,