

Original Communications.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

INTERMEDIATE V. MEDICAL MATRICULATION.

DEAR SIR,—In a recent issue of the *Kingston Whig*, is an article under the above heading, to which I desire briefly to refer.

The writer refers to the fact, that certain students who had successfully passed what is known as the "Intermediate Examination" of the High Schools had failed in the Medical Council Matriculation examination as conducted by Mr. Wood of Kingston, and he would seem to have the public infer that this result was due in part to the fact that Mr. Wood's examinations were more thorough. I do not altogether concur in such an inference. Of Mr. Wood's competence as an examiner, there can be no two opinions. His standing as a literary man of the highest type is beyond controversy. Nor do I desire to offer the slightest objection to his method of conducting examinations, because I believe him to be, in every respect, equal to the responsibility, and entirely above suspicion, so far as fair and honourable dealing is concerned. But I do think that the intimation that Mr. Wood's method of conducting examinations is so far superior to that of others quite as competent as he, that—the above—mentioned failures have been the consequence—is not susceptible of proof. Any one at all conversant with examinations knows that a student only indifferently acquainted with the various subjects required for matriculation might happen, with one examiner, to get a set of questions with which he was sufficiently familiar to obtain the requisite number of marks to pass him, while with another, such questions might be put as to completely baffle him. This, I think it will be admitted, is an almost every-day occurrence for which no examiner can be held responsible. If a student reaches the requisite percentage in his examination neither Mr. Wood nor anyone else can refuse to pass him. But no one will deny that such a student may have but a very indifferent acquaintance with his subject; and that it would be quite possible to propound questions to him which, while perfectly legitimate and reasonable, might result in his complete

and absolute failure. It is not, therefore, doing justice to the other examiners for the Medical Council, nor to those conducting the Intermediate, to intimate that, because certain students who passed the Intermediate Examinations, failed under Mr. Wood, those who conducted the Intermediate failed to discharge their duty. Nor is it any evidence that the requirements of the Intermediate are any less searching or stringent than the Matriculation Examination demanded by the Council.

It may be fairly questioned whether the Council's interfering with the literary requirements of intending students further than demanding a *bona fide* certificate from any authorized University of their having successfully passed its Matriculation Examination, was a necessary arrangement. I am aware that such legislation was by some considered necessary during the early history of the Medical Council. But I fail to see that in order to avoid such irregularities as prompted this legislation, it was the only remedy. It will be remembered that before the incorporation of the Medical Council, grave irregularities were disclosed as to the manner in which students were permitted to pass their Matriculation Examinations before some of the schools. Moreover, at the time to which we refer, each University possessed the licensing power, and so had the entire control of the education of its medical students, not only as regarded their literary, but also their professional qualifications. Then it was quite possible, if the authorities of any University were lax enough in the control they exercised over the Medical School in affiliation with them, for the managers of such a school to admit students to their professional studies whose preliminary education was of the most indifferent character.

And thus students whose preparatory training was but trifling, and who had no ambition to acquire a higher standard of preliminary education, were attracted to the medical institution where the bugbear of Matriculation offered the least cause for embarrassment. But from the moment the Medical Council had an existence in its present shape, and the licensing power of the Universities was cancelled, any encouragement that may have been offered for such irreg-