

It may gratify you to learn that your crushing, though courteous reference to the "bee" in the writer's bonnet has so blunted and demoralized his implement of offence that, if you have not altogether stopped his unpleasant "hum," you have, at all events, reduced him to the condition of a mere *tinnitus aurium*, and made him, henceforth, as stingless and innocuous as a lazy "Blue-bottle." Let this letter testify to the wonderful transformation you have wrought. But for that, instead of filling my stylographic pen with the milk of human kindness, and expending myself in congratulations and respectful compliments, I would, in all probability, have charged it with caustic, or with the venom of scorpions, and would have become sarcastic or tried to say something severe. Unhappily the peculiarities of your position preclude you from claiming all the merit that is justly yours—compel you to share the glory of your finest exploits, not only with your several sleeping associate editors—the "four (nameless) new men put on"—but also with the august body, by the grace and bounty of which, you write and tumble and have your being.

Having thus paid my tribute of praise to the cleverness and good-taste of your recent editorial, I will now, with your permission, proceed to business. In my last letter, I promised to discuss, in your journal, the ethics of the professional tax—the grounds on which I and others refuse to recognize it as an honest debt, and the utter absurdity of the charge, made and reiterated by you and your associates, that in promoting the recent crusade against the Medical Council, we were actuated, merely, or mainly, by a sordid desire to save the money involved in the payment of the annual \$2 assessment. Before attempting to redeem this promise, allow me to say that, in view of the professional elections next spring, and the possibility of the conditional reinstatement of this tax by the elected members of the new Council, these, and kindred points comprehended in their consideration, are of vital interest to all, and their fair and intelligent discussion is a desideratum. The issues involved in our next elections are momentous and far reaching. If the verdict given by the electorate on these, is to possess the character of finality, it must be rendered fairly and intelligently. The pivotal point on which it

will turn, is the question whether the assessment and coercive clauses of the Medical Act shall be restored in a shape permissible by the law as it now stands, or in any shape at all. Now, that fees, if assessed at all, are to be strictly self-assessed, medical men will not be averse to contributing towards the expenses of the Medical Council, provided the whole amount required, beyond its ordinary and legitimate receipts, is assessed equally upon the profession and the educational bodies. But, if I am not greatly mistaken, they will object, with startling unanimity, to any renewal of a scheme which, of the two constituencies concerned, taxes one but allows the other—though the more directly and stringently protected and vitally interested—to go scot free. If there must be an assessment, an equitable adjustment of the burden between the profession and the schools will be imperatively demanded. From our point of view, less than this would be less than what is right and fair, and, if peace and harmony are to be restored to us, they must, this time, rest on rock-bottom justice—if a new pact is to be made between the educational bodies and the medical electorate, both parties, this time, must enter into it with their eyes open. Hence the necessity of ventilating the whole matter either in the public press or in the professional periodicals. You cannot, if you would, prevent the discussion. You may, however, if you are so inclined, retain it largely in your journal and measurably control it. Let me explain on what conditions.

The tone and purpose of your printed articles show the futility of proposing anything like honest and serious journalistic debate with you individually. Your personal, or rather your editorial, gifts and graces—though rare and admirable of their kind—are more calculated to startle than to convince your readers, and neither honor nor solid benefit can accrue from a controversy so essentially one-sided. But behind your editorial chair, the circumstances of the hour have grouped a legion of eager auxiliaries anxious to help. Among these are to be found many able and eminent men—masters of literary fence who, even while fiercely exchanging *carte* and *tierce*, can respect their opponents and thus give evidence that they respect themselves—men who can ride Pegasus with the curb on, who know and can keep within the re-