

Correspondence.

PROVINCIAL MEDICAL BOARDS.

To the Editors of THE MONTREAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

SIRS:—In the admirable introductory address delivered by my friend Dr. MacDonnell, and published in your last issue, I subscribe to everything except to his remarks on the subject of "Provincial Medical Boards." I had hoped that the day of antagonism to them was past, but I regret to see that the spirit of opposition is not yet dead, and still more that it should be evinced by one of the younger generation. I am bold to say that if in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec a higher standard of general medical education exists to-day, than on any other part of this Continent, it is because for forty years or more the medical boards have sought for uniformity in the qualification to practise—a uniformity which the public has a right to expect, but which it certainly cannot obtain from irresponsible medical schools. Unrestricted competition between the colleges without state supervision leads to the chaos which is seen on this side of the line; and that the same state does not exist in Canada, is not owing to any virtue on the part of the schools—far from it—but is due solely to the wisdom of the men who organized and have supported the medical boards. We must remember that it is a new thing for the university degree to carry with it the license to practise, and it has only crept in in the case of the Doctorate in Medicine. It is a function of the state to determine whether a man is fit to be entrusted with the lives and limbs of citizens; and to carry out this function through an organised profession, by its representatives, is a thoroughly Anglo-Saxon way, certainly preferable to the arbitrary Teutonic plan in which the *Staats-examen* is conducted by nominees of the Crown.

I freely concede the difficulty to which Dr. MacDonnell refers, in having to comply with regulations inconsistent with modern ideas of education; but we must have patience. The schools are not themselves quite ready for a thoroughly advanced system of teaching, though now with the compulsory four years and