

THE CANADA LANCET.

A Monthly Journal of Medical and Surgical Science
Criticism and News.

✉ Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice. Address, DR. J. L. DAVISON, 12 Charles St., Toronto.

✉ Advertisements inserted on the most liberal terms. All Letters and Remittances to be addressed to DR. C. SHEARD, 320 Jarvis St., Toronto.

AGENTS.—DAWSON BROS., Montreal; J. & A. McMILLAN, St. John, N.B.; GEO. STREET & Co., 30 Cornhill, London, Eng.; M. H. MAHER, 23 Rue Richer, Paris.

TORONTO, APRIL, 1889.

The LANCET has the largest circulation of any Medical Journal in Canada.

THE ANATOMY ACT.

All the Medical Colleges in Ontario, aided by the sympathy of the whole medical profession of the Province, were much interested in the passing of the recent amendments to the Anatomy Act. The Medical Council and our Medical Colleges, are very properly, most anxious, while extending from time to time the curriculum of medical studies, to give students every reasonable facility to bring themselves up to the high standard now required. Hence the necessity which exists for increasing the supply of anatomical material obtainable by law, without forcing students to get, *as best they can*, what they absolutely require, in order to pursue their studies to any advantage. The amendments sought for, embraced the unclaimed bodies of persons having no relatives, who have died in our insane asylums, hospitals, houses of industry and other refuges aided by public grants. To have granted this fully, and with readiness, would have been the very least our Ontario Legislature should have done in aid of a profession like ours, the members of which, have necessarily committed to them, the care at one time or another, of every man, woman and child of the population. But the experience of past efforts in the same direction was repeated this year. Some of the members of the Legislative Assembly, without distinction of party, did as they always have done,—set themselves steadfastly against meeting the reasonable

demands of the profession and the Medical Colleges, and left nothing undone which they could do, to make the amendments obtained as meagre and unsatisfactory as was in their power. For example, under the absurd idea that the minds of persons, who have been in many cases hopelessly insane and as mindless as oysters for a long term of years, might be affected unfavorably by the idea of their bodies being used for the advancement of science before being buried,—was made a reason for excluding asylums for the insane from the institutions included in the amendments sought for.

How such persons can ever be supposed to bother their heads about what is to befall their bodies after death, whether they are to rot in the grave as usual, or be first made tributary to science, has never been satisfactorily explained, and cannot be. It is true that some of the medical superintendents of asylums themselves have a fad of this kind, and bring it forward periodically, as often as the Medical Colleges ask for what they are justly entitled to in this direction; a fad, however, to which no attention should be paid.

It was also desired to have the bodies of those who had died in public institutions claimable only by *relations*; for heretofore, the permission given to "*bona fide* friends" to claim them, has been sadly abused—50 or 60 per cent. of these bodies being sometimes claimed by friends of a bogus kind, *e. g.*, by fellow-members of societies to which the deceased might have belonged, and often only by fellow-countrymen; or by any one indeed, even a hospital nurse, who could collect in small sums the necessary \$5 from any source.

On this account the words "*bona fide* friends" were left out by the framers of the amendments. This provoked vigorous opposition. All sorts of imaginary cases were spoken of by garrulous legislators as likely to occur, and finally they were re-inserted, and a provision added by way of guarding against "bogus" claimants, *viz.*, that the order of a police magistrate, who is to be satisfied that the party claiming the body is a "*bona fide* friend," will have to be procured, in addition to paying the \$5. This, of course, will, to some extent, decrease the evil which formerly existed and enlarge the supply available for Medical Colleges; but to have given the promoters of the amendments what they asked for, would have done no harm, as