

# THE MCGILL GAZETTE.

1st FEBRUARY, 1877.

Editors for 1876-77.

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SELDOM or never has it been the case, that Englishmen, in any branch of science, trade, or adventure, have been afraid to risk competition with rivals of other nationalities. So true is this that in many departments, the name British is regarded as a synonym for cosmopolitan, and the liberal principles which have governed and regulated the commerce of the mother land, have had their natural normal effect in making her the foremost commercial power of the world. If, in the domain of science Britain has not occupied the same relative standing, it is owing, not to lack of genius, not to a want of talented able men but rather to a spirit of conservatism, prompted by a feeling the direct opposite of that which has always guided her commercial enterprises. Though to a certain extent, this protectionist enactment—to apply a commercial phrase to science—might, when displayed in reference to foreigners and aliens, be justifiable; it becomes utterly, totally inexplicable when shown towards fellow-subjects in a different clime, who are though remote from the seat of Imperial Government, nevertheless British subjects, in every sense of the word. British medical men have always held the foremost rank of any in Europe. The profession as a whole is one which should be, and, we are rejoiced to say generally is liberal and generous in its ideas, and the standard though high has never excluded genius and merit when joined to the requisite practical training. It is simply a duty which medical men have to perform to their profession, and to the public, to exclude empirics, quacks, and incompetent men. This we say is a duty and it has hitherto been faithfully, scrupulously carried out with good results to all concerned. Petty jealousy or timid fear of competition has seldom shut the door on true worth; and though Britons look with comparative distrust on foreign physicians, colonial surgeons, especially Canadians, have been always treated as worthy of all confidence and respect. However, one morning last week the inhabitants of Canada, long in the habit of congratulating themselves upon the high standing, of their medical schools, and boastful of the fact that the degrees of one of our colleges—our own Alma Mater—were accepted and recognised by the British Army and Navy

were rudely awakened from their happy dreams by the report that the officers of the British Custom House, forsooth, had decided to clear no Canadian steamers, unless the surgeons on board are provided with British diplomas. This rather startling fact was announced in a letter from Sir Hugh Allan to Dr. Campbell, the honoured head of our medical faculty. Sir Hugh in this matter displays the same spirit which has characterized him in all his actions in Canada, that is, of not tacitly accepting the badge of inferiority simply because we are colonists; and for this as Canadians we sincerely thank him. And more particularly, for his testimony as to the comparative value of English and Canadian medical degrees, as McGill men we again thank him. As Sir Hugh says "for the last twenty years we have carried Canadian surgeons on board our steamers, as well as English ones, and the result of our experience is, that the Canadian surgeons are equal, both in professional acquirements and in gentlemanly bearing to those we receive from the colleges in England. Therefore I am not prepared to submit to this requirement, inasmuch as I think it great injustice to the institutions of this country as well as to the young men who study therein, in fact it is a slight upon the Dominion itself." Sir Hugh has written to the British Government on this subject, and this combined with the expression of public opinion in the press of the country, will, we have no doubt, procure from the Imperial Government speedy repeal of this iniquitous regulation which has been prompted, as we have said, by the most despicable professional jealousy and conceived in a spirit, different far from that true British spirit of fair play which it should be the aim of every true Briton to foster and encourage.

THE *Witness*, which considers our columns "readable and interesting under the present management," contained some remarks a few evenings ago, on the *Académie Commerciale* Bill, noticed in our last. It does not agree with us in its estimate of that institution; but calls attention to the fact, that the French Government will have something to say in the matter, as far, at least, as provisions for efficiency are concerned. We are glad to learn that such is the case, but think that it will take a pretty thorough reform to make the stuff required out of the material at hand. A good staff would certainly be the best of beginnings; but not the only one required, and we take the liberty of saying, that the average student, even be that average high, is in no way fitted to take degrees, after so short a term as the *Académie* proposes.

—Dr. Dawson is about to deliver a course of special lectures on the "Timber Trees of Canada," in connection with the regular botanical work.