

(To the Editor of the *British American Journal*.)

Sir,—I propose addressing you on a subject of importance because it relates to the future of the medical profession of this city; I allude to the qualifications at present deemed essential by the board to fit physicians for the responsible post of medical attendants at our General Hospital. In this city it has become a matter of notoriety that some of our brethren in their anxiety to be appointed on the medical staff of the Hospital have not hesitated to stoop submissively and cheerfully to the condition attached by authority to the post—that of becoming political partizans. I confess in shame and sorrow that some medical men have not scrupled to take advantage of this standard of qualification, instead of frowning it down as degrading to their body, and injurious to those institutions in which they have a particular interest. It used not to be the rule, but it has become so recently, that men are chosen to high offices of trust in the Hospital by any other test than that of ability. It was thus that the last two medical appointments (the announcement of which you have already doubtless seen) were made. I never was directly or indirectly an applicant for the post, but I know of two who were; who have almost grown gray in the honest pursuit of medicine; who are above soliciting as a favour from a Parliamentary candidate what they have every right to expect on the score of merit, and who were as a matter of course rejected. In their stead the board selected two, whose only recommendation was the certificate of the successful election candidates.

This is only one of the results of this system of Hospital management. I might mention several others, did your space or my time permit just now. What I have given you is an example of the spirit that pervades the whole of this misdirected institution. Instead of being liberal as the sun, it is filled with narrow prejudices. Its directors—two of whom are physicians—have not the discretion to leave their party politics behind them when they enter the hallowed precincts of an institution dedicated to the suffering of all politics, of all creeds and of every country. Its superior servants are chosen for their political bias, and most humiliating of all—the same test is now applied to the election of its medical officers.

It has been so long the habit in medical circles here to pass over the abuses inherent in our Hospital system in the hope that a more liberal spirit would in the end prevail, that, from commencing passive, many of us have at length become disheartened and disgusted. It is high time that attention should be drawn to it. The tendency is to set at nought the personal and professional qualifications which, in every other country, are recommendations to responsible posts. It is to deprive the Hospital of the services of well educated men who under any other system of management would apply. It is to undermine the respectability of our rising medical institutions and give the people an indirect power in their management which they know not how to turn to good account. It is to tempt the physician to shape his conduct after any other model than that presented in the character of the fathers of our profession, whose ambition it was to do their duty courageously and honestly, without regard to popular applause or censure, reward or neglect.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your obliged Servant,
Toronto, May 13th, 1862.

Spectator.