

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE MEDICAL EDUCATION OF
THE DAY WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RE-
ORGANIZATION OF THE PHYSIOLOGICAL
DEPARTMENT OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

BY

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As the suggestions I have to offer in regard to the reorganization of the Physiological Department rest on my present views as to Medical Education, I will ask your patient attention to these views expressed somewhat briefly. They might be summed up in two statements:

1. Our present methods of education or dealing with students are a great improvement in many respects on those in existence when even the youngest member of the Faculty was an undergraduate.

2. The methods we now employ, and those we omit to use, cause a condition of mind in students which is highly unsatisfactory. This probably applies more fully during the first three years of the course than during the last year or two.

The improvement in our methods consists in the following:

1. The greater opportunities students have to observe by demonstrations, etc.

2. The improvement from laboratory work, and clinical observations carried out by the students themselves.

3. The time was when students at McGill could boast that they had passed examinations in certain subjects—and not in one but several—without having opened a text-book.

That is scarcely possible now though some students come near to it, anatomy always being an exception. Students once did practically no reading except of the notes of lectures. Now they do some—at least a little—and a few students, a good deal.

A student is not now supplied with information in purely abstract form. His demonstrations and laboratory work help, at least to some extent, in the comprehension of what he hears and reads. We have made an advance and we are likely in a condition not either much worse or much better than, on the whole, other first-class Medical Schools; and though we might in some directions, imitate these institutions, I maintain that we are in a transition stage as regards medical education, and far from what might be, and should be, at the present time.

We give information in better form than ever before; but we ourselves supply too much and require the student to seek too little for himself; and this imparting of information, with even the best *exposition*, is not to any considerable extent educative.