

Communications.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCE.

HARVARD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

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It may be interesting to some of the readers of this JOURNAL, and instructive to those engaged in medical education in this country, to learn somewhat of the internal economy of what must be regarded as the most progressive medical institution on this continent.

A week spent in Boston in the spring of 1876, and another in April of the present year (when I had the company of my colleagues, Drs. Rose and Shepherd), have made the details of the work in several departments of the Harvard School of Medicine tolerably familiar, enabling me to speak, with some degree of accuracy, of the system there in vogue.

Up to 1871 the plan of education did not differ materially from that at other American schools—a winter session of four or five months, and an optional summer course; the requirements for a degree being no greater than at similar institutions.

At this date sweeping changes were made in the methods of teaching, the length of residence, and the examinations. I have been given to understand that, to a large extent, these measures were forced upon the Faculty by President Elliot in the face of a strong opposition, and, in the words of his report for '74-'75, "so rapidly were they enforced that not a few well-informed persons thought that the school would be killed outright." Instead, however, Harvard has since entered upon a career of educational prosperity which places her in a most enviable position among American schools, it being almost universally acknowledged that her degree, and her degree alone, carries with it the guarantee that the possessor has spent the proper time in the acquisition of medical knowledge, and that he has passed examinations which are thorough and searching.

Let us see in what the changes consist. Briefly, they are these:

1st. A greatly increased length of residence. The session begins on the Thursday following the last Wednesday in September, and con-

tinues until the last Wednesday in June, being divided into two terms with a vacation of a week between.

2nd. The course of instruction, extending over three years, "has been so arranged as to carry the student progressively and systematically from one subject to another in a just and natural order." The studies for the first year students are Anatomy, Physiology, and General Chemistry; for the second, Medical Chemistry, Materia Medica, and Pathological Anatomy, Clinical Medicine and Surgery; for the third, Medicine, Surgery, Clinics, Therapeutics, and Obstetrics.

3rd. Written examinations have been substituted for the oral, and students must pass in the subjects of one year before they can pursue those of the next. The above is an outline of the system of education now generally known as the *graded* system; one which is, no doubt, likely to be adopted by very many of the medical schools.

As was expected, a considerable reduction in the numbers attending Harvard followed the adoption of these measures; thus, while in '70-'71 there were 301 students, in '71-'72 there were only 203, in '72-'73 but 170, in the following session, 175, in '74-'75 the number rose to 192, in '75-'76 to 206, while there is an additional increase in the present session. The effect of the reduction in numbers upon the income was compensated for by the increase in the fees, which are now \$200 for a year; so that while with 301 students in '70-'71 the income was only \$22,717, in '74-'75, with 192 students, it was \$36,661; and the last session the income exceeded the expenditure by \$6,000.

The class of students has also much improved, owing to the increased standard demanded for graduation. In '70-'71 only 23 per cent. of those attending the school held literary or scientific degrees; in '75-'76 the number had risen to 42 per cent. An interesting fact since the new regulations were enforced is the striking reduction in the number of students from the British North American Provinces, chiefly Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; in '70-'71 ten per cent. were from the Dominion, but in '75-'76 only two per cent. Several Canadian students passed on to the New York schools,