

THE CANADA LANCET.

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Criticism and News.**

Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice.
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THE NEW BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY.

The handsome and excellently equipped buildings known as the Biological Laboratories of the University of Toronto, were opened on Friday, Dec. 20th, with a series of lectures given by Prof. Ramsay Wright of Toronto University, Profs. Osler and Welch of Baltimore, Prof. Minot of Harvard and Prof. Vaughan of the University of Michigan. With such a brilliant array of talent, it is needless to remark upon the success of the opening; it was such as to reflect credit upon any university and any country, and it must be admitted that in efficiency and advantages for biological study, these laboratories are second to none on this continent. This is a matter for sincere congratulation, among those interested in the higher education of our country to-day. The science, if it may be so called, of pharmacology, has been and is making great strides in all the centres of learning in Europe, and to a less degree in America. Now while we in Canada cannot hope to equal those countries which contain such centres of learning, in scientific attainments, any more than in their wealth, there being a more or less constant ratio between the two all over the world, we shall surely do well to emulate them, in placing advantages within the reach of those who possess the opportunity of following up the cognate branches of physical science.

This class of student is unfortunately all too

few in Canada. We are too young and too poor a country for the rank and file of students to be able to afford the time and money necessary to acquire an acquaintance with physical science as it is understood to-day by specialists in that science.

Certain it is that in every institution the elementary principles of a science must be taught and thoroughly learned, and when those special departments of biology which are of particular interest to those who are qualifying as physicians are being studied, there is a fixed line from which it is not well to diverge too far, for the simple, but absolutely certain reason, that the student's time will not permit it; and when we remember the many attractions which the study of biology possesses, especially when taken up with such advantages as are now to be found in Toronto, the fear is that the mind of the student may digress widely from the more practical applications of the science as it applies to man, and the art of medicine. We are not prepared to admit, as is stated by some, that the man who does not thoroughly know the development of the peritoneal membrane can have only a bungling and imperfect knowledge of that membrane. The clinical characters of this or any other tissue or organ, meaning by this, those peculiar processes and conditions which they evince in disease, are as important generally as is their embryological history, and to the physician far more so; and are in themselves so distinct and peculiar as never to be observed or known by the specialized scientist, whose knowledge is derived exclusively from observation in the laboratory.

The habit of the human mind is always toward extremes, and when we regard the tendency of medical education to-day, we incline to the belief that if in the short space of four years the average student is required to know and to master such extensive departments as those of Chemistry, Biology, Comparative Anatomy, Physics and many others, where there is so much to learn regarding the apparatus used therein, as well as the details of the science, it would not be surprising if some should complete their course in medicine without even having got as far as man—and know very little of the healing art as it is destined to benefit him. We have no desire to criticize severely those to whose labors and laboratory studies the practical physician owes so much, neither have we any desire to do other than commend those who, know-