

much lowered or raised, by the mere fact that the supply of doctors is greater than the demand.

It is evident that such a state of things must lead to a terrible struggle for existence, and in that struggle the only wonder is that so few resort to disreputable practices. With hunger staring in the face himself and probably his wife,—for custom wisely exacts that the physician should be married—with very likely a large family to be provided for, for his knowledge of the results would prevent him from resorting to those means of limiting his offspring, which are unfortunately too frequently employed at the present day, it is not to be wondered at that he takes the three pence or sixpence when he can get it. Now, who is to blame for this state of affairs? Certainly not the man who has gone through a long and expensive course of training to fit him for a profession, in which he finds out only when it is too late that there are already too many. The ones who are to be blamed, we think, are the licensing corporations, which, for the sake of the money which it brings them in, are willing to sacrifice the welfare of the thousand by turning adrift every year several hundreds more practitioners than they well know there is room for. That they do so wilfully is evidenced by the fact that they have for so long been throwing every obstacle in the way of those schemes, which from time to time have been proposed for controlling and limiting the number of admissions to the profession.

In the United States the same difficulty seems to be arising, although, owing to the enormous expansion of the population, the evils of overcrowding will take longer to manifest themselves than in England. Happily in Canada we have as yet no cause to complain. So far, any one with average ability, who devotes himself heart and soul to his work, is pretty sure of obtaining a competence. But it is well that we should be prepared for the emergency when it arises. Let us therefore consider the means we have at our disposal for limiting the number of graduates. There are two ways of doing it. First, by raising the standard of admission to the study; and secondly, by making the pass examination more difficult. Of the two the former is, we think, much the better; for it is no hardship to turn a man back at the threshold from a life of hardship and toil, while he is yet young enough to direct his energies into some other channel; but after having devoted four of the best years of his life to the study of it, it is an acknow-

ledged hardship to tell him that he will not suit.

Let us insist upon our representatives on the licensing boards maintaining a high standard of preliminary education, so that when the student receives his diploma he may be a doctor in deed as well as in word.

GIRL DOCTORS.

On the much vexed question as to whether women should be allowed to compete with men for the practice of the medical profession, we have always held the opinion that no obstacle should be thrown in the way of their having a chance. If it is an easy way of making a handsome living, by all means we say women have as much right to it as men. At the same time on the question as to whether such women, whose mental endowments are such as to fit them for a physician's duties, are likely to have the necessary physical strength, is a question upon which we have always had our doubts. As the editor of the *Medical Times*, Philadelphia, says: "There are certain responsibilities which the physician,—man, or woman,—must assume. In no walk of life is a shirk more out of place. Office work and attendance on the wealthy make no serious calls upon one's strength, and as long as ladies' work is limited to these easy tasks, she may do very well." We commend the following case to which he refers to the attention of any lady who is thinking of entering our profession. A young girl of his acquaintance started out in her professional life, precisely as a young man must do. She had no means, and she began with the poor—"the alley folks." She took a poor district; turned out of her bed at night in all sorts of weather to visit the filthy denizens of the seventeen family house, and similar places; was cheated most unmercifully by those she served; and, in a word, did just what any young male physician in similar circumstances must do to get a start. He noticed her when she graduated as a bright, pretty girl, with so much intelligence that one could not help sympathizing with her desire to make of herself something more than ordinary. It was five years later when he saw her again. The struggle for existence had told heavily upon her; she had aged greatly, and her fresh, youthful beauty was gone, and hard lines on her face told of the severity of the struggle. She was disheartened and weary, and in less than six months more she was dead. He felt satisfied that she had died in the hopeless endeavor to show that women can fill men's place in the world.