

CANADA

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Abstract of the Introductory Lecture to the Medical Course of McGill University, by Principal DAWSON, Nov. 2, 1868.

The lecturer commenced by stating, that on reading the opening address of Dr. Acland, as President of the British Medical Association, and the reports of introductory lectures delivered at the opening of the Medical Schools in London, his attention had been directed to the character of medicine as an art and a science, and to its relations to the modern scientific thought of our time. As to the question whether medicine is to be regarded as an art or a science, there might be different opinions, though the safer way was to regard it as partaking of the qualities of both ; but there could be no doubt as to its relations to various sciences, and to modern scientific culture in general. He would refer to a few points bearing on this subject.

First, there could be no doubt as to the importance of scientific training to the medical student. He should as far as possible not merely store his mind with facts, but acquire by a wide range of scientific study, habits of severe and accurate thought, enabling him rigidly to investigate all supposed causes, and on the one hand to reject crude and baseless theories, and on the other hand to connect every fact with those related to it, and to grasp the laws of phenomena, and the hidden causes of complex effects. Such training is also essential to that clear and ready thought, so important to the medical practitioner. It is not without reason that higher preliminary training than formerly, is required of the medical student ; and even when his attention is directed to languages as well as to science, it is that he may receive mental training, and that he may have access to a larger sphere of scientific culture.

Secondly, modern science has in many of its departments a direct bearing on medical practice. We are struck with wonder, for example, when we contemplate the vast growth of chemical science within the last ten or twelve years, and more especially when we think of the marvellous