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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications and reports solicited. Correspondents must accompany letters, if intended to be printed anonymously, with their proper signature, as a guarantee of good faith.

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In Boston they have opened a training institution for female nurses; in the University of Michigan they have thrown open the medical classes to the admission of females. Boston is the more to be congratulated. Its training institution has been modeled on that in New York, which again is modeled on the one attached to St. Thomas's Hospital, London. There can be no doubt of the practical working of such an institution, proved as it has been by an experience already acquired elsewhere. Nor it need it be doubted that all possible improvements in the system will be put in practice in Boston. It is a city famous for the excellence of its public institutions.

The training of nurses is a worthy undertaking, opening up as it does in the large cities a lucrative employment for women, and introducing them into a sphere which by nature they are fitted to fill. To be a trained nurse is not so ambitious a role as the female medical students seek to play; but it is a worthy part, and those who take it and act up to its duties and responsibilities, may surely count upon the respect of medical men. The lack of trained nurses is a want felt in every town, and wherever large hospitals are established it should become a question with their governors whether or not some institution could be added or some system of hospital training devised whereby the education of nurses could be carried into effect. This ought to be considered in the interest of supplying the hospital itself with nurses, and further with a philanthropic view of doing good to the sick and also of enlarging the sphere of woman's work and giving her a legitimate field of labour. Society would appreciate the advantages thus conferred.

MEDICAL INCOMES.

In the recent inquiry into the condition of the Civil Service in Ireland, it was natural that there should be some reference made to the incomes obtained by professional men in this country. Some extracts from the evidence given may be of interest. Dr. E. Kennedy stated that in Dublin a competent medical man, having the advantages of a hospital and connection, ought, when of ten years' standing, to make from £300 to £1200 a year; if reasonably successful, he ought then to

double his income in the course of the next five or six years, and a really successful man ought in a few years more to double his income again; but the instances in which a medical man reaches £6000 a year or £5000 a year are very rare. The advantage of a hospital physician is that his pupils become scattered about the country and send up patients to him. In the chief provincial towns of Ireland, with a large population, the leading medical man may possibly reach from £1200 to £2000 a year. Sir D. Corrigan, who was also examined, thinks there are perhaps ten or twelve medical men in Dublin making from £2000 to £6000 a year, or more; and there are a great number, whose names are not very prominently before the public, making from £800 to £1000 a year. There are general practitioners in Dublin, men who have never written a line, and who are unknown to the public as men of great eminence, who sometimes accumulate large fortunes.—*London Lancet*.

DENTISTRY AND SURGERY.

We believe specialism in medicine to be a necessary outgrowth of the extension of our science and art; but, of course, there is a possibility of carrying it too far,—of dividing up too finely,—of pulverizing into dust instead of breaking into large fragments fitting into one another and capable of being joined together into an united whole. The question then is, Is oral surgery sufficiently distinct and of sufficient magnitude to be worthy of rank as a specialty?

In considering this, it seems to us of vital importance that we recognize the true position of dentistry and of dentists.

Argue and reason as we will, laud dentistry to the skies, or degrade it to lowest rank, the fact remains, that the great bulk of the work to be done is purely mechanical; that whilst a few practitioners, like our friend Dr. Garretson, may climb from tooth-plugging and tooth-pulling to the performance of the most serious operations, involving life itself,—from being skilful dentists to being as skilful surgeons,—the great bulk of the profession must spend their lives in a monotonous round of purely mechanical labour, labour in which mechanical and artistic skill along with personal qualities are the sole guarantees of success.

The higher education, the wider culture of the physician, though it may contribute, is in no sense a necessity, to such success; and just so long as this is true, so long will a very large proportion of dentists neglect that culture which, whilst it may be an ornament, is not a necessity for the practice of their profession. Here, it seems to us, the matter rests. Dentists—we mean the general mass—have at present no claims to be recognized as representatives of a branch of our profession; many dentists are doctors, some of them are "oral surgeons," and as such we receive them into the brotherhood; but the great mass must probably always remain as they are at present,—dentists,—worthy citizens,—we do them no disrespect,—artists of ability, many of them,—but yet in no sense practitioners

of medicine, in no sense entitled to recognition as such.

The professions of dentistry and of medicine may be conjoined in one person, but they are essentially distinct, and a man may assuredly be an excellent dentist without being a doctor, or an excellent doctor without being a dentist.

In truth, we can see no necessity for "oral surgery" being a specialty. Is cancer of the jaw different from cancer of the rib, or any more different from cancer of the rib than the latter is from cancer of the vertebra or cancer of the tibia? Is every bone to have its specialist? In such a specialty as the eye, profound study of sciences and the use of instruments not employed by the general surgeon are necessary; but not so with "oral surgery."

Further, we see no reason for believing that a man can take out a jaw-bone or diagnose an epulis any better for knowing how to plug a difficult molar or to counterfeit with consummate skill a lost incisor.

Far better preparation for such work, it seems to us, is long-continued daily practice in resecting other than jaw bones, and in diagnosing tumours in other parts of the body than the face,—practice to be obtained only in the wards of the general hospital and the office of the general surgeon, not at all in the usual work of the dentist.

Finally, oral surgery has no natural boundaries,—no Rhine or Pyrenees which shall limit it. This very day, chancing to be at the clinic of the great apostle of oral surgery alluded to, we saw present three cases, the first of which was an erectile tumour of the vertex, the second an occipital tumour, believed to communicate with the brain and to be arachnoidal. We can conceive of the oral surgeon crawling down to the anus; but how arachnoidal tumours and cephalic varices are connected with the mouth passes our comprehension.

We would like to see dental schools attached to our medical colleges, and opportunity afforded to our medical students to learn something of the diseases of the teeth, or even, if they like, to become practical dentists. We believe that in many parts of our country the practice of dentistry would afford training in the use of the fingers, occupation and honourable support to young, unemployed, almost starving, surgeons, and, at the same time, open the paths to the higher fields of their life-work.

In very many of our country towns and villages even respectable dentistry is a lost art, or rather an art that has never been found. A very few months' instruction would enable any young physician of a mechanical turn of mind to extract teeth and to plug, under ordinary circumstances, with credit to himself. The work of two or three hours would give him at least a bare livelihood, and at the same time offer excellent opportunities for gaining the confidence of his neighbours.

This is no mere fancy sketch: we have known the door to high success as a practitioner of medicine opened in this way.—*Philadelphia Medical Times*.