

THE STUDY OF MEDICINE.

There has always been a tradition, especially in the Faculty of Arts, that a knowledge of the Calendar was as essential to a student as a mastery of the text-books. But a study of this somewhat sibylline volume is of value, apart from the useful exemptions from study it may suggest to a thoughtful man, especially if the comparative method is adopted. A comparison of the present Calendar with those of earlier date will show the demands that have been made upon students in the progress of the University.

The increasing burden has fallen with greatest weight upon the Students of Medicine: and though the session has been lengthened and the number of hours increased, though the course has been extended by summer sessions, the medical work is now almost too heavy to be borne. The difficulty is felt in other places as well, and in England an attempt has been made to meet it by adding a fifth year to the course. The Medical Faculty of McGill has always been keenly alive to the necessity of doing the best thing possible for its students,—on the one hand to give them a sound medical education, and on the other to avoid too heavy a strain upon their time and financial resources. The course of preliminary and professional education which many men now take before commencing the practice of medicine extends over ten years—and it is none too long—namely, four years in arts, four years in medicine and two years in foreign hospitals. Such a course is possible only to well favored men; and looking to the emoluments of practice, it is perhaps asking too much of a man to spend ten years of his life in preparing for it. The scheme that is necessary is to provide a course which shall give to a medical student the preliminary training and culture now supposed to precede the Arts degree along with his purely professional work. In the University of London this is provided for by the preliminary scientific course. The principle that professional study should be accepted as an equivalent for some of the subjects usually demanded in the Arts course has already been recognized by the University. In the Calendar it is stated that Art students of the third and fourth years matriculated in the Faculties of Law, Medicine or Applied Science are entitled to certain exemptions in the Arts Faculty. The extension of this principle would appear to be a solution of the question. For many years it was held that the only subject proper to an Arts course were the classical languages. After much discussion mathematics was admitted, then modern languages, then scientific subjects. Until now in many colleges the classics and even mathematics may be excluded from the course leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree. In McGill an Arts student may select the science course, and exclude classics and mathematics excepting such as might well be obtained in a High school or academy.

A course could be well arranged extending over a period of six years, in which a student might obtain the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Doctor of Medicine. Many men consider four years too high a price to pay for the Bachelor degree who would be willing to assume the two years course. In the preliminary course might

be included many subjects now taught exclusively in the medical school, and when the student entered upon his purely professional work he would have a free hand. If Geology and Mineralogy, Zoology, Botany, physiological and histological, are proper subjects in the Arts course, it is hard to see why general anatomy, physiology and histology should not have like favor. Indeed, some of the subjects, Chemistry, Botany, Physics and Zoology, are common to both courses. Instead of an extension of the course this arrangement merely means a condensation of the work of eight years into six. Students of medicine would be fully equipped for their professional study, and freed from the burden of studies that have no more connection with medicine than with any other scientific pursuit.

It is probable that some arrangement must be come to to bring the course into harmony with that laid down by the conjoint Board of the Royal colleges of physicians and surgeons of England, and some such scheme as now propounded would seem to deserve consideration at the hands of the Faculty.

A DINING HALL.

A Careless reader going through the back numbers of the numerous efforts in College journalism at McGill must be arrested from time to time by the magic words "Dining Hall." He reads the article through, be it under the heading of Editorial or Correspondence, and he finds the substance to be an appeal for a common Dining room, a room where the students of all the faculties may meet, even if it be only for the mid-day repast, and where they may enjoy a comfortable meal and at a moderate cost. We again record the want, again raise our voice in favor of such an institution, with the confidence, however, that if the scheme be not feasible at the moment, the innovation will be made at the earliest opportunity. We know, or we imagine we know, the difficulties with which the board of Governors have to contend, and yet it seems to us that they have it in their power to grant this boon to all the Students.

The difficulty of obtaining good board has been, we believe, never so great as this year, owing to the large increase in the number of students, and many of them have been forced to get their meals at long distances from their lodgings. The students in Medicine and Applied Science are specially to be condoned with, some of whom have but a single hour at noon, and are unable to get dinner without going down town for it. Enterprising restaurant keepers seem to have stepped into the breach the University has so far been unable to fill, and from the stand-point of convenience the want has been by them in a measure supplied.

A suggestion.—To what use is the old east wing, formerly occupied by the bursar, and latterly fitted up as a temporary building for the use of the Faculty of Applied Science, being put? It has the advantage of being in the college, and is sufficiently large for the purpose. The plan seems possible—more than that, it seems feasible, and if the authorities will but consider the scheme, such an institution could surely be made to pay its way, and if properly managed might become a source of revenue to the University.