

THE CANADIAN
Journal of Medical Science,

A Monthly Journal of Medical Science, Criticism,
 and News.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—*We shall be glad to receive from our friends everywhere, current medical news of general interest. Secretaries of County or Territorial medical associations will oblige by forwarding reports of the proceedings of their Associations.*

TORONTO, MAY, 1882.

FREEDOM OF CONSULTATIONS.

The *New York Medical Record*, in its issues of 8th and 22nd April, contains two very specious and *ad captandum* editorials on the above subject, and in defence of the new code of ethics recently promulgated by the New York State Society. The articles afford from beginning to end a rather startling illustration (in view of its source) of the form of argument known as *petitio principii*, and we should not feel called upon to direct attention to them at all had it not been that in a recent issue of the *Canada Lancet*, indications of a somewhat similar tendency were manifest. As an offset to these pernicious publications we have thrown together at random certain expressions of more orthodox views by various American Journals and herewith present them for the edification and encouragement of our readers. Amongst the American Journals the *Record* stands almost alone in its advocacy of the new departure, and we regret to say, judging by its last issue, seems to glory in its shame. In our last two numbers besides expressing our own views upon the subject we have cited the comments of various portions of the Press, but have not presumed to suggest a reason for the anomalous and unaccountable action of the State Society. The opinion that the motives were purely mercenary has, however, been pretty freely expressed as witnesseth the *Medical News* of April 22nd: "It becomes more and more evident that the great body of the medical profession in the City and State of New York, not consulted, and not recording their opinions, continue, as they have been, opposed

to the surrender of professional honour, and that the real leaders are a number of specialists whose interests are promoted by the withdrawal of all restrictions on consultations."

"We do not believe in violent denunciation of any honestly believing man; but we do maintain that there must of necessity be a right and a wrong to every question. If one man says, 'You give too much medicine in every case; your doses are too large, and you reason from fallacious grounds,' while his opponent answers, 'your doses are ridiculously small and cannot have any appreciable effect,' one or the other must be wrong. It would be equally '*compounding a social felony*' for the conscientious homœopath to consult with the strictly scientific physician, as it would be to reverse the case. Such legislation as the New York State Medical Society has seen fit to pass can remove the penalty from this wrong-doing; it can give the sanction of professional law to this social wrong; but it cannot remove nor disguise the self-evident fact, that when the conscientious believer in our principles and doctrines consents to meet at the bedside one whose belief and whose prospective methods of treatment he honestly considers to be useless or worse than useless, he is doing a social and moral wrong, he is sacrificing his conscience, and in doing so, is fully under the impression that he is doing his patient an irreparable injury. This action on the part of an influential society has opened the ethical door, through which many easy-going consciences can pass; but let us hope that the better portion of the profession will, as they always hitherto have, regard it honestly impossible to professionally meet those whose methods of curing disease they consider fallacious and invaluable. Liberality of belief, and tolerance of those who may differ from us in anything, is commendable, but conscience must never be sacrificed."—*Phila. Med. and Surg. Journal*.

"In regard to the question of consultation with the representatives of homœopathy, the distinguished and learned author uses the following emphatic language: 'Every impulse of a legitimate professional pride; every sentiment of fraternal allegiance; every feeling of self-respect; and every principle of honor, im-