

BOSTON, JULY 27, 1842.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY IN QUEBEC.

PERHAPS there are no practitioners in the British American Provinces better educated for the several departments of professional life to which they are devoted, than those of the city of Quebec. Those who are most distinguished, are natives of Scotland, England or France, where they had all the advantages of elevated scientific instruction in early life. A very few only, residing within the walls, who are engaged in practice, were born in Lower Canada. There are several, a younger class of aspirants, in the suburbs, who acquired their professions in the States. It is considered that the advantages to be derived from an attendance on the lectures in Boston, New York or Philadelphia, are now quite as valuable to Canadian students, as those of Edinburgh or London, so far as the great and leading principles are concerned. A fact that is stated in an American school, would still be but a fact when presented in Europe.

The admirably-conducted hospitals, too, of the Atlantic cities, are appreciated by the medical gentlemen of the Provinces, or they would not so generally recommend their pupils to forego the fatigues of a voyage to the mother country, in pursuit of a species of knowledge that is attainable nearer home. From a personal intercourse with those who are able from their position in society to influence the public sentiment, we feel assured that the confidence of the Canadian physicians in the medical institutions of the States, is increasing, and the evidence of it will be shown in an annual increase of students from the British American Provinces.

A medical school exists at Quebec, which is confided to the care of able men, such as Dr. James Douglass, Dr. Morrin, and some others, who are well known to the world. Of the number in attendance on the lectures, ordinarily, we have not ascertained. This much, however, is certain, that the College is considered to be firmly established, and constantly gaining in character and in public esteem.

The Hotel Dieu, established in 1636, by the Duchess D'Aiguillon and Cardinal Richelieu, is the oldest hospital, probably, on the American Continent. The *Sœurs de Charité* have the entire management of its finances, and elect the medical officers. The patients increase or diminish just in proportion to the value of the rents of buildings belonging to the nuns. If many of their houses are vacated, or unusual repairs are required to keep the property tenable, then they have less money to bestow in charity. They are admirable economists—since they never owe a farthing; nor do they allow any money to accumulate on their hands. At the close of a year the institution is always free from debt. The nuns, too, decide upon admissions and grant discharges, influenced, however, in either case, by the advice of the medical attendants—whose services are gratuitous. The Hotel Dieu, as a specimen of ancient architecture, is a rare curiosity. Its interior is no less rare than its exterior. Extreme neatness, comfort, order, and unceasing kindness towards the sick, characterize this unpretending charity.

The Marine Hospital is of recent origin—a noble stone structure without the walls, at the mouth of Charles river, and not yet completed.

At Grosse Island, 27 miles below Quebec, there is another hospital which takes cognizance of all diseases brought in from sea. At the present time, owing to the immense rush of Irish emigrants, many of whom arrive in a feeble condition, the effects of a long and tedious voyage, two hundred patients, principally with fevers, are in this hospital. Dr. G. M. Douglass, the attending physician, is constantly occupied, therefore, with the duties of his office.

Although the cities of Lower Canada are abundantly supplied with an industrious, learned body of physicians, the country towns are woefully neglected. There is not a single practitioner for fifteen or twenty miles to the north and west of Quebec. Beauport, a thriving agricultural town, four miles distant; Charlevoix, seven miles; and Lorette, nine miles—delightful residences, commanding unrivalled and extensive scenery, with excellent Macadamized roads to the city—have neither of them either a physician or druggist, and the people are obliged to send to Quebec for medical advice and assistance. Yet, from a general examination of those and other towns equally destitute, we see, no reason why a physician would not succeed to his entire satisfaction in either of them.

When physicians from the States contemplate establishing themselves in the Canadas, their diplomas must necessarily be lodged with the medical board of examiners. An examination may be required, but ordinarily a degree or license is sufficient evidence of the qualifications and respectability of the applicant. The board were never known to place obstacles in the way of any one who emigrated from the States.