

institution forms one of the strongest safeguards against the perpetration of the most terrible of crimes, this is a publication which cannot be too widely diffused amongst vestries and boards of guardians, nor too extensively read by the public.

We conclude by expressing a confident opinion, that a more useful work, with reference to the office of coroner, never issued from the press.

## THE GHOST OF THE APOTHECARIES' MONOPOLY.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—The shades of the departed are said sometimes to visit the earth, uttering strange moanings, and frightening credulous people. Common enough in the very far north, a ghost in the south is quite a *rara avis*. But I perceive, on returning from my autumnal tour, that a real ghost—the shade of the dead and buried monopoly of the Apothecaries' Company—has been seen lately lying in wait to frighten the medical students, making its way even into your pages, where, this day month, it uttered certain mysterious moanings, trying to persuade others, if not itself, that it is not dead, and, daring ghost that it is, shrieking in despair that the licence of the College of Physicians has not an equal legal value!

The usual way of bringing down a ghost, it is said, is to shoot with a silver bullet; but this fellow may be finished off simply by loading with the 31st Clause of the Medical Act. Here it is:—

“Every person registered under this Act shall be entitled, according to his qualification or qualifications, to practise medicine or surgery, or medicine and surgery, as the case may be, in any part of her Majesty's dominions; and to demand and recover, in any court of law, with full costs of suit, reasonable charges for professional aid, advice, and visits, and the cost of any medicines, or other medical or surgical appliances, rendered or supplied by him to his patients.”

Now, I defy the combined ingenuity of all the apothecaries in the kingdom to get over this. When a new Act of Parliament is intended not to supersede a previous one, it is necessary to introduce a reservation into the Act. Thus the 47th Clause provides for the reserve of King Henry the Eighth's charter to the College of Physicians; but there is not the slightest allusion in any clause of the Act to a reservation of the Apothecaries' monopoly. In fact, one great object of the Act was to sweep away that monopoly, as Clause 31 has most carefully and thoroughly done. There he that runs, as well as he that cross-examines, may read that *every* registered holder of a medical or surgical qualification is now entitled to practise in any part of her Majesty's dominions, and to recover for advice, attendance, medicines, &c., in any court of law. There is no reservation of the Apothecaries' late monopoly here, unless it can be made out that England is not part of her Majesty's dominions. The licence of the College of Physicians, therefore, is a thoroughly legal qualification, with authority to practise medicine and also to recover for attendance and medicines, in any part of her Majesty's dominions.

Then, anticipating defeat on the ground of legality to practise and recover, the ghost next takes refuge in the Poor-law Board, and makes believe that its licence is still required there. Daring and untruthful ghost again! Turn to the last general order of the Poor-law Board (quoted in the last Minutes of the Medical Council), and then and there any man may read that the Board recognises the licence of the College of Physicians exactly on the same footing as the Apothecaries' licence, and mentions it first besides. This order can be changed only (as the secretary writes within these few days in a letter which I have seen) by a new general order of the Board, and no such order has been issued, nor is likely to be. I challenge the Apothecaries' Society to produce any such letter or order from the Poor-law Board, although I dare say they could easily produce their unsuccessful application to the Board to pass such an order.

But the utterings of the ghost are of a vague and intangible kind. No fair-play attempt to show, by reference to facts, that the Act has not smashed the monopoly (for this would be a suicidal attempt), but, instead, vague and dark rumours are secretly circulated, so as to produce doubt and fear, and lead the alarmed student to the conclusion that he will be safer to take the Apothecaries' than the Physicians' licence. But the dodge

wont do. It will merely serve to bring into greater notoriety the fact that the Apothecaries' monopoly is defunct, thoroughly defunct. The Apothecaries' Company ought to be thankful for past power and riches (they must have made a deal of money—what have they done with it?), and grateful for that mercy of the Medical Act which still permits a trading company to license for the practice of a liberal profession in any part of her Majesty's dominions; and it should now be their great pride and policy to boast that their licence is *as good*, in law, as that of the College of Physicians. Trusting to the force of habit, they may calculate on a fair share of licentiates still; but if this ghost tries any more pranks, it will raise such a hue-and-cry that the Apothecaries' licence will be overwhelmed with disgrace.

That the ghost should have tried to show itself in your pages is but in accordance with the law of ghosts, whereby they haunt the places where they were slain; for the profession assigns to THE LANCET the leading and the principal share in the great merit of breaking up this monopoly, of freeing the profession from the degrading yoke under which it has so long groaned, and of advocating (at length successfully) the claim and right of the general practitioner to be licensed by the College of Physicians as well as by the College of Surgeons.

Clause 31 of the Medical Act should be printed up in large handbills in every medical school; and wherever the ghost shows face, the mere quotation of the clause will make it vanish with a shriek!

My medical qualification is not from the College of Physicians. I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

September 27th, 1859.

A SURGEON.

## A MEDICAL ACT IN BRITISH AMERICA.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—In regard to the Medical Act of New Brunswick, commented upon in THE LANCET of August 20th, you have therein clearly expressed the designs had in view by the profession here; which were, to allow, on first registration, a good many persons who were deficient in *degree* of qualification, and then frame a schedule, to be sanctioned by Government, enumerating colleges the graduates of which should be entitled to registration, and thus gain for the profession a higher status, and take other measures for its elevation. But it was never intended, even for the first registration, to admit persons whose title to it was wrong in *kind*, such as a homœopathic degree. Of your opinion on this subject, and that you would discountenance any annexment of such to the profession by registration on the same roll, I am perfectly well aware, from your repeated statements on the point; hence I consider it a little unlucky that from your concluding remarks a sort of inference is to be drawn, that if the homœopathic college of Cleveland were a chartered institution a degree from it would be a valid title to registration. It is true that the college is chartered, but under the name of *Homœopathic Medical College*. The charter says that there shall be instruction given “in the various departments of medical science, which shall include anatomy, physiology, pathology, materia medica, chemistry, obstetrics, medical jurisprudence, principles and practice of *homœopathic medicine and surgery*.” In the diploma from this college which was presented, the last-mentioned chair is that of “Institutes and Practice of Homœopathy,” the word “medicine” not being mentioned, although the recipient, in the diploma, is called Doctor of Medicine. This degree is a homœopathic degree, and not a medical one. As well might a veterinary surgeon claim to be registered because his diploma contains the word “surgeon,” and our Act says that anyone having a diploma to practise surgery shall have that right. It is surgery, but of a peculiar kind; the other is medicine, but of a peculiar kind: one to practise on horses, the other on asses.

I think, from what I can gather, that, should the matter be brought to trial, the law will sustain the view that a homœopathic degree is not a medical degree in the sense of the terms of our Act. From this question being so unusual a one for the arbitration of the law, it must naturally be one of interest to the profession everywhere; and if such is your view, and you desire it, I will furnish you with particulars of further events.

From being obliged to write in extreme haste, to be in time for the mail, I may have given you a very imperfect idea of what I intended to impart.

Thanking you for your flattering remarks on our efforts,

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

W. T. HARDING, M.R.C.S.,

Registrar under N.B. Medical Act.

St. John, New Brunswick, Sept. 20th, 1859.