

THE CANADA LANCET.

**A Monthly Journal of Medical and Surgical Science
Criticism and News.**

Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice. Advertisements inserted on the most liberal terms. All Letters and Communications to be addressed to the "Editor Canada Lancet, Toronto."

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MEDICAL ACT VS. QUACKERY.

From the tone of the correspondence in our last number, we infer that considerable doubt exists in the minds of certain members of the profession regarding the utility of medical legislation, especially in the suppression of quackery. The younger men in the profession are especially prone to say that it is useless. They have paid certain fees, and have been obliged to take a long and expensive course of preparation. After beginning their professional career they meet with many unexpected obstacles and difficulties, but most of all the irrepressible quack. He does not "hang out his shingle," nor as a rule flaunt himself before the public as formerly; but he is there all the same, and hence the young practitioner, who knows nothing of by-gone times, fancies that he spent his money and time for nought. But let us for a moment contrast the past with the present. Formerly, a considerable number of those practising, either had no previous training, or had taken but a partial course. Anyone was at liberty to attach M.D. to his name and announce himself qualified to practise medicine. About the only barrier was inability to collect fees by process of law. There were three systems or schools authorized by law, each holding corporate rights. Two of them had no schools or colleges, yet they were able to graduate doctors with amazing facility. The third had several faculties, but owing to rivalry their standard was somewhat low and behind the require-

ments of the times. Each year doctors were turned out in great numbers, and altogether beyond the requirements of the country. Professional dignity and standing were at a low ebb. An M.D. was thought no more of than a K.C.B. is now, and cultured medical men thought themselves degraded by the company they were compelled to keep. In short, pathies were multiplying, quackery was rampant and audacious, and but a brief space longer and the country would have been captured by the charlatans.

Such is a brief representation of the unhappy condition of things, when some of the more thoughtful of the profession began an agitation for reform. These men asked the legislature for fresh legislation, and after encountering many defeats and disappointments, they were at length successful.

Instead of three separate systems or schools recognized by law, the law now knows no particular system or doctrine, and instead, demands a thorough preliminary and professional education, without regard to dogmatic opinions,—thus uniting and exalting the whole into one strong and dignified body. Every candidate seeking admission into this body must pass through a long course of arduous labor, and before admission, prove himself well skilled in all that pertains to the practice of medicine. Graduates are no longer turned out in hundreds, and none but competent persons find their way into the profession. To be sure, we still have the quack with us, but "he is not numerous." Pressed as he now is, and will be, according to natural law, a few years more and he will all but have disappeared. A "look at this picture, and then at that," is surely enough to convince any reasonable mind that the Medical Act has most fully met the ends for which it was created. All who remember the utter chaos, under the old order, cannot but wonder how successful the law has been and how much good has been accomplished, both in the interest of the profession and the public at large.

The Medical Act does suppress quackery, and besides, does many other good things, of which we should feel proud. It has brought order out of chaos, harmonized discordant elements, advanced education, and given a standing and dignity to the profession not enjoyed in any other country.

But after all, the medical profession are but co-partners under the law. This is an element in