

## ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY

### *SEQUAH: AN ENGLISH “AMERICAN MEDICINE”-MAN IN 1890\**

“SEQUAH ON CLAPHAM COMMON” is the legend attached to a small Victorian oil-painting in the Wellcome Institute library (plate 1).<sup>1</sup> The setting, Clapham Common, is known to Londoners as a grassy open space a mile or two south of the river Thames, but the name “Sequah” today means, to most people, nothing. Yet for a brief period around 1890, Sequah was perhaps the most celebrated medical operator in Britain outside the capital. The painting is a nocturne in which Sequah, clad in gold, stands out from the darkness, transfigured by moonbeams and naphtha flares. Together with other records, it enables us to penetrate the obscurity which now covers his name and to see him in the lurid, flashy light of his now distant celebrity.

The Sequah story—for it falls naturally into the language of journalism—goes back to September 1887, when Sequah started his medical career at Landport, Portsmouth.<sup>2</sup> In January 1888, he was practising at Brighton.<sup>3</sup> By June 1888, he had joined the medical scene in Dublin.<sup>4</sup> Reports from these and numerous other towns scattered throughout the United Kingdom reveal the technique behind his triumphs. The inhabitants of the town would be shaken by the sound of a brass band and bass drummer parading through the streets in a colossal golden carriage, and handbills

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The abbreviation PRO. BT. refers to the records of the Board of Trade at the Public Record Office, Kew. PRO. J. refers to the records of the Supreme Court of Judicature at the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London WC2. CMAC means the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre at the Wellcome Institute, London. *Chem. Drugg.* means the journal *Chemist and Druggist*.

<sup>1</sup>Oil on canvas, 30.3 × 40.6 cms., authorship and provenance unknown.

<sup>2</sup>‘Itinerant quackery’, letters to the editor of the *Evening Mail for Hampshire*, from “Scire Facias”, 17 September 1887, p. 2; C. B. Callaway, 20 September 1887, p. 4; K. W. B., 21 September 1887, p. 2; “Scire Facias”, 22 September 1887; p. 4; “An eye-witness”, 22 September 1887, p. 4, “Scire Facias”, 23 September 1887, p. 2; “Phos Phero”, 24 September 1887, p. 4. Anon., *Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette*, 24 September 1887, p. 5. ‘The chariot doctor’, *Chem. Drugg.*, 18 February 1888, 32: 212. “An eye-witness”, loc cit., states that he had earlier seen the same medicine-man performing in Manchester but does not support his statement with any details. W. F. H. Rowe, letter to the *Daily News and Leader*, 10 February 1916, p. 3, refers to Sequah’s “first opening in Great Britain at Portsmouth in the year 1886”: the place confirms the letters cited above but the year 1886 is inconsistent both with them and with W. H. Hartley’s statement reported in the *Financial News*, 25 September 1890, p. 3, that the operation started “three years ago”. The earliest testimonials to the value of Sequah’s medicines come from Southsea, 29 September 1887, and from Fratton, 3 October 1887, printed in the *Sequah Chronicle*, 19 July 1890, no. 9, p. 3, and 22 May 1890, no. 1, p. 6, respectively: both Southsea and Fratton are near or in Portsmouth, thus confirming the place and date of Sequah’s debut as Portsmouth, September 1887.

<sup>3</sup>Anon., *Truth*, 9 February 1888; *Chem. Drugg.*, 11 February 1888, 32: 179; 13 September 1890, 37: 364.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 23 June 1888, 32: 802.

distributed by local gamins informed them that Sequah had arrived. Who Sequah was would be revealed at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and again at 8 o'clock in the evening, at the place advertised, which was generally a circus-ground, garrison-field, drill-hall, or market-place. Towards the appropriate time, a crowd was drawn to the place by band-music, and Sequah duly drove up in a horse-drawn waggon. He was a tall, sallow, long-haired man who talked with an American accent, was dressed in the manner of an American cowboy and was accompanied by a troop of other cowboys and American ("Red") Indians in feathered headgear. He reminded one journalist of Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* (1826):

His long residence in America seems to have given him many of the distinctive characteristics of the wild Children of the Prairie. He has the same broad high forehead, the keen, penetrating, critical eyes, the aquiline nose, the high cheek-bones, and the firm, clean-cut chin, with a general expression which betokens fearlessness and courage.<sup>5</sup>

Having mounted the golden chariot, Sequah began his work with an exhibition of tooth-drawing, dentistry being an art in which Americans were considered pre-eminent. Showing a set of over a hundred dental instruments,<sup>6</sup> he would offer to extract bad teeth gratis and without pain from anyone who stepped up on to the car. A queue would form of people glad to save the fee of 5s charged for the same service by a local chemist or dentist.<sup>7</sup> Sequah strapped an electric lamp to his forehead<sup>8</sup> and set to work with his forceps, apparently removing teeth with astounding speed: "fifty teeth in half as many minutes" at Cardiff, or at Hastings "317 teeth in 39 minutes (8 per minute)".<sup>9</sup> The patient had scarcely opened his mouth before Sequah had pulled out a tooth, held it up to the crowd (plate 2), put it under the patient's hat and sent him on his way. The operations were accompanied by the continuous playing of the brass band and bass drum, which distracted the patient and drowned any cries of pain.<sup>10</sup> The speed of the performance caused the spectators much amusement, which was indeed its object.<sup>11</sup>

Having secured by this curious entertainment the laughter, applause, and goodwill of his audience, Sequah put away his instruments and proceeded to a serious disquisition.<sup>12</sup> The ordinary medical men might oppose him, he granted, but perhaps they were unaware of Sir Morell Mackenzie's pronouncement, "No one has the right to dogmatize in medicine, which is still an inexact science". After adducing further

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 November 1889, 35: 615 (Leeds).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1888, 32: 212 (Landport); 2 March 1889, 34: 285 (Cardiff).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 April 1889, 34: 501 (Swansea).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1888, 32: 212; 19 July 1890, 37: 90.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 March 1889, 34: 285 (Cardiff); 20 September 1890, 37: 396 (Hastings). A writer in the *Cape Argus*, 2 December 1890, stated "His average rate is about three per minute or 180 an hour".

<sup>10</sup> H. Southam, 'Sequah', *Notes and Queries*, 25 November 1939, 177: 389; Wm. Jaggard, *ibid.*, p. 390. A rival of Sequah, using his methods, told a court that after his band had left him he was unable to extract teeth "painlessly": *Chem. Drugg.*, 26 March 1892, 40: 437.

<sup>11</sup> See further pp. 278–279, below.

<sup>12</sup> No transcription of a Sequah speech is known to the writer: what is offered here is a reconstruction from various sources. Unless otherwise indicated, direct quotations are from Sequah's letter (signed W. H. Hartley) in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 12 December 1888, p. 4. The letter follows a similar line of argument to that described in a brief account of his speech at Liverpool in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, 9 August 1890, also printed in the *Liverpool Echo* of the same day. The paraphrase includes too little of the religiose philosophizing, probably after the style of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, which is mentioned in another article in the *Liverpool Echo*, 11 August 1890, p. 3, as forming part of Sequah's addresses.

citations from Sir [*sic*] Wilson Fox and Sir William Jenner, Sequah drove home his message with rhetoric, reason, and some truths.

The modern physician, although he may be a man of learning and culture; although he may have so complete a knowledge of anatomy as to be able to describe the most insignificant bone or muscle in the body; although he may have completely mastered the signs and symptoms of every complaint incident to the human frame; although he may have practised for long years in the hospital wards or at the private bedside, is still almost entirely ignorant on the very point in which he is generally supposed and expected to be most proficient: he does not know how to *cure disease*.

Medical education, Sequah continued, involved long courses on the theory and history of medicine and on the description of diseases, “but the course of lectures and study on what should be the most important point of all—remedial agents for the cure of disease, in other words the science of therapeutics—is one of the shortest and most insignificant of the whole series.” It was high time something was done to remedy this evil. Rheumatism, for example, was a scourge of humanity, but no opportunity was given to students or medical men to make it worth their while to investigate the action of drugs, or to spend time and labour in finding out new and reliable remedies for the cure of the disease. The same was true of other diseases (the effects of which Sequah demonstrated with the aid of a wax anatomical model).<sup>13</sup>

At present it is mostly left to chance and outsiders—persons not in any way connected with the profession. In past generations, for instance, the knowledge of quinine came from the Peruvian Indian; while more recently podophyllin has found its way from the Far West; and the wonderful properties of cocaine, without which no doctor’s bag would now be thought complete, became known from aboriginal sources; and so with many other useful remedies.

This brought Sequah to the point at hand, for he himself was in possession of two remedies which he had come across by studying the pharmacopoeia of the Apaches and other American tribes. Enthralling his audience with anecdotes of his adventures among the Indians, he described how he had learnt to combine the medicinal powers of certain herbs and roots indigenous to Montana and Dakota with the virtues of a mineral water found only in the Far West. The result was a medicine called Prairie Flower, which contained ingredients unknown to medical science, and which, when used together with another Indian remedy in the form of an embrocation, proved to offer instant relief from rheumatic ailments.<sup>14</sup>

To prove his point, Sequah appealed for a sufferer from rheumatism who had consulted a doctor without receiving any benefit. A bent and crippled man would be carried up the steps of the waggon. The following account records what happened at a typical performance at the Strawberry Gardens, West Derby Road, Liverpool, on 8 August 1890.<sup>15</sup>

Sequah did not know who his subject was to be, and heard from the man’s own lips for the first time his name and address. The man himself gave it out in a faint and feeble tone, and the information was repeated by Sequah to the crowd. The subject was Thomas Ackerley, 6 house, 7 court, Bolton Street, off Lime Street. Ackerley, questioned by Sequah, told a plain unvarnished tale. He had been some years, four or five, afflicted with rheumatism, and had

<sup>13</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 21 July 1888, 33: 68 (Dublin). On the use of anatomical models by quack-doctors see also ‘Market-place quackery’, *Ibid.*, 27 January 1906, 68: 148.

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 276–277 below.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Sequah’, *Liverpool Daily Post* and *Liverpool Echo*, 9 August 1890.

lately spent seven months in Brownlow-hill Hospital, where he got little relief and no cure. He received the crutch he brought with him from the Workhouse authorities, and the artificial limb bore evident traces of having been well-used . . . then the patient was wheeled into the operating-room, in sight of the audience: a perfect wreck. Some gentlemen were invited to watch the process, among them the writer. The man was stripped kindly, but quickly. Sequah donned his operating garments; two cowboys doffed their leathern coats. As the patient lay on the table or rest, there were evident signs of attenuation where the parts were afflicted; the joints were swollen, the soles of the feet straight and stiff. The legs did not lie straight down but were crumpled up, and when the parts affected were touched there was a groan of real undisguised pain.

Then Sequah poured his mysterious liquid along the parts, "hammered", as a cured subject afterwards expressed it, the soles of the feet, and ran his fingers along the muscles, administering a succession of sharp taps. Then Sequah's liquid was poured by the boy in livery along the limbs and the two cowboys, led off by Sequah in person, began the work of rubbing in, Ackerley having previously been given some of Sequah's compound [i.e., Prairie Flower]. The patient was for some time in great pain, and groaned dreadfully, but Sequah comforted him, and the cowboys, off whom the sweat was now pouring, went on with their work, heedless of the stifled groans, using the palms of their hands, and sometimes their knuckles. It was not a very pleasant sight to see, but the operating-room of an hospital for that matter never is, and few there are who see it.

The liquid and the rubbing seemed to act very quickly and potently, for, the man being well basted with oil, Sequah said the worst was over, and, coming to the patient's feet, he began to move them about, first gently and then with greater force: then he proceeded to deal with the knee-joints, and these he twisted about and placed in a variety of positions. Gradually the joints that were sore and stiff and useless with pain became pliable, and the patient, at the request of Sequah, kicked up his heels high and straight in the air. The man was greatly changed, and being dressed was able to walk out of the room by himself, and without his crutch, which was lying on the platform in view of the audience. Ackerley afterwards stood up and walked about, a little bent, it is true, but a changed man, whether for good or not remains to be seen. Afterwards he put his hat on, descended the staircase of the car, mixed among the crowd, and returned by another staircase without assistance, and without his crutch. The people applauded and Sequah scored a triumph.

Sequah addressed the crowd again. They had seen the effect of Sequah's Prairie Flower and Indian Oil. He did not claim to have invented these medicines: God had invented them and left them to be found by Sequah in the treasure-house of nature. It was Sequah's mission to spread their use for the benefit of suffering humanity. Since his motive was philanthropic, he would give the medicines away free to those who could show by a clergyman's letter that they could not pay.<sup>16</sup> Others would surely not begrudge a couple of shillings or even less to buy it in the knowledge that he always made generous gifts, from the proceeds, to the charities of the towns he visited.

Now began the real business of the evening, the sale of the medicines. Hats, satchels, bags, and other articles were sent up in hundreds for Sequah's Prairie Flower, Indian Oil, and Indian Dentrifice.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes people fought and shoved each other in order to get up to the carriage.<sup>18</sup> Sequah, as the Liverpool journalist remarked, mixed up with such adroitness the commercial and humanitarian objects he had in view that people seemed more willing to pay for the medicines than he was to receive their cash.<sup>19</sup> When a certain amount of medicine had been sold, but before all who wanted to buy could be satisfied, Sequah closed the proceedings. There

<sup>16</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 23 June 1888, 32: 802 (Dublin); 2 November 1889, 35: 615 (Leeds).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1889, 35: 517 (Oldham).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1888, 32: 212 (Landport).

<sup>19</sup> *Liverpool Echo*, 11 August 1890, p. 3.

would be another opportunity to buy at the next day's performance, and so on for as long as demand held out, for a week, several weeks, or a month.

It is unlikely, because it was unnecessary, that all of Sequah's dramatic cures should have been prepared cases,<sup>20</sup> but whatever caused the cure was certainly not the medicines. Sequah's story about his "Prairie Flower" medicine, that it was a mineral water from a North American spring combined with herbs from Montana and Dakota, must be regarded as a fabrication. Several pharmacists and analysts gave their opinion of it, and also of the embrocation "Sequah's Indian Oil", and they more or less agreed on the medicines' composition. A pharmacist at Landport suggested shortly after Sequah's debut that the oil was cheap fish oil scented with origanum, and the Prairie Flower was Cape aloes and capsicum dissolved in a strongish solution of carbonate of potash.<sup>21</sup> The medical botanist Max Gregor, Sequah's competitor in Scotland, told a court that the oil was turpentine and the Prairie Flower bitter aloes.<sup>22</sup> During Sequah's visit to Edinburgh in December 1888, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* commissioned an analysis of Sequah's preparations from the city's public analyst, J. Falconer King, who reported on 14 December that Sequah's Indian Oil consisted of "oil (possibly whale oil) and turpentine, and perhaps a small quantity of some essential oil"; Sequah's Prairie Flower was "aloes, alkaline carbonate (potash or soda), alcohol, and probably extract of capsicum or pepper"; and Sequah's Indian Dentifrice was "carbonate of lime and starch". Apparently, Sequah had offered to give £1000 to the charities of the city if the composition of his medicines were analysed correctly, but in response to Falconer King's analysis he claimed there were still thirteen ingredients left unnamed.<sup>23</sup> He also himself commissioned an analysis of "Sequah's Prairie Flower" from a public analyst in London, and published it in the form of the following evasive testimonial:<sup>24</sup>

The City Central Laboratory and Assay Office,  
London, January 7 1889

I hereby certify that I have made a very careful analysis of a sample of Prairie Flower, and find it contains no mineral matter whatever, except that derived from the mineral water from which it is made, I have also subjected the same to a minute examination of alkaloids, and am convinced that it does not contain any poisonous alkaloid. From these results I am satisfied that the Prairie Flower consists of the extract of certain vegetable substances, the nature of which at present is beyond the reach of analysis to separate.

William Johnstone, Ph.D., F.I.C., F.C.S., F.G.S. &c.,  
Public Analyst

Sequah's advertisement commented with pride:

CHEMISTRY NEVER LIES,

and the London Public Analyst has demonstrated, scientifically and chemically, that Prairie Flower consists of a NATURAL MINERAL WATER, combined with BOTANIC

<sup>20</sup> "We never prepared cases" wrote a Sequah imitator in *Chem. Drugg.*, 28 January 1893, 42: 122.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 February 1888, 32: 212.

<sup>22</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 13 December 1888, p. 2. On Gregor see further p. 297 below.

<sup>23</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 22 December 1888, p. 2 (the analysis and the £1,000); *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 January 1889, 34: 57 (Sequah's response).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 January 1889, 34: 7.

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EXTRACTS. He has also positively proved that it contains  
NO NOXIOUS OR POISONOUS MATTER  
whatever, and is therefore a

### SAFE REMEDY.

Moreover, Dr. W. Johnstone has conclusively shown that no analyst can possibly detect or separate the various active ingredients of which this

### REMARKABLE REMEDY

is composed, which should be a salutary lesson to those who have pretended to perform an impossibility.<sup>25</sup>

A third analysis was made by the borough analyst of Hanley when a man died there on 24 July 1889, reputedly after drinking the external remedy Sequah's Indian Oil in mistake for the medicine Sequah's Prairie Flower. Neither mixture was found to contain any poison; the Prairie Flower was found to be a weak alkali, vegetable extract, a small quantity of alcohol, and some capsicum (to give it a hot flavour); and Sequah's Oil was found to be a natural oil of camphor with turpentine. At the inquest, the jury returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes", and, thanks to the undistinguished nature of its products, Sequah Ltd was cleared.<sup>26</sup>

A quack who briefly tried Sequah's methods as an experiment later published a list of the ingredients of *his* oil and medicine. The oil was composed of cod-liver oil and turpentine in equal parts, with a small quantity of origanum oil (marjoram). The medicine was composed of aloes, potash bicarbonate, gentian powder, myrrh, and capsicum.<sup>27</sup> One wonders if the North of England firm which supplied him with these mixtures ready bottled also supplied Sequah.

Given the unremarkable composition of Sequah's medicines, how should one explain his success, the "astounding cures" of rheumatism, the testimonials from clergymen and others, and the alleged sale of nearly a million and half bottles in one year? In the first place "rheumatism" is a notoriously vague diagnosis, which can cover any kind of disability of muscles or joints. Second, we rarely hear, and never from Sequah, about the cases in which his treatment produced no improvement at all, nor about the long-term effects of his remedies, but only about apparent short-term improvements.<sup>28</sup> But even these were only very approximately assessed, and Sequah probably exaggerated the gravity of his patients' condition before he saw them. Patients who had been carried up the waggon-steps before the treatment walked down the same steps unaided afterwards, thus giving the impression, not necessarily correct, that they could not have walked up in the first place.<sup>29</sup> The way in which

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Reprinted in the *Carlisle Journal*, 28 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 24 August 1889, 35: 259.

<sup>27</sup> "Market Quack", 'A travelling medicine-man's balance-sheet', *ibid.*, 28 January 1893, 42: 122-123.

<sup>28</sup> The following failure is reported in the *Liverpool Echo*, 11 August 1890, p. 3: "The subject under treatment became very fidgety and uneasy; he groaned, he wriggled and struggled to regain his liberty, but the cowboys, thinking that these were merely indications of a shrinking will under the painful ordeal, and that the man would recover his steadfastness of purpose hurried on with the cure so that it should be short as well as sharp. . . . the subject, however, gradually became more uneasy; he struggled frantically; he bellowed for relief; then he prayed for deliverance from his supposed torturers with such intensity and such evident dread that Sequah gave the order to desist. . . ."

<sup>29</sup> "Market Quack", *loc. cit.*, note 27 above, "the more helpless the case appeared, the more credit was due to the oils".

Sequah put his own interpretation of his patients' case-histories into the minds of his audience is illustrated by the following account, which was recorded as evidence for T. H. Huxley's view of miracles by an admirer of his writings. This event took place at Lowestoft in 1889.

The quack doctor [Sequah] emerged on to the little platform at the back of the vehicle and announced that a certain old man of the sea, "Ben" something or other, had been cured of a disease which had long made him a helpless cripple, so far as his legs were concerned. "You all know Ben; he hasn't walked for fourteen years", shouted the Sequah man. "Is that true?" I asked a fisherman beside me. "As true as I'm here" was the reply. "Old Ben ain't walked for many a long year." Just then the door of the caravan was opened wide, and the old man after coming gingerly down the steps, hobbled slowly round the square, leaning on a stick. There was a general cry of astonishment from all parts of the crowd. "Wonderful", "Good Lord, Old Ben can walk", and other expressions of astonishment came from scores of people who had known the old man all their lives. It seemed a truly marvellous cure.

The next morning, as we were walking near the fish market, we met Ben hobbling along by himself. I ventured to say "Good morning; this must be a pleasant change for you, to be able to walk after all these years." The old man looked up with, as I thought, just a suspicion of a twinkle in his eyes: "Change", he said. "I don't know much about that. I've always walked pretty much like this." Yet, I have no doubt whatever that the fisherfolk who expressed so much astonishment in the square the day before, did actually believe that one of their oldest friends had been made able to walk after fourteen years of incapacity.<sup>30</sup>

Such improvement as there was would have been partly due to the patients' psychological state: stirred by the band-music, amused by the tooth-drawing comedy, dazzled by Sequah's display (plate 1) and persuaded by his rhetoric, they were hardly in a fit state to give a level-headed estimation of their own everyday ailments. The treatment would only be tested fairly if they tried their hardest to walk, but if they made such an abnormal effort, they would probably succeed. Sequah's real skill was in challenging his patients to put on a performance which would stand up to his own. Any failure would be theirs, not his.<sup>31</sup> Some of the improvement must also have been due to the massage, for its effects were repeated by at least one of Sequah's imitators.<sup>32</sup>

Sequah's dentistry must have been equally haphazard. He surely did not extract as many teeth as he claimed. One hostile witness wrote:

I have seen the quack draw several teeth with great rapidity, and I have twice seen him make no less than ten efforts at one tooth without drawing it. He has then bundled his wounded patient off, and extending his fingers towards the crowd in front shouted "Ten" in such a way as to make his audience believe he had drawn ten teeth.<sup>33</sup>

The same witness also reported on another case as follows:

On 12th inst. a local surgeon dentist was summoned to attend a man whom he found thoroughly prostrated as a result of copious haemorrhage and shock to the system . . . his condition was brought about by the treatment he had received at the hands of the "Yankee quack" who, in

<sup>30</sup>W. H. Helm, *Memories*, London, Richards Press, 1937, pp. 61–63. Helm quotes a letter to himself from T. H. Huxley, 4 December 1889, "Your case [i.e., the Sequah case] and the remarkable letter from the Mahdi's general to Emir Pasha are the best illustrations of my position I have met with for a long time" (p. 61). Cf. E.H. Visiak in *Notes and Queries*, 25 November 1939, 177: 390.

<sup>31</sup>So in the Liverpool case described in note 28 above, "Sequah made no secret of the ill-success of the experiment but put the cause of it wholly upon the man himself, who preferred prolonged—perhaps lifelong—pain to a sharp planing-down with permanent benefit hereafter."

<sup>32</sup>"Market Quack", loc. cit., note 27 above.

<sup>33</sup>"Scire Facias", *Evening Mail for Portsmouth*, 22 September 1887, p. 4.

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attempting to extract the second lower right molar managed to close his forceps at random betwixt that and the first molar, which was sound, the former being carious. The consequence was that he smashed both teeth, leaving the roots embedded in the gum. An examination revealed that severe injuries had been inflicted, the alveolus being actually fractured, while the gum was extensively lacerated. This exposed pulp being in a state of hyperaesthesia, gas had to be administered before the dental fragments could be removed with the aid of a surgeon who was called in.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, there was no shortage of people willing to give rise to the remark that “the novelty of having your teeth drawn with a trombone playing near your right ear, a big drum beating near your left, and the eyes of a delighted crowd following every contortion of your features has an attraction in it almost irresistible.”<sup>35</sup> Like the massage, the tooth-extraction would be as much a trial of the patients’ courage and good humour as of Sequah’s dexterity. If they failed to co-operate, their cowardice, not Sequah’s incompetence, would be presented as the cause.

The numberless testimonials which Sequah advertised were not difficult to obtain, for anyone who advertised a proprietary medicine received offers to write bushels of them for a few shillings apiece.<sup>36</sup> Sequah gathered an impressive array of supporting statements from clergymen, who emphasized the benefits he had conferred on the poor. Sequah had earned this goodwill from tea-parties for old ladies, bouquets for hospitals, contributions to bazaars, free medicines for the poor, and benefit-concerts for charities.<sup>37</sup> At York in April 1890, he produced an entertainment which raised £70 for the Yorkshire Fine Art and Industrial Institution.<sup>38</sup> In Barnsley in July, he joined the Hospital Sunday Committee in a concert for the benefit of the Beckett Hospital.<sup>39</sup> At Preston in the same month, he raised £125 for the Industrial Institute for the Blind.<sup>40</sup> In November, he gave a concert at the Star and Garter Home, Richmond, Surrey;<sup>41</sup> and in December, another at the Theatre of Varieties, Hammersmith, to enable the West London Philanthropic Society to provide coal and food for the poor: at this concert Sequah (baritone) sang a plantation song called “Slavery Days”.<sup>42</sup> Such occasions brought him recognition as a public benefactor: as a result clergymen spoke for him from his waggon, mayors commended him in the local press, and committees of local worthies were formed to present him with a testimonial at his farewell performance in their towns,<sup>43</sup> all acts which helped indirectly to increase the revenue of the business. But not everyone was taken in by Sequah’s humanitarian pose: when he asked Aberdeen town council for permission to follow his philanthropic vocation in a certain more respectable place than the circus-ground, the committee enjoyed a hearty laugh and declined the proposal.<sup>44</sup>

There were also more immediately commercial methods for making up any

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 September 1887, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Cape Argus*, 2 December 1890.

<sup>36</sup> “A man who didn’t make his million”, ‘My quack medicine’, *Chem. Drugg.*, 6 October 1894, 45: 526.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 September 1890, 37: 396. F. R. Gale, ‘Sequah’, *Notes and Queries*, 6 January 1940, 178: 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 31 May 1890, no. 2, p. 2, citing *York Herald*, 17 April 1890.

<sup>39</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 26 July 1890, no. 10, p. 6, citing *Barnsley Independent*, 12 July 1890.

<sup>40</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 2 August 1890, no. 11, p. 5, citing *Preston Guardian*, 16 July 1890.

<sup>41</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 22 November 1890, 37: 699.

<sup>42</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 10 January 1891, no. 34, p. 7, citing *West London Advertiser*, 20 December 1890.

<sup>43</sup> E.g., at Richmond, Surrey, *Chem. Drugg.*, 22 November 1890, 37: 699 (testimonial); *Stroud Journal*, 17 October 1890 (vicar of Stroud and his curate on Sequah’s waggon).

<sup>44</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 September 1888, 33: 335.

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shortfall in therapeutic effect. Sequah published in local newspapers advertisements headed “Sequah Speaks”, followed by the testimonials from clergymen entitled “The Churches Speak”, and ending with floods of upper-case triplets, an advertising fashion of the time.

SEQUAH! SEQUAH'S PREPARATIONS!  
SEQUAH!! SEQUAH'S PREPARATIONS!!  
SEQUAH!!! SEQUAH'S PREPARATIONS!!!  
ENORMOUS DEMAND  
50,000 BOTTLES ALREADY SOLD IN EDINBURGH  
PRAIRIE FLOWER! SEQUAH'S INDIAN OIL!  
PRAIRIE FLOWER!! SEQUAH'S INDIAN OIL!!  
PRAIRIE FLOWER!!! SEQUAH'S INDIAN OIL!!!

and so on.<sup>45</sup> A penny newspaper, the *Sequah chronicle*, was published weekly: it contained short stories, essays, and jokes interspersed with advertisements and the more favourable accounts of Sequah culled from local newspapers.<sup>46</sup> Arrangements were made for pharmacists and grocers to continue retail sales of the medicines after Sequah had left. As many shopkeepers were appointed agents as could be persuaded to order £100 worth of goods.<sup>47</sup> Their names were printed in Sequah's farewell advertisement in the local papers, and repeated in large leaflets distributed to every household.<sup>48</sup> Special variations were introduced into Sequah's farewell performances: the rubbing for rheumatism would be replaced by a speech in which Sequah thanked the citizens of (for example) Plymouth for their kind reception, and remarked that the clear-headed and thinking people of Plymouth would not have met in their thousands to give him a hearty farewell if he had not done for them all he had said he would when he arrived.<sup>49</sup> After further sales of the medicines, Sequah's carriage would be drawn through the streets in a noisy triumphal procession. The ensuing newspaper reports would be inserted as a testimonial in the local newspaper of the next town visited.<sup>50</sup>

“Sequah has been doing a roaring trade” (Dundee), “Sequah has fairly captivated the people” (Oldham), “Sequah is carrying all before him” (Leeds), “Sequah is attracting large audiences” (Ipswich), “Sequah has taken the city by storm” (Lincoln), “The sale of his medicines has made retail and wholesale trade stand aghast at its rapidity” (Newcastle).<sup>51</sup> Estimates of his takings were variously given as

<sup>45</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 5 January 1889, p. 1. In the original, the repeated phrases run down the page, not (as here) across it. On the typographic fashion see E.S. Turner, *The shocking history of advertising*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1965, pp. 80, 118.

<sup>46</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, no. 1 (22 May 1890)—no. 54 (30 May 1891). A complete set is in the British Library (Newspaper Library). The CMAc Sequah archive holds nos. 20–54, 4 October 1890–30 May 1891 (wanting nos. 21, 28–29, 32, 45–46), and also the *Sequah Annual*, 1891.

<sup>47</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 22 June 1889, 34: 841 (Sunderland).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1888, 33: 677 (Dundee).

<sup>49</sup> There are numerous descriptions of Sequah's farewells, e.g. *ibid.*, 13 July 1889, 35: 36 (Newcastle); 12 October 1889, 35: 517 (Oldham); *Clapham Observer, Tooting and Balham Times*, 22 November 1890 (Clapham).

<sup>50</sup> E.g., *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 December 1888, 33: 775 (Aberdeen testimonials reprinted in Edinburgh).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 November 1888, 33: 644 (Dundee); 31 August 1889, 35: 292 (Newcastle); 21 September 1889, 35: 436 (Oldham); 2 November 1889, 35: 615 (Leeds); 1 February 1890, 36: 145 (Ipswich). *Lincoln Gazette*, 11 January 1890, as cited in the *Sequah Chronicle*, 22 May 1890, no. 1.

£150 a day, £5,000 a month, and £8,000 in three weeks,<sup>52</sup> but whatever the true figure may have been there was little doubt that his business between 1887 and 1890 was an enormous success.

#### WHO WAS SEQUAH?

At a dinner given in his honour at the Hotel Victoria, London, on Monday 16 June 1890, Sequah was introduced as a Canadian.<sup>53</sup> Speaking to an Oldham reporter the previous September, he had said, "I was born in Rochester in New York State, in March 1862, and at the age of fourteen was apprenticed to a chemist in the capital town [New York]."<sup>54</sup> He told a Brighton reporter that his grandfather had been an English stagecoach driver, and that he had been born in New York and educated in Chicago.<sup>55</sup> While in Edinburgh in December 1888, he was reported to have been recognized by one of the ladies attending his performance as her long-lost brother and was therefore the son of an Edinburgh brewer. Sequah had been a medical student at Edinburgh University, it was claimed, but had left before the end of his course to become a showman in the Wild West.<sup>56</sup> A Dundee reporter in 1908 was told by him that he was a Scot born and bred, a native of the Perthshire village of Bankfoot, who had simply adopted the American name Sequah for professional purposes.<sup>57</sup> Returning to the Oldham account, we learn that after four years in New York, the chemist's apprentice from Rochester wanted to see more of the world than could be viewed from the windows of a Broadway store, so he set off for Chicago. While continuing his journey westwards, he met a man called Schneider, who suffered from chronic rheumatism and was on his way to "Council Bluffs" where he hoped to obtain a remedy from the Apaches, who were famed for their medical skill. The effect of even a brief application of the Indian oils was wonderful, and Schneider was soon able to throw away his crutches. Sequah was so impressed that he decided to live among the Indians. Fortunately, the knowledge of dentistry which he had picked up in the Broadway pharmacy enabled him to extract the diseased stumps of a few braves and squaws, and thus he came into great favour with the tribe, who communicated the secret manner in which their medicinal oils were compounded, the principal ingredients being the blubber of the silver seal and river fish. From that time on, his career was easy. After acting as an interpreter for an Indian tribe at a Chicago exhibition, he devoted himself to bringing the secret remedies of the Apaches, the Cherokees, the Sioux, and the Chippewas to the common knowledge of the civilized nations of the earth.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>52</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 13 April 1889, **34**: 501; 20 April 1889, **34**: 531 (Swansea); 13 July 1889, **35**: 36 (Newcastle).

<sup>53</sup>*St James's Gazette*, 17 June 1890, p. 7. Sequah was introduced by the mind-reader "Stuart Cumberland" (Charles Garner), author of *People I have read* (1905), etc. He held ten ordinary shares in Sequah in 1895 (PRO. BT. 31. 4793/31733, no. 17) and intervened unsuccessfully in a critical moment for the business: see *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 October 1892, **41**: 559.

<sup>54</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 28 September 1889, **35**: 460. The true capital town of New York State is Albany, but the context implies that New York City is meant.

<sup>55</sup>*Who and what is Sequah?*, advertising booklet in CMAC Sequah Archive.

<sup>56</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 12 January 1889, **34**: 36.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 11 July 1908, **73**: 43.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 28 September 1889, **35**: 460.

However, at Dundee in November 1888, he made no mention of Schneider or New York. Instead, he stated that he had travelled five times over the American continent from Maine to California, presumably selling medicines, and then took a farm at Kincardine, Bruce County, Ontario, which he still had. After speculating in oil, he returned to the medicine business, at first in California and then in the Sandwich Islands, where he had drawn a tooth for a royal princess [*sic*] and also cured the islanders' rheumatism. From the North American Indians he had learned how to combine botanic matter with mineral water, the technique which produced the medicine "Sequah's Prairie Flower".<sup>59</sup>

A Leeds newspaper reported in 1889 that Sequah owned a farm six miles round (presumably the one at Kincardine), and he was saving the crutches discarded by his patients to make a boundary fence for it. the princess whom he had treated was now said to be a native of Honolulu, unless this was another one; it was she who had given him the magnificent gold chain which he wore around his neck.<sup>60</sup>

The account which Sequah himself published in May 1890 starts with the moment when he became aware simultaneously of the properties of some mineral springs in the Western States and of the uses to which the Indians and early settlers put certain roots and herbs indigenous to the prairies and forests of Montana and Dakota, then almost unexplored.<sup>61</sup> On proceeding to New York, he was led to observe the continuous demand for proprietary medicines. "The idea suddenly flashed across him" that the knowledge he had acquired in the Far West, of combining the virtues of vegetable and mineral remedies, would enable him to place before the public a medicine that would equal if not surpass any that was at present on the market. He therefore obtained a supply of roots and herbs, prepared extracts, instituted a course of experiments on the mineral waters, and showed, by a few months' careful investigation, "that several of the substances were absolutely unknown to medical science, that those already known to be valuable were not likely to come into general use for several years owing to the slow conservatism of the medical schools, and that whereas the value of the mineral waters was known and recognized, no one had ever imagined any other way of using them than that of sending the patients to reside upon the spot, a course which quite excluded them from general use among all but the wealthier classes". Sequah's experiments also revealed that his preparation was by far the best for treating disorders of the stomach and the liver as well as rheumatism. However, for rheumatic affections he considered that an oil for external application would be a useful supplement to the internal medicine, and it was here that knowledge he had obtained while travelling in Manitoba and Alaska came in handy. He had found that the seal oils and fish oils so extensively used by the Indians of those districts, when carefully combined with natural camphors, turpentine, and other products of the vast pine forests of the Red River Valley, formed an embrocation which, when properly applied, would afford almost instant relief from rheumatic pain. He then secured by deed the exclusive rights to use the mineral waters throughout Europe, the United Kingdom, and the colonies, and went over to Britain

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 November 1888, 33: 644.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 November 1889, 35: 615.

<sup>61</sup> 'Small beginnings', *Sequah Chronicle*, 22 May 1890, no. 1.

to introduce the remedies to the public. The names which he originally chose for the medicines proved unsuitable for registration as trademarks, so he renamed the internal medicine “Sequah’s Prairie Flower”, after one of the botanic additives to its mineral water base. The embrocation was called “Sequah’s Indian Oil”.

A Lancashire chemist’s assistant who turned to a career as a quack doctor near Manchester called himself “Professor Wills of Melbourne, Australia”, dressed as a professor (fig. 1), and claimed that his medicine was composed of certain secret herbal remedies which his father had been given by some Australian aborigines in return for an act of kindness.<sup>62</sup> Some such fabrication, often setting forth how the explorer had been snatched from the jaws of death by the ancestral lore of a noble savage, was *de rigueur* among medicine-men of the 1890s.<sup>63</sup> It was not necessary for the audience to take the story literally (though many people did), for it was part of the free entertainment which was supposed to give them a feeling of obligation to buy the proffered medicines, and the more extravagant the lies, the greater the entertainment. Hence we should have no hesitation in regarding Sequah’s birth in Rochester N. Y., the cure of Schneider, the farm at Kincardine, and the whole story of the medicines, as pure fabrications.

In fact, Sequah was, in the first place, William Hartley, known as William Henry Hartley, who was not an American or Canadian but was probably born in North or West Yorkshire in 1857.<sup>64</sup> His mother was Sarah Ann Hartley, who lived for a time at Brunthwaite, Silsden, near Keighley, Yorks.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup>“A chemist’s assistant”, ‘How and why I became a quack doctor’, *Chem. Drugg.*, 27 January 1906, 68: 147–148, p. 148.

<sup>63</sup>Brooks McNamara, *Step right up*, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1976, pp. 113–114. Turner, op. cit., note 45 above, p. 215 (“it was necessary to pretend that the secret of an ointment had been whispered to a titled traveller by a dying hermit in a cave at Petra”). H. Leon Wilson, *Professor how could you!*, London, John Lane the Bodley Head, 1924, pp. 105–106 has a good example, in the story of a professor of history who becomes a quack-doctor’s Red Indian.

<sup>64</sup>It was no secret that his real name was Hartley (see e.g., *Chem. Drugg.*, 21 July 1888, 33: 68). He signed a letter to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 12 December 1888, p. 4 “W. H. Hartley”, and in the papers of the Sequah companies (see pp. 290–293 below) he always called himself “William Henry Hartley”. His origin in W. Yorks. is mentioned by W. H. Rowe in his letter to the *Daily News and Leader*, 10 February 1916, p. 3, and the *Registers of births and deaths* confirm that such a name would be found almost exclusively in W. Yorks or E. Lancs. It is therefore tempting to identify him with the William Henry Hartley who was (like our Hartley) the son of a Sarah Ann Hartley (see next note) and who was christened at St Saviour’s, York, on 2 October 1849 (*International genealogical index*, Utah, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Genealogical Dept., 1982, fiche England—Yorkshire). Against this identification, (a) our Hartley’s age on 16 January 1924 was given (though not by himself) as sixty-six (see note 248 below), which, if correct, would yield a birth-date between 17 January 1857 and 16 January 1858, not 1849; and (b) in his will (see note 247 below), our Hartley named himself as “William Hartley, commonly known as William Henry Hartley” implying that Henry was not a baptismal name. The combined implications of (a) and (b) are negatively supported by the fact that there is a birth certificate for only one William Henry Hartley born within the period given in (a) (*Register of births*, September 1857, vol. 8d (Manchester), p. 262) and *his* mother’s christian names were different from those of the mother of our Hartley. Positive confirmation, in the form of a birth certificate of a William Hartley, son of Sarah Ann Hartley, within the period given, has unfortunately not been obtained, as many William Hartleys were born during that period.

<sup>65</sup>Under the name Sarah Ann Lambert she came to have substantial shareholdings in Sequah Ltd: see p. 313 below. The register of shareholders in 1895 gives her address as Brunthwaite Selsden [*sic*], Yorks. She was still living there up to the time of her death on 3 January 1910, after which administration of her estate was granted to “William Henry Hartley . . . natural and lawful son and one of the next of kin of the said intestate” (Somerset House records).



Figure 1 Anonymous engraving: "Professor Wills of Melbourne, Australia" (*pseud.*), near Manchester, inviting people to allow him to extract their bad teeth. To right of chair, boxes of herbs from which "Golden nuggets of health" were supposed to be made. *Chem. Drugg.*, 27 January 1906, p. 147. Wellcome Institute library, London.

How William Hartley spent the thirty years of his life before he became Sequah we do not know, but he must surely have spent some time in North America, for he would have found the model for Sequah among the numerous American Indian medicine companies which flourished there in the 1880s. The most successful of these was the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Firm, which was founded by John E. Healy of Connecticut and Charlie Bigelow of Texas in 1881 to sell what were claimed to be medicines used by the Kickapoo Indian tribe, and especially a nostrum called Kickapoo Indian Sagwa. Like Sequah's later performances, the Kickapoo act relied on the excitement caused by Red Indians, supposed to be Kickapoos, who appeared

in tribal war-dress. By 1884, Healy and Bigelow had thirty-one Kickapoo units operating in Illinois alone, and others in other parts of America.<sup>66</sup> Another large firm was the Oregon Indian Medicine Co. of Corry, Pennsylvania, which had been founded in Pittsburgh in 1876: its best-selling medicine was a tonic called Ka-Ton-Ka, which was said to be prepared from roots collected in Oregon by old women of the Modoc and Nez Percé tribes, but was essentially a mixture of sugar, aloes, baking soda, and twenty per cent alcohol.<sup>67</sup> These two firms had many imitators. Even the reputable Burroughs Wellcome Co. used Red Indians to draw attention to its sale of Florida mineral-water at a Chicago exhibition in the 1890s (plate 5).

Outside business hours, William Hartley was a friend of Healy, the Kickapoo chief, but in a business letter to a third party Hartley claimed that he had personally beaten off competition from the Kickapoos when he and they arrived to work in the same place.<sup>68</sup> This suggests that Hartley, when in America, had worked not for Healy and Bigelow but for one of their rivals: perhaps his training was done with the Kamame Medicine Co. of Windsor, Ontario (just over the US/Canadian border from Detroit), which he was to use as a vehicle for introducing Sequah into Canada in 1891, despite the fact that its products were supposed to have originated in India proper rather than in America.<sup>69</sup>

Having learnt the tricks of the American medicine-shows, Hartley appears to have worked in the same line of business in Sydney, New South Wales.<sup>70</sup> A remark which he made in a letter implies familiarity with Tasmania and Ceylon,<sup>71</sup> and he probably visited those places, and perhaps India as well, before returning to England, where the benighted natives had not yet seen an American Indian medicine-show. As we have seen, he launched Sequah in Portsmouth in the autumn of 1887. The name Sequah was a contraction of the name of Sequoyah (1770?–1843), inventor of the Cherokee syllabary,<sup>72</sup> although this etymology was never made public.

<sup>66</sup> Stewart H. Holbrook, *The golden age of quackery*, New York, Macmillan, 1959, pp. 208–215; James Harvey Young, *The toadstool millionaires*, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1916, pp. 192–193; Thomas P. Kelley jun., *The fabulous Kelley*, rev. ed., Don Mills, Ontario, General Publishing Co., 1974, pp. 96–97; McNamara, op. cit., note 63 above, pp. 79–103; Varro E. Tyler, ‘Three proprietaries and their claim as American “Indian” remedies’, *Pharmacy in History* 1984, 26: 146–149. On American medicine-shows in general see also C. Lee Jenner (editor), *The Vi-Ton-Ka show*, [s.l.] American Place Theater, 1983.

<sup>67</sup> McNamara, op. cit., note 63 above, pp. 119–130; Tyler, op. cit., note 66 above, pp. 147–148.

<sup>68</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letter from Emil Danziger for Sequah Ltd to James Kasper in Jamaica, 29 January 1891, “[Healy] has friendly relations with us outside of business”; letter from W. H. Hartley to Kasper in Jamaica, 31 January 1891, “your system is far superior to Healy and Bigelow, I am aware of that, for it is not the first time they have been met and defeated by the head of this concern [i.e. Hartley himself].”

<sup>69</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive contains advertisements for Kamame products and correspondence with the firm, October–December 1891.

<sup>70</sup> On 27 April 1888, when Hartley filed applications to have the names of Sequah medicines registered as trade marks, he gave two addresses, one in Farringdon Street, London, and the other at 232 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, N.S.W.: see note 125 below. In a letter of September 1888, Hartley also referred to facilities for selling medicines which had been granted to him by “Major Young of Sydney”: see *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 September 1888, 33: 335.

<sup>71</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letter from W. H. Hartley to James Kasper in Jamaica, 20 January 1891, “you will certainly not find as good roads in every place in the world as in England unless you go to Ceylon or Tasmania”.

<sup>72</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letter from E. Danziger to James Kasper, 29[?] January 1891.

## Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library

The success which attended Hartley's opening campaign in Britain led him to recruit additional Sequahs to work simultaneously in different towns, all using the name Sequah.<sup>73</sup> Among the first was one William Francis Hannaway Rowe, who was born around 1841 in Hampshire. Before joining Hartley, Rowe was probably a herbalist and dentist.<sup>74</sup> Then they were joined by a third Sequah called Charles Frederick Rowley, who was born in West Bromwich.<sup>75</sup> The linchpin of the enterprise was its general manager, James Norman, who was an old fairground professional and, at this time, the proprietor of a travelling freak-show.<sup>76</sup> The star of his freak-business was Lalloo, a young Hindu with a parasitic headless attachment at the chest (plate 6).<sup>77</sup> Norman's good name helped Hartley to recruit Sequahs and to hire grounds in provincial towns. Norman also acted as trouble-shooter in the not infrequent disputes between the Sequahs and their associates. By September 1890, there were no fewer than twenty-three Sequahs on the road in the United Kingdom.<sup>78</sup> A portrait of "Sequah" (fig. 2), published at about that time, may be of any of them.<sup>79</sup> Some had been dentists, some pill-vendors, and some were even Americans.<sup>80</sup> On 9

<sup>73</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 19 January 1889, 34: 69, reports a correspondent's doubt that Sequah could be in London because he was in Nottingham. Later, the multiplicity of Sequahs became well known.

<sup>74</sup>Rowe gave these forenames at Rochdale County Court on 16 May 1890: see *ibid.*, 24 May 1890, 36: 682. His birth-date is inferred to be 1841 only from the fact that he gave his age as seventy-five in a letter to the *Daily News and Leader*, 10 February 1916, p. 3, but there is no birth certificate for anyone of those names born in that year, probably—since Rowe is an unreliable witness—because he gave the wrong age. In that letter Rowe also stated that he was born in Hampshire (which there is no reason to doubt), and, in his words, "I have identified myself with medicine and dentistry practically all my life".

<sup>75</sup>This assumes that the "Charles Frederick Reyley" whose obituary as Sequah appeared in a Reuter report in *The Times*, 20 March 1936, p. 12, after his death in Balfour, New Zealand, was the same man as the "Charles Frederick Rowley" who owned 2,000 ord. shares in the first Sequah Ltd at 4 July 1889 (PRO. BT. 31. 4371/28393, no. 5, where his address is given as Swansea and his profession as Gentleman). On 12 February 1890, he had only 700 shares (*ibid.*, no. 7). In the register of shareholders of the second Sequah Ltd (see pp. 290–293 below on the companies) his address is given as 44 Farrington Street [London], the address of the company, and his profession as Agent [i.e., of Sequah Ltd]: he then owned 863 ord. shares in that company (PRO. BT. 31. 4793/31733 no. 7).

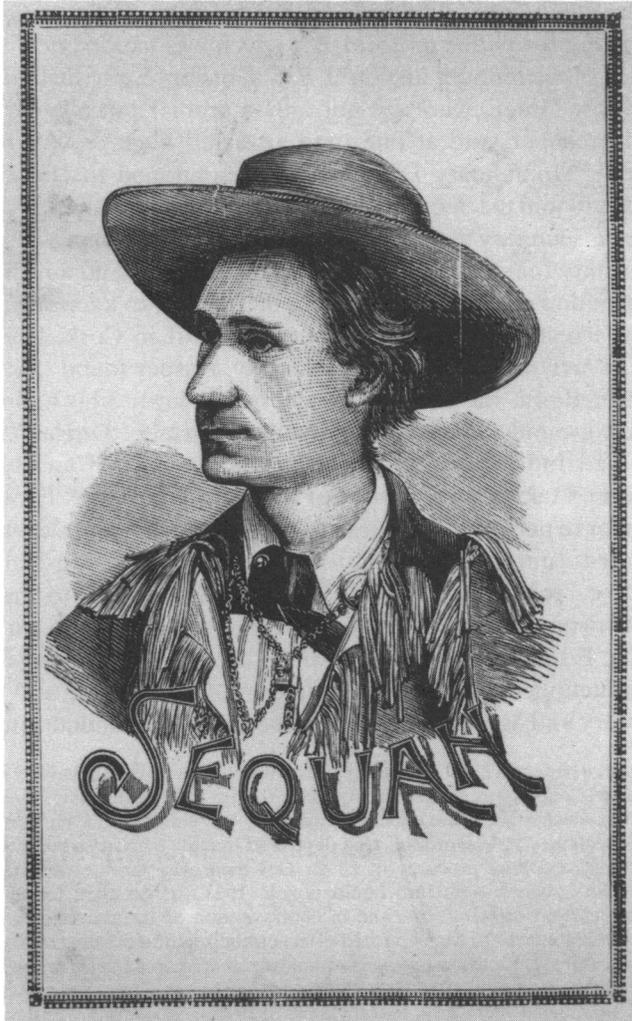
<sup>76</sup>CMAC Sequah Archive, letters from James Norman referring to his business. The archive also contains printed contracts for hire of grounds in which Sequah is represented by James Norman as "Agent and Contractor". Presumably he was related to Tom Norman, once proprietor of the "Elephant Man" (Michael Howell and Peter Ford, *The true history of the Elephant Man*, revised ed., London, Allison & Busby, 1983, pp. 93–111). After the decline of the freak-shows in Britain, James Norman ran a travelling "Electric Theatre" or bioscope (*World's Fair*, 9 June 1906, p. 1, 29 December 1906, p. 1, 6 April 1907, p. 5, 23 March 1907, p. 4, etc.).

<sup>77</sup>CMAC Sequah Archive. G.M. Gould and W. L. Pyle, *Abnormalities and curiosities of medicine*, Philadelphia and London, W.B. Saunders, 1901, pp. 192–93; George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York stage*, vol. 15 (1891–1894), New York, Columbia University Press, 1949, pp. 155, 157, 438, 453, 456, 726, 734. According to Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1978, p. 219, Lalloo died in a train crash in Mexico in 1905.

<sup>78</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 13 September 1890, 37: 364.

<sup>79</sup>*Who and what is Sequah?*, advertising booklet in CMAC Sequah Archive. However, a photograph of Sequah in 1888 probably shows W. H. Hartley: it was published in the *Northern Figaro* (Aberdeen), 6 October 1888, p. 18, and reproduced in Trevor H. Hall's *The search for Harry Price*, London, Duckworth, 1978, facing p. 55.

<sup>80</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 7 March 1891, 38: 337, "Most of them are Americans, and have had experience in the peripatetic line before. Many are dentists, but there are no actors or broken-down preachers amongst them." In the announcement of his wedding at Ennis Cathedral, Ireland, on 5 September 1891, Alfred Wilson Hartley Snow ("Dr Sequah") described himself as "late of Chicago, U.S.A." (*ibid.*, 19 September 1891, 39: 426). Another Sequah, Charles Santor, said "There is a company of ten of us who came over from America" (*ibid.*, 9 November 1901, 59: 751).



*Figure 2* Anonymous engraving: portrait of “Sequah”. Front cover of *Who and what is Sequah?*, CMAC Sequah Archive, Wellcome Institute library, London.

March 1889, the Sequah organization was formed into a limited company called Sequah Ltd., with a head office in London ruled over by Hartley as managing director.<sup>81</sup>

#### THE MAKING OF A SEQUAH

Among the people whom Jim Norman introduced to the Sequah business were two young Glaswegians, Peter Alexander Gordon and his wife Bessie. They had been on the road as part of Norman’s company, doing a clairvoyant or mind-reading act with

<sup>81</sup>See pp. 290–293 below.

music under the stage name James and Esther Kasper.<sup>82</sup> Peter Gordon (James Kasper) had a talent for public performance which was handed down in his family, for he was the son of the redoubtable Dr. J. F. S. Gordon, Episcopalian Minister of St Andrew's, Glasgow Green, who was not only a scholar but also "a vigorous and unconventional preacher, and at one time attracted huge crowds by his Sunday evening lectures".<sup>83</sup> In January 1890, Norman mentioned to Hartley that James Kasper would like to join the Sequahs, and Hartley offered Kasper £3 a week to act in the first instance as secretary to the Sequah in Cork, a Mr Boon. Kasper's duties were to take responsibility for stock control and accounting, to send a business report to Sequah Ltd in London every other day, and, ominously, to keep the company fully informed of any irregularities on the part of the staff in Cork, from the Sequah downwards.<sup>84</sup> On arriving in Cork from Glasgow, Kasper found that the company there consisted of Boon, the Sequah; a general manager who had charge of the waggons, stables, grounds, lamps, and patients; a certain "Duglas" who seems to have played a Red Indian; and a band which was recruited locally.<sup>85</sup> Boon was annoyed at Kasper's taking over control of the cash, but a week later, being found insufficiently sober to perform his duties, he was discharged, and a substitute Sequah called Crichton was sent from Ipswich to replace him. Crichton had considerable business initiative, for before joining Sequah, he seems to have served a twelve-months' prison sentence for buying clergymen's vestments on credit from a mail order firm in Edinburgh and then pawning them in order to raise money to set himself up as an auctioneer. Crichton worked Cork, Queenstown, and Waterford for Sequah in February and March 1890, but by then the onset of delirium tremens had

<sup>82</sup> James Kasper's own papers (1890–92) and related material on Sequah collected by him, comprise the Sequah Archive in the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre in the Wellcome Institute Library (ref. CMAC/GC/69), from which extracts are quoted with permission. Kasper put these papers in a brown tin box inscribed with the name "P.A. Gordon", and deposited the box with his bank, the Birkbeck Bank, Southampton Buildings, London, probably in 1892. This bank was run by the Birkbeck Permanent Benefit Building Society, which went into liquidation in 1911. It was then found that its banking operations had been carried on *ultra vires* and in contravention of the Banking Acts. The Receiver obtained an order on 26 June 1912 for deposited effects to be separated from the Society's assets and placed in Court. Accordingly, Kasper's uncollected box was sealed and placed in the Bank of England where it remained undisturbed until 1982. It was then opened by the Court Funds Office and carefully examined by Mr F. Simmons, Chief Clerk, Royal Courts of Justice, whose appreciation of the interest of the papers led to their being presented on the authority of Master John Ritchie, Senior Master and Queen's Remembrancer, to the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre, through the good offices of Major Charles O'Leary, Clerk to the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London.

<sup>83</sup> J. Wilkinson, *Centenary souvenir of St Andrew's Church, Glasgow Green*, Glasgow, D. Gilfillan, 1905, pp. 33–34, with a portrait of Dr Gordon facing p. 60. There is an obituary of him in the *Glasgow herald*, 25 January 1904 (cutting in William Young, 'Glasgow scraps', album in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, vol. 8, p. 35). J.F.S. Gordon was the author of numerous antiquarian works, notably *Glasghu Facies: a view of the city of Glasgow*, 2 vols., Glasgow, J. Tweed, [n.d.] (vol. 2, dated 1872, is entitled *The history of Glasgow from the earliest to the present time* and has continuous pagination with vol. 1). The *International genealogical index*, op. cit., note 64 above, states that Peter Alexander Gordon was born on 9 November 1859 in the parish of Tradeston, Glasgow, the son of James Frederick Skinner Gordon and Elspeth Russell Gordon. The identification of this P.A. Gordon with James Kasper is proved by a letter from Kasper to his bank, 13 October 1891, in which his father's address is given as 8 Stonefield Terrace, Glasgow, which was the same address as 8 Mathieson St, Glasgow, the residence of the Rev. Dr J.F.S. Gordon according to the 1889–92 *Register of voters*, Glasgow (Kasper's letterbook, CMAC Sequah Archive, p. 93). There is also a letter from Kasper to his father (ibid., pp. 100–101).

<sup>84</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letters from J. Norman and Sequah Ltd to Kasper, 8 and 23 January 1890.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., accounts in Cork.

begun to affect his performance, his lectures were padded out with Shakespearian quotations and anti-semitic jokes, and at the end of March James Norman was summoned from London to speak to him. Norman arrived incognito and attended one of Crichton's performances in Waterford. During the tooth-extraction, Crichton broke a girl's tooth, and, because she shouted, he pushed her off the waggon and would not take out the pieces. Norman, who could not bear to watch any more, left the ground, and returned later to give Crichton his discharge. Crichton was replaced in Ireland by a more reliable American Sequah.<sup>86</sup>

Despite this unfortunate start, a certain amount of money was made, and Hartley was pleased with the way Kasper had handled some unpleasant situations.<sup>87</sup> On 22 February 1890, he wrote to Kasper, "my intentions are to give you a waggon and start you out sometime this summer as a Sequah. I have no doubt that you would be able to do better with us as a Sequah than you would to continue in your old business."<sup>88</sup> In March, Kasper was ordered to proceed to Carlisle where he acted in the same capacity for the Sequah there, and this period was followed by short spells accompanying the same Sequah in Penrith and another one in Belper, Derbyshire, apparently without serious incident. Having seen all aspects of the work, Kasper was summoned to London on 30 April 1890 and was offered the opportunity to become a Sequah, which he accepted.<sup>89</sup>

Presumably, after being given a fortnight's training in tooth-extraction and massage, Kasper was given his contract on 19 May 1890.<sup>90</sup> Under the contract, which was valid for three years unless terminated by the company, Kasper would work exclusively for Sequah Ltd, and would be paid his expenses, a salary of £3 per week, and a commission of 12½ per cent on all sales over £50 per week. Sequah Ltd could terminate the contract at one week's notice, or without notice if Kasper should at any time be intoxicated while in the performance of his duties. Any liability of any kind to his patients would be borne by Kasper and not by Sequah Ltd. The contract obliged Kasper to carry on business "in and through Great Britain and Ireland, the Colonies of Great Britain, Europe and the United States of America, Mexico, South America and the West Indian Islands or such of them as Sequah Ltd. may select or require him to visit", but, though Kasper would eventually travel far in Sequah's service, his first assignment was closer to home: the Somerset market town of Shepton Mallet.

For the following six months (24 May to 12 November 1890) Kasper acted as Sequah in Somerset and Gloucestershire, going twice daily through the routine described in the opening pages of this paper.<sup>91</sup> Financially, he was not a great success,

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, letters and telegrams from Sequah Ltd to Kasper, January–March 1890, and letters from B. White to Kasper, March 1890. The *Cork Daily Herald*, 13 February 1890.

<sup>87</sup> For the unpleasant situations see p. 307f below. In the eight weeks from 25 January 1890 to 12 March 1890, Sequah's receipts in Cork were £749 7s 9d. and expenses came to £455 0s. 7d., leaving a balance of £294 7s. 2d. to offset overheads (CMAC Sequah Archive). Letters from W. Hartley and J. Norman to Kasper, 31 January and 9 February 1890, *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, Hartley to Kasper.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1890, instruction to proceed to Carlisle; 14 April 1890, instruction to proceed to Belper; 30 April 1890, instruction to proceed to London.

<sup>90</sup> The contract is in Kasper's ledger, *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, letters from Sequah Ltd to Kasper, 23 May–5 November 1890, together with miscellaneous accounts, cuttings, receipts, etc. in the same archive.

partly due to bad weather and perhaps partly through inexperience. W. H. Hartley kept urging him on with vigorous letters.

Remember that you never do your work right on one of these waggons until your shirt is wet, and when you have perspired sufficiently to wet your shirt so that you can take it off and ring it out, then YOU HAVE DONE YOUR DUTY. As you feel, so do the people feel, and if you do not warm yourself up you will never warm the people up. You must work with a will and heart, and make them understand that you are interested in what you are doing and that you believe in the merits of the goods you are selling with your whole heart, body, soul and mind.<sup>92</sup>

Kasper's accounts for these first twenty-six weeks are summarily reproduced in Table 1. It will be seen that he made only a small profit for the company, and after overheads were taken into account may barely have broken even. His takings were certainly far from equalling the fabulous sums which "Sequah" was rumoured to take, though these rumours may have had some foundation in the moneys received in W. H. Hartley's first attack on Edinburgh and the great industrial cities in 1887–88.

#### THE SEQUAH COMPANIES

Hartley had started out as Sequah in 1887 with a one-waggon show, but as the number of employees increased, the business came to need more capital and more organization than he alone could provide.<sup>93</sup> He therefore entered into partnership, probably in 1888, with two American Polish Jews called Leon Kokocinski and Emil Danziger, who had come to London (perhaps from Chicago) only in 1886.<sup>94</sup> Kokocinski and Danziger were partners in an optician's business called L. K. Leon & Co., which they had founded at 167 Piccadilly, almost opposite Burlington House.<sup>95</sup> Together with Hartley, they formed the Sequah Indian Medicine Firm, and took over a large office in the centre of the patent medicine business in London, at 46 (later also 44) Farringdon Street.<sup>96</sup> On 9 March 1889, the three of them made allowance for the growth of the business by turning the partnership into a joint-stock company called Sequah Limited. As sole shareholders in Sequah Ltd, they would buy the Sequah Indian Medicine Firm from themselves as sole partners in the firm for £49,993, which sum they would pay to themselves in the form of 49,993 shares of £1 each in the new company. Hartley received 34,997 shares (seventy per cent), the other two partners 7,498 shares (fifteen per cent) each. Apart from chattels, the main assets of the firm were stated to be the trademark "Sequah's Prairie Flower" (reg. no. 75527) and the benefit of an agreement between Owen D. Phelps and William Henry Hartley on 26 June 1888 for "the exclusive right of selling in Europe the mineral water from the

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., Hartley to Kasper, 22 September 1890, and a similar letter dated 1 October 1890.

<sup>93</sup>W. H. Hartley, reported in the *Financial News*, 25 September 1890, p. 3.

<sup>94</sup>No papers relating to this partnership have been traced, but the partners' agreement to sell it to the first Sequah Ltd (see below) states that "the vendors have for some time past carried on business together in partnership as proprietary medicine vendors" (PRO. BT. 31. 4371/28393, no. 4, dated 9 March 1889). The earliest documented date of the partnership is 27 April 1888, when its name was given in an application for a trade mark: see note 70 above.

<sup>95</sup>The firm L. K. Leon & Co. was presumably named after Leon Kokocinski. He and Danziger gave its premises as their address in the papers of the first Sequah Ltd cited in the previous note. For one of their early advertisements see Richard Corson, *Fashions in eye glasses*, London, Peter Owen, 1967, p. 207. The firm still exists, at 29 New Cavendish Street, London W.1.

<sup>96</sup>PRO. BT. 31. 4373/28393, nos. 2 and 5.

TABLE 1. JAMES KASPER'S ACCOUNTS AS SEQUAH IN SOMERSET AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE, MAY-NOVEMBER 1890

<i>week nos.</i>	<i>dates</i>	<i>place</i>	<i>(amounts in pounds shillings and pence)</i> <i>receipts</i>	<i>expenses</i>	<i>balance (deficit)</i>
1-4	24 May-10 June 1890	Shepton Mallet, Somerset	109 18 0	92 5 7	17 12 5
4-6	11-28 June 1890	Wells, Somerset	104 12 0	84 2 1	20 9 11
7	29 June-5 July 1890	Wells, Westbury, Glastonbury, Somerset	50 6 0	31 18 9	18 7 3
8-10	6-21 July 1890	Glastonbury, Somerset	151 6 0	70 11 11	80 14 1
10	22-26 July 1890	Street and Wedmore, Somerset	24 8 0	28 9 3	(4 1 3)
11	27 July-2 August 1890	Cheddar, Somerset	19 6 0	29 10 3	(10 4 3)
12-17	3 August-9 September 1890	Weston-super-Mare, Somerset	194 14 0	173 15 8	20 18 4
17-22	10 September-13 October 1890	Stroud, Gloucestershire	247 0 6	143 10 10	103 9 8
22-26	14 October-12 November 1890	Cirencester, Gloucestershire	192 8 0	120 12 0	71 16 0
<i>total</i>			<b>£1093 18s. 6d.</b>	<b>£774 16s. 4d.</b>	<b>£319 2s. 2d.</b>

Source: CMAC Sequah Archive, Wellcome Institute Library, London.

*Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library*

Avon Springs in the Village of Avon, County of Livingston, State of New York". The vendors signed an undertaking not to take part for ten years in any other patent medicine business in any country in Europe except Russia, Russian Poland, and Austria-Hungary, and, if active in those countries, not to use the trade names "Prairie Flower" or "Sequah Oil": the excepted countries were presumably so defined in consideration of likely business and family contacts of Kokocinski and Danziger. In the new company, Hartley was Managing Director, while Leon Kokocinski travelled in the interest of the company for twelve months without remuneration except for out-of-pocket expenses, and Danziger manned the office in London.<sup>97</sup>

By 4 July 1889, Hartley had sold about 2,000 shares and the other two shareholders about 400 each, thus bringing at least £2,800 in new capital into the company. The seven new shareholders included one performing Sequah, Charles Frederick Rowley, then of Swansea (2,000 shares), and some of the businessmen who were later to play an important part in the history of the business.<sup>98</sup> By February 1890, there were eighteen shareholders in all, some of whom had bought a further 6,000 shares sold by Kokocinski and Danziger.<sup>99</sup> Since at this time the Sequahs were sweeping the country with sensational success, it became clear that there were too few shares to satisfy all the people who wanted to own them. At the same time, there was not enough capital. The solution to both problems, though probably unprecedented for a quack-medicine show, and much ridiculed for that reason, was to go public.<sup>100</sup>

Hartley planned on a large scale. On 19 June 1890, a new company, also called Sequah Limited, was formed with a nominal capital of no less than £300,000 divided into 100,000 preference shares and 200,000 ordinary shares of £1 each.<sup>101</sup> (By way of comparison, Boot's Pure Drug Co. was formed in 1888 with a nominal capital of £80,000.)<sup>102</sup> The new Sequah Ltd was to buy the business from the shareholders in the old Sequah Ltd. for £250,000, of which £150,001 would be paid in cash, £33,333 in pref. shares and £66,666 in ord. shares, in proportion to the stakes which the shareholders had had in the old company. The dominant shareholder, W. H. Hartley, now owned 65.53 per cent of the old shares: he was therefore due to receive £98,295 in cash (over £3 million by 1985 values); 21,843 new pref. shares and 43,686 new ord. shares of £1 each. Brokers were appointed in London and Bristol; the

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 4. Sequah Ltd does not appear to have had any connexion with Sequarine Ltd, whose papers are at PRO. BT. 31. 24740/156225 and which made a tonic supposedly connected with the rejuvenation treatment of C.-E. Brown-Sequard: see *More secret remedies*, London, British Medical Association, 1912, pp. 62–63. It may have been connected with Sequanah Limited (reg. 283439), but unfortunately the papers of this company were destroyed by the registrar of companies on 9 June 1964 under a rule which permits such an act twenty or more years after a company's dissolution.

<sup>98</sup> PRO. BT. 31. 4373/28393, no. 6.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7.

<sup>100</sup> W. H. Hartley, reported in the *Financial News*, 25 September 1890, p. 3, "The vendors were thought to have laid themselves open to a great deal of ridicule in promoting themselves into a public company, but this was partially agreed upon at the time that they made themselves into a small syndicate [i.e. the first Sequah Ltd.]"

<sup>101</sup> The surviving papers of this company, the second Sequah Ltd, are at PRO. BT. 31. 4793/31733.

<sup>102</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 17 November 1888, 33: 677.

prospectus for the new Sequah Ltd. was published on 21 June 1890, and the list of applications for shares opened on 24 June 1890.<sup>103</sup>

The prospectus is not an entirely convincing document. It gives a figure for the number of bottles of medicine sold in the previous twelve months (1.46 million), and it shows that sales increased from 247,343 bottles in the first quarter to 457,697 in the last, but it gives no figure for turnover or for the average price per bottle, nor does it give a figure for the number of bottles given away, or even mention that any bottles were. Figures are given for “net profit” for the year (£44,584) and for each quarter (increasing from £8,951 to £12,966), but how these figures were obtained is not indicated, for there are no figures for costs, indebtedness, or anything else except dividends: a twenty per cent dividend could currently be paid on the ord. shares. With the aid of this inducement, the company was successfully floated. By 8 October 1890, it could boast a register of 368 holders of pref. shares and 966 holders of ord. shares.<sup>104</sup> Hartley was the biggest shareholder (43,784 ord.). Of the holders of ord. shares, 178 (18.4 per cent) gave addresses in London, 161 (16.7 per cent) in Bristol, 111 (11.5 per cent) in Ireland, and 89 (9.2 per cent) in Yorkshire. The rest lived elsewhere in the UK except for a Mr J. J. Burton, chartered accountant, of 39 Broadway, New York. Since the company advertised the prospectus in the *Chemist and Druggist*, it is not surprising that at least eighty men in the pharmaceutical retail trade bought shares.<sup>105</sup> There were also six surgeons, five medical practitioners, and eleven clergymen among the shareholders. No shareholder described himself as a dentist.

Sequah Ltd now had a flourishing business, money in the bank, and a bright future which it owed almost entirely to the genius of William Henry Hartley. As the chairman said at the company’s first meeting, “There is no nook or cranny of this business, and no honest or straightforward dodge (laughter) with which Mr Hartley is not able to deal. The ingenuity and skill with which he insists upon people being cured by his remedies are beyond all praise (laughter and applause).”<sup>106</sup> There were, however, to be some dodges which would defeat even Hartley.

#### SEQUAH AND CIVIL DISTURBANCE

Sequah’s performances were attended by vast audiences. In July 1889, they filled St George’s Hall in Newcastle, the largest roofed space in the city.<sup>107</sup> At Leeds, in October of the same year, 30,000 people were estimated to have come to the Pig Market each day to see him in action.<sup>108</sup> While most were impressed by Sequah and some young ladies were said to idolize him, he also had his enemies, particularly among medical students, doctors, and pharmacists. Sequah was not above enlisting popular support by spreading rumours that these vested interests were persecuting

<sup>103</sup> The prospectus was published in *ibid.*, 21 June 1890, 36: advert. pp. iv–v and in the *Sequah Chronicle*, 21 June 1890, no. 5, p. 8.

<sup>104</sup> PRO. BT. 31. 4793/31733, no. 7.

<sup>105</sup> Most (73) described themselves as chemists, 3 as druggists, 1 each as apothecary, patent medicine dealer, and seller of patent medicines.

<sup>106</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 13 September 1890, 37: 364.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 July 1889, 35: 36.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 November 1889, 35: 615.

him. His army of Red Indian chuckers-out was also intended to suggest that there were threats against which he had to be protected. Sequah's visits to provincial towns tended to produce lawsuits, bloody heads, and damage to property, which would hardly allow local authorities to favour a second visit.

In December 1888, Sequah—in these early days it was still W. H. Hartley in person—arrived in Edinburgh to perform twice daily in the Waverley Market. It was the time shortly after the unfortunate death of the German emperor under Sir Morell Mackenzie's care, and a lecture by Sir Morell to the students of Edinburgh University on 6 December had allegedly been boycotted by certain professors.<sup>109</sup> Their classes had been disrupted by pro-Mackenzie medical students, who had thus earned a bad press for students in general. Hartley exploited their unpopularity by spreading the rumour that they were going to try to overturn his waggon. So successfully did he arouse the sympathy of his audience that at one performance an individual who had the courage to shout "Quack!" was rushed by the crowd, which cheered when it was told that "a student" had been ejected.<sup>110</sup> From then on, Sequah continued to wage war on the medical students. On 20 December, three arts students went to the Waverley Market out of curiosity to see Sequah in action, having first agreed to stay away from any disturbance. As Sequah passed the three students on his way to the rostrum,

suddenly and without the least provocation, he attacked the third member of our party, who in height and weight was by no means a match for him. In the most cowardly manner he drove his clenched fist into the student's face, and having almost stunned him by the first blow, repeatedly hit him about the head in a most furious manner. The student was so completely taken by surprise that he had no time to defend himself. Meanwhile the mob cheered the man, and to our surprise, when the police interfered, it was not "Sequah", the assailant, whom they ejected, but the assaulted student.<sup>111</sup>

It was the same story with another Sequah, Crichton, in Cork in 1890. A man who had been smoking during Sequah's lecture in the Corn Exchange was ejected with much invective from Sequah against the manners of "medical students". The following evening (22 February) Sequah's meeting was invaded by some sixty or a hundred students from the Queen's College marching five abreast, who heckled to prevent him from speaking. The crowd roared "Turn them out!", the students bellowed in reply "Science against quackery!", and the police arrived to eject the troublemakers who, having made their point, left after ten minutes to go and serenade the city's physicians. Sequah also blamed medical students a few days later, when a burly individual called Long Con, being dissatisfied with the way in which his tooth had been "yanked out", remonstrated with Sequah. Sequah attacked him, the two closed on each other, rolled off the car, and continued the fight on the ground. A pitched battle between the audience and Sequah's little band seemed imminent when a posse of constables intervened with batons drawn and managed to separate the two factions.<sup>112</sup> Sequah published in the local press a statement, signed "Cornelius X.

<sup>109</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, December 1888, *passim*; *Br. med. J.*, 1888, ii: 1352.

<sup>110</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 19 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1888, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> *Cork Daily Herald*, 24 February 1890; *Cork Examiner*, 24 February 1890; *Cork Daily Herald*, 26 February 1890. *Cork Constitution*, *Cork Daily Herald*, and *Cork Examiner*. 11 March 1890. Cuttings of these articles are in one of Kasper's scrapbooks, CMAC Sequah Archive.

Kellehey, his mark”, in which Long Con “confessed” that certain medical students had paid him to cause trouble.<sup>113</sup>

The second Sequah, William Rowe, was also no stranger to civil strife. In September 1889, he appeared before the magistrates at Middlesbrough to request a summons against a local medical man, Henry Leiston. Rowe had come out of his lodgings after nightfall, he said, and had found waiting for him at the garden gate a tall man, Leiston, who had looked him straight in the face and said “You are a damned quack”. After a certain commotion, they continued their dispute at the police station. Rowe demanded damages because, he claimed, he had given the doctors in the town every facility to prove whether or not he was a fraud. The magistrates persuaded Rowe to let the matter drop.<sup>114</sup> A couple of months later one of the Red Indians was charged at Ashton-under-Lyne with assaulting two men and a police constable during one of Sequah’s performances. The accused, Paul John Bear Foot, offered his defence in the language now familiar from Westerns. “This was the beginning. I am to protect our business, and to keep peace outside the carriage. If anyone talks during my master’s was giving his lecture I had to keep order; and if a man must not trained to keep order as me.” After condemning the policeman for restraining him from throwing the two men out, the brave offered to forgive him, but ended with a bitter “Glad of leaving this plain. That is the pay I got of my labour in Ashton.” He was fined five shillings and costs, with an option of seven days’ imprisonment.<sup>115</sup> Rowe was in court again, this time at Rochdale, on 16 May 1890. He was alleged to have taken some lodgings and to have ordered the landlord to buy in provisions in the form of a bottle of claret, a bottle of gin, twelve bottles of stout, and certain necessaries for tea. He then vanished. In the inevitable suit the judge found for the landlord.<sup>116</sup>

Another Sequah, Henry Wardle, visited Oxford in August 1890, and performed in Circus Grounds, Church Street, St Ebbe’s. A small boy by the name of Edward Charles Simmonds, who was watching the proceedings with half a dozen friends, was invited by Sequah to step up on to the waggon to have a tooth drawn. He stepped up, and Sequah extracted a perfectly healthy double tooth and apparently some of the gum too, for the boy went home with a bleeding mouth. The boy’s father sued Sequah for assault, but the magistrates dismissed the case on the ground that the boy, although little more than a baby, had given his consent to the operation, though they also warned Sequah to use more care and discretion.<sup>117</sup> The following month, Sequah’s visit to Cambridge resulted in riot. During his performance on Friday 26 September 1890, he incited the hostility of his audience against a certain Mr Bird, chemist of King Street, Cambridge, who had called Sequah’s medicines quackery and humbug. At the end of the evening, Sequah’s chariot was drawn through the streets in triumph as usual, and as it passed down King Street, Mr Bird’s shop windows were smashed. Sequah emerged unharmed from the subsequent legal proceedings because the unfortunate chemist had not been able to prove who broke his

<sup>113</sup> Reprinted in the *Liverpool Echo*, 11 August 1890.

<sup>114</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 7 September 1889, 35: 322.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 November 1889, 35: 746.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 May 1890, 36: 682.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 September 1890, 37: 349.

windows.<sup>118</sup> A week later, there was a similar event at Kingston-on-Thames, where a grocer was selling Sequah's remedies at cut prices. Incited by Sequah, a large crowd presented itself before the grocer's shop, hooting, howling, and ultimately smashing his windows. This time, three men were arrested and convicted.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to the tensions which Sequah deliberately created, there was the commotion at the end of his performance when the people would pay him what was gullibly reported as a spontaneous tribute: local youths would unhitch the horses from his golden chariot and draw it through the streets at a run, accompanied by the cheers of his admirers. At Hull in September 1889, one of the youths pulling the chariot fell to the ground, was run over, and died the following day. At Clonmel in Ireland, a little girl was run over by Sequah's chariot in September 1890, and at Springburn, Glasgow, it knocked down and ran over a boy of seventeen, who died of his wounds.<sup>120</sup> On 22 November 1890, a man was driving a gig drawn by a pony along Ryland street, Birmingham, when Sequah's golden chariot, carrying a brass band and drawn by four horses, appeared driving in the opposite direction. The pony was frightened and backed the gig into the road, but Sequah's driver carried straight on and overturned it. At the County Court, the judge remarked sarcastically that "no doubt people were in their rights in driving a huge caravan containing a band of musicians along the public streets", but people were not obliged to leave the streets merely because Sequah was there. Not for the first or last time, damages were awarded against Sequah.<sup>121</sup>

#### SEQUAH AND HIS RIVALS

Like any company introducing a new product, Sequah Ltd feared plagiarism by its own employees. The company had to pay its Sequahs more than it would have liked "because they might otherwise have opposed us."<sup>122</sup> One of its agents in Wales was David James of Tonypany. After leaving Sequah, James traded as "Danix", and using a waggon like Sequah's sold a medicine called "Danix's Flower of the Wilderness" (an apparent plagiarism of "Sequah's Prairie Flower"), which was supposed to "cure indigestion with the speed of electricity". Also like Sequah, he sold an oil for external application, as a remedy for impaired sight. For a time, he employed Edward Baxter Hedley, an ex-Sequah, as his salesman in Treorchy. (It was only because Hedley absconded with some 1,500 bottles of Danix's fluids, and was sued by James for embezzlement, that we know of their activities today.)<sup>123</sup> In Ireland, when another ex-Sequah, Alfred Wilson Hartley Snow of Ennis, Co. Clare, was reported to be selling Sequah's medicines in the Sequah style in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, the secretary of Sequah Ltd in London wrote to the press that he would be prosecuted forthwith for selling fraudulent imitations of Sequah remedies and

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 October 1890, **37**: 466–467.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October 1890, **37**: 506.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1889, **35**: 396 (Hull); 20 September 1890, **37**: 396 (Clonmel); 25 October 1890, **37**: 570 (Springburn).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 February 1891, **38**: 188.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 September 1891, **39**: 397.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 March 1892, **40**: 436–437; 16 April 1892, **40**: 561–562.

infringing trade marks.<sup>124</sup> Sequah Ltd could not have sold many bottles of its own in the face of home-grown competitors like these.

Patent medicines, though so called, were rarely patented, for that would require the revelation of the formula, which was normally too banal to be patented anyway. But their names could be registered as trade marks, as were “Sequah” and the names of his products.<sup>125</sup> This proved to be a protection on 13 January 1892, when Sequah Ltd took out a summons against Joseph Emmons, sued as “Sequa”, and Henry William Wood of Wood & Co., as a result of which Emmons and Wood were perpetually restrained from using the name of Sequa or Sequah’s or Sequa’s Oils as a designation for or in connexion with any medicines, oils, pills, or preparations manufactured or sold by them. Emmons was also “perpetually restrained from stating to any person or representing that he is the original Sequah”.<sup>126</sup> Sequah Ltd had had a less sympathetic hearing at Dundee in 1888. W. H. Hartley, the real original Sequah, had left the city after a couple of weeks, having filled the chemists’ shop-windows with advertisements for Sequah’s Prairie Flower and Indian Oil. Then a medical botanist named Max Gregor arrived and tried to hitch his waggon to Sequah’s star by selling his own “Prairie Flowers” and Indian Oils”, thus omitting the name “Sequah” and using plural nouns for Sequah’s singulars. Sequah Ltd petitioned the sheriff for an interdict, and legal proceedings were opened on 8 December 1888. Gregor, after throwing abuse at the plaintiff and being instructed to speak to the point, did not deny Sequah’s allegations, but declared that no one, not even a Yankee adventurer, had a monopoly of the word “Indian”, which was the name of an integral part of the Empire, and surely everyone had heard the lines,

Everyone who knew her  
Felt the gentle power  
Of Rosalie, the Prairie Flower.

Who could have a monopoly of that? The sheriff agreed and refused to grant the interdict: at once imitation “Prairie Flowers” and “Indian Oils” went on sale in the chemists’ shops.<sup>127</sup>

Other rivals of Sequah included “Rhuma”,<sup>128</sup> “Lequah”, “Pasqua”, “the Sepoy”,<sup>129</sup> the Cherokee Medicine Company<sup>130</sup> and numerous unauthorized persons

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 11 November 1893, 43: 684; 18 November 1893, 43: 741–742.

<sup>125</sup>*Trade Marks Journal*, 1 August 1888, no. 540, p. 1118, mark no. 75,527 (“Sequah’s Prairie Flower”), and 26 September 1888, no. 548, p. 1384, mark no. 75,528 (“Sequah’s Oil”). *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 September 1888, 33: 335.

<sup>126</sup>PRO. J. 15. 2035, fol. 136<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>127</sup>*Chem. Drugg.*, 15 December 1888, 33: 810; 5 January 1889, 34: 3; 23 January 1892, 40: 100. In fact, the word “Indian” was not part of the trade mark: see note 125 above.

<sup>128</sup>CMAC Sequah Archive, copy of letter from Kasper, Weston-super-Mare, to Hartley in London, 27 August 1890.

<sup>129</sup>*Wakefield Free Press*, 26 July 1890, as cited in the *Sequah Chronicle*, 9 August 1890, no. 12, p. 5, refers to these three. For “The Sepoy” see also *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 February 1890, 36: 175, and 15 February 1890, 36: 219. He (or they) represented a small Peterborough-based firm, the Sepoy Company Ltd, which sold “Indian Balm” from 1889 to 1891. Its surviving papers are at PRO. BT. 31. 4642/30512.

<sup>130</sup>The Cherokees were an Irishman called Arthur Redmondi (né Redmond) and one Philip Levine. A cutting in Kasper’s Jamaica scrapbook, CMAC Sequah Archive, records a legal case at Hanley County Court, probably in 1890, involving them and Sequah.

using the name Sequah.<sup>131</sup> Among many other plagiarists whose names are not known to us, there was a character whose experiences were recounted at length in the *Chemist and Druggist* in 1893 under the pseudonym “Market Quack”.<sup>132</sup> He had recently been “exploiting the country in the approved modern style with painted chariot, band, tooth-drawing instruments and all the outfit” at the request of a North of England drug firm which wanted to test Sequah’s method of marketing. The illustration (fig. 3) shows that he also adopted Sequah’s Americanoid trappings; his accounts show that the experiment was not successful—a mere £3 profit for a month’s work—for reasons which will be given in due course.<sup>133</sup>

The competitor who was most insistently persecuted by Sequah went by the illustrious name of “Dr Galen”. While touring Burslem, Staffordshire, on 2 October 1890, Galen, whose real name was John Bounds, was visited at his lodgings at 11.30 a.m. by one James Henry Wood, who told him, “I am a detective-inspector for the Inland Revenue Office, London, and am sent down here to arrest you and impound your horses and carriage”. Wood did not, in fact, arrest him but merely instructed him not to sell any more medicines until he heard from him again. Bounds, whose offence was represented as non payment of Stamp Duty on his medicines, accordingly cancelled his performances for that day and the next, Thursday and Friday, but on Saturday he discovered from an officer of the Inland Revenue that nobody called J. H. Wood was on the staff. Wood was arrested for impersonating an officer of the Inland Revenue, and Bounds was summoned for using threats of violence against him. It emerged that Wood was an advertising agent for Sequah Ltd, who had been sent down to put a competitor out of business. The trick did not work, however, for Wood was sent for trial and “Dr Galen” was soon back at work.<sup>134</sup> Their enmity flared up again in due course, and the case of *Bounds v. Sequah*, an allegation of slander, came before Liverpool Assizes on Monday 23 March 1891. Bounds claimed that his appearances before the public were often heralded by a shower of handbills warning the public against “unscrupulous persons” copying Sequah’s advertisements, devices, and trade marks. These aspersions had caused his receipts to drop from £30 or £35 a night to a mere £12 or £13. Sequah’s counsel cross-examined Bounds to show that his advertisements and the names of his medicines were imitations of those used by Sequah. Bounds admitted that he now, like Sequah, employed a band, whereas previously he had only used the Scottish bagpipes (“to make people ill before you cured them” was the judicial joke here interposed by Mr Justice Lawrence: in many of the legal cases mentioned here, proprietary-medicine vendors or quack doctors were treated by the judiciary with levity or even contempt). Eventually, both parties withdrew and had to pay their own costs.<sup>135</sup>

The competitors mentioned above are only those who imitated Sequah’s name or methods, but there were many other medicine vendors using different techniques.

<sup>131</sup> For example, Kasper, as the official Sequah in Somerset, faced competition from an unofficial Sequah at Frome: CMAC Sequah Archive, letter from Kasper to Sequah Ltd, 28 May 1890.

<sup>132</sup> “Market Quack”, op. cit., note 27 above, p. 122.

<sup>133</sup> p. 306 below.

<sup>134</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 18 October 1890, 37: 539–540.

<sup>135</sup> *Liverpool Daily Post* 24 March 1891, p. 4; *Daily Telegraph*, 26 March 1891, pp. 4–5.



*Figure 3* Engraving by A.W.J. depicting “Market Quack”, one of Sequah’s competitors. *Chem. Drugg.*, 28 January 1893, 42: 122. Wellcome Institute library, London.

There was St Jacob’s Oil which was sold by the Chas. A. Vogeler Co., an American company with a British office in Farringdon Road: the Company sent a four-in-hand coach around the country distributing advertisements for the oil, which was sold by

*Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library*

chemists.<sup>136</sup> The company had a close imitator who sold *St Joseph's Oil* through street-corner urchins dressed in coats of many colours (as though the Joseph of the motley coat were St Joseph, the husband of the Virgin).<sup>137</sup> However, it must have been Sequah Ltd which presented Vogeler with the most serious competition for the British market, because *St Jacob's Oil* published "knocking copy", anti-Sequah advertisements, in the local papers of towns which were visited by Sequah. They reprinted an account of Sequah's difficulties in Cork,<sup>138</sup> headed by a parody of a Sequah advertisement,

ENDED IN A ROW	LOOK OUT	FOR YOUR TEETH
ENDED IN A ROW	LOOK OUT	FOR YOUR TEETH
ENDED IN A ROW	LOOK OUT	FOR YOUR TEETH
DISORDERLY PROCEEDINGS		IN CORK
DISORDERLY PROCEEDINGS		IN CORK
DISORDERLY PROCEEDINGS		IN CORK

and concluding with the genteel claim that "St Jacob's Oil is not sold in the public squares, but is sold by every respectable chemist and medicine dealer. It conquers pain . . . . It does not require a cheap brass band to parade the streets with a gaudy show dressed like cowboy Indians, to convince the public that St Jacob's Oil will do this."<sup>139</sup> Many other proprietary medicines, some of purely local renown, combined to make the medicine business an extremely competitive one, although it was competition in advertising and marketing rather than in the invention of better medicines.

#### SEQUAH AND THE PHARMACISTS

The purpose of sending waggon-loads of tooth-drawers and brass bands around the UK was not only to sell Sequah's products directly to the public but also to stir up a demand which would be satisfied by local pharmacists after Sequah had ridden out of town.<sup>140</sup> The names of shopkeepers who had taken out a franchise would be advertised in the local newspapers before Sequah left, and he would see that their windows were full of his name.<sup>141</sup> But the 1880s and '90s were the time of the emergence of wholesalers and chain-stores in the pharmacy business, price-cutting was rife, and trading for small shopkeepers was difficult.<sup>142</sup> The market was glutted with pills and potions. A vendor of proprietary medicines, who took his wares around the chemists' shops received a gloomy reception: "We have to compete with the Stores", they said. "The old days, when a patent medicine fetched 1s 2½d or 2s 9d are over; we must sell your 1s box at 9d."<sup>143</sup> To win over the retailers, Sequah

<sup>136</sup> "Our town traveller", 'Proprietary articles', *Chem. Drugg.*, 7 March 1891, 38: 333–337, p. 335.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 November 1887, 31: 638.

<sup>138</sup> p. 294 above.

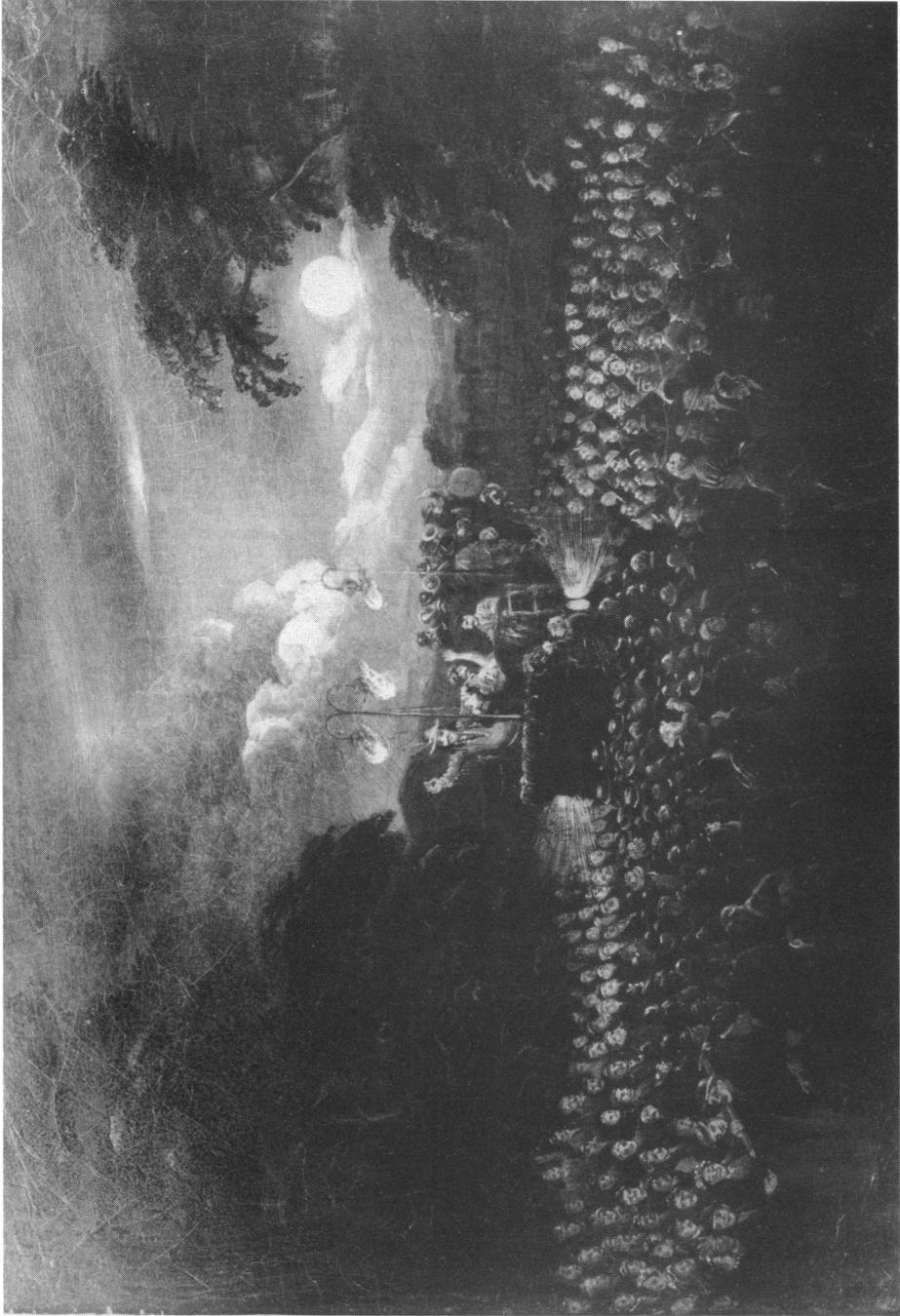
<sup>139</sup> *Liverpool Echo*, 5 August 1890, p. 2. Reprinted with Sequah's reply in the *Carlisle Journal*, 28 March 1890, p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> 'Sequah and his methods', *Sequah Chronicle*, 31 May 1890, no. 2, p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> E.g., *Chem. Drugg.*, 17 November 1888, 33: 677 (Dundee).

<sup>142</sup> Stanley Chapman, *Jesse Boot of Boots the Chemists*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1974, pp. 103–119.

<sup>143</sup> "A man who didn't make his million", *loc.cit.*, note 36 above.



*Plate 1* "Sequah on Clapham Common". Anonymous oil painting, c. 1890, on canvas 30.3 × 40.6 cms, Wellcome Institute library, London.



*Plate 2* Detail of plate 1: “Sequah on Clapham Common”.



*Plate 3* Anonymous oil painting, 17th century, after Theodoor Rombouts, c. 1628, on canvas 110 × 193 cms. (see p. 316). Wellcome Institute library, London.



*Plate 4* Advertisement for Sequah's medicines. Coloured lithograph, 76.7 × 101.2 cms. Sequah Archive, Contemporary Medical Archives Centre, Wellcome Institute library, London.



*Plate 5* Photograph of a stand of the Burroughs Wellcome Co. at a Chicago Exhibition, probably in the 1890s, with "Red Indians" (see p. 285). Wellcome Institute library, London.



Plate 6 Laloo (see p. 286). From G.M. Gould and W.L. Pyle, *Abnormalities and curiosities of medicine*, Philadelphia and London, W.B. Saunders, 1901, fig. 57. Wellcome Institute library, London.

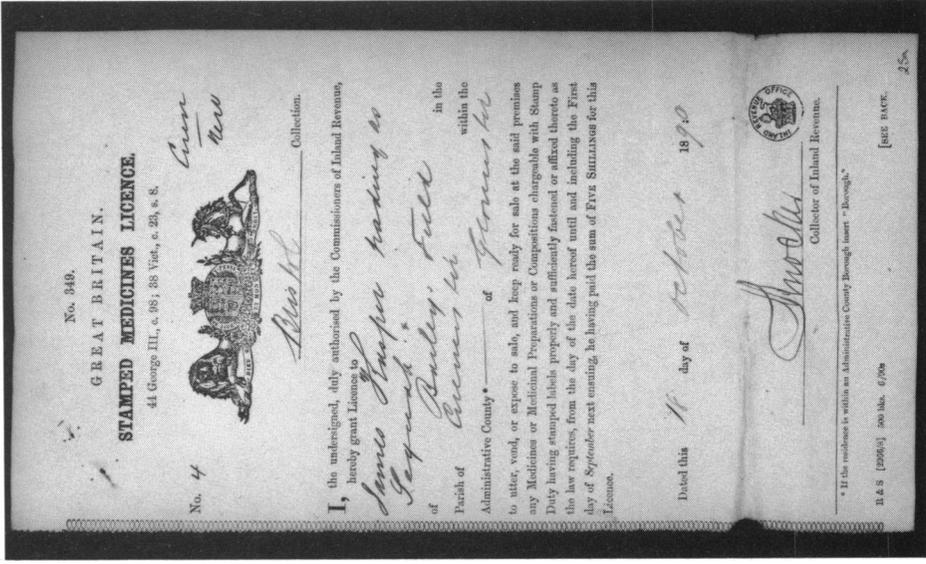


Plate 7 Stamped medicines licence mistakenly issued to James Kasper as Sequah in Cirencester, Bristol, 18 October 1890 (see p. 304). Sequah Archive, Contemporary Medical Archives Centre, Wellcome Institute library, London.

*Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library*

represented himself as the champion of the small man. In 1889, Sequah Ltd published a series of full-page advertisements in the trade press announcing that, in the interests of pharmacists, the company had refused to fill over £1,000 worth of orders from wholesale houses in London. Sequah's goods were sold to retailers for resale to the public at ONE SPECIFIED PRICE ONLY, as a mutual protection to the manufacturer and retailers.<sup>144</sup> Retailers who took up a Sequah franchise had to sign a written promise not to cut the price (fig. 4).<sup>145</sup> At Hull in August 1889, Sequah fought some price-cutting wholesalers by selling his 2s. bottles to the public for 4s. for three.<sup>146</sup> At Newcastle at about the same time, grocers who had somehow bought the medicines and were selling them at no profit were persuaded by Sequah not to sell the 2s. bottles for less than 1s. 10d., an act for which the pharmacists were most grateful.<sup>147</sup> What happened to a price-cutter at Kingston-on-Thames has already been told.<sup>148</sup>

Shepton-Mallet  
6<sup>th</sup> June 1890  
We The undersigned  
Chemists & Medicine  
Vendors, agree to fix  
the price of Sequah's  
remedies at 2/- per  
bottle & we undertake  
not to sell below this  
rate.  
J. H. Stephenson ✓  
T. W. Kendrick ✓  
A. H. Haldid pt.  
Mr. Coltrill ✓  
Wilson & Morrison ✓  
Gare & Son ✓

*Figure 4* Price-fixing agreement written by James Kasper as Sequah at Shepton Mallet, Somerset, 6 June 1890, and signed by five local pharmacists. CMAC Sequah Archive, Wellcome Institute library, London.

<sup>144</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 January 1889, **34**: 11; 20 April 1889, **34**: advert. p.vii; 27 April 1889, **34**: advert. p.vi.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 November 1888, **33**: 677; 12 January 1889, **34**: 57.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 August 1889, **35**: 259.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 August 1889, **35**: 292.

<sup>148</sup> p. 296 above.

It was therefore particularly annoying to pharmacists when a travelling Sequah arrived and sold his firm's medicines below the agreed price. A Workington chemist complained to the trade press that he was selling Sequah's 2s. preparations at the prevailing price (probably 1s. 10d.) when a Sequah man arrived and cut the price to 1s. 6d.<sup>149</sup> At York, wrote another complainant, the pharmacists sold Sequah's preparations at 2s. or 1s. 10d., the price-cutting stores at 1s. 8d., and Sequah at 1s. 6d. Sequah even sold for 3s. a packet containing one bottle of each of the 2s. medicines and two packets of his own brand of toothpaste priced 1s. each: an equivalent of 6d. per 2s. bottle.<sup>150</sup> The *Chemist and Druggist* remarked sardonically that the company was thus shown to be the best judge of the value of its products, but added: "The competition of a proprietor against his own agents is hopelessly unequal; and it is a question whether the obloquy cast on the usual retailers by the Sequah method does not outbalance whatever profit there may be on subsequent sales."<sup>151</sup> It was the old conflict between the steady business of the local man and the short-term profit of the fly-by-night; but in this case it left a bad taste because the latter had made a great show of being on the local men's side.

#### SEQUAH AND THE INLAND REVENUE

Sequah had a vast popular following, but the police, magistrates, and pharmacists had reason to regard him as a menace. He had also stirred up a more powerful enemy: the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, at their headquarters, Somerset House.

Ever since the first Medicine Stamp Act of 1783 (23 George III, c. 62), stamp duty had been payable on sales of proprietary medicines in Great Britain. The stamps were not a sign of the government's endorsement of the quality of the medicine, though the fact that they were so interpreted was often used as an argument against them: the purpose of the levy was simply to raise money for the Exchequer. Adhesive stamps were introduced in 1802, and they had to be stuck on the top or cork of the bottle in such a way that the stamp was broken when the bottle was opened. The stamps had to be purchased and affixed by the vendor who first sold the medicine in the vessel in which it would be bought by the consumer. In Sequah's case, it was Sequah Ltd which was responsible for paying the duty, since the company sold its medicines already bottled to both retailers and the public. The rate of duty was 1½d. on a bottle priced at 1s. or less; 3d. on a bottle priced between 1s. and 2s. 6d.; 6d. on a bottle priced between 2s. 6d. and 4s., and so on.<sup>152</sup>

In addition, those who sold proprietary medicines had to buy a licence to do so. The effect of this regulation was not to restrict the trade to qualified persons—anyone might buy a licence—but to enable the Inland Revenue to keep a check on all those from whose businesses it should be receiving stamp duty. In the year ending 31 March 1892, the number of licences sold was 28,746 and the revenue from medicine

<sup>149</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 19 July 1890, 37: 90.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 July 1890, 37: 146.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 September 1890, 37: 380.

<sup>152</sup> E. N. Alpe, *Handy book of medicine stamp duty*, London, offices of the 'Chemist and Druggist', [n.d., c. 1888]. George Griffenhagen, *Medicine tax stamps worldwide*, Milwaukee, American Topical Association, 1971, pp. 6–13.

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stamp duty was £240,062,<sup>153</sup> the equivalent of stamp duty on 38.4 million bottles sold at 1s. each.

There were two exceptions relevant to our story: medicine stamp duty was not payable on medicines given away, whether as samples or for charity, nor was it payable on medicines sold in Ireland.<sup>154</sup> Apart from these two exemptions, the application of the Medicine Stamp Act to the sales of Sequah Ltd was in theory straightforward: the company was obliged to purchase a licence and to pay stamp duty at the appropriate rate on all medicines sold in England, Scotland, and Wales.

In practice, Sequah and his imitators presented a problem for the Inland Revenue. Sequah Ltd had bought licences for all of the twenty or more Sequahs, but each of them was at liberty to operate his own pricing policy. In the face of price-cutters, a Sequah might sell 2s. bottles for 1s., and with this policy in mind Sequah Ltd applied 1½d. stamps to the 2s. bottles in advance. Pharmacists would have to sell the same bottles with 3d. stamps on.<sup>155</sup> The Sequahs offered to give away bottles to anyone who produced a clergyman's letter attesting that he or she could not pay,<sup>156</sup> and for this purpose the company legitimately sent out bottles without stamps, but undoubtedly some of these unstamped bottles were sold.<sup>157</sup> It was possible for an Inland Revenue inspector to enter an established pharmacy, herbalist's, or grocer's shop with witnesses, buy a medicine, and then prosecute if a dutiable medicine was sold unstamped, and such prosecutions occurred frequently.<sup>158</sup> It was scarcely possible for an inspector to take action if he emerged from the hurly-burly of a Sequah meeting with an un- or under-stamped bottle of Sequah's Prairie Flower. Who could say he had not accidentally got his hands on a charity bottle or part of a consignment for Belfast?

Confronted with complaints from aggrieved pharmacists about inequable stamping and with its own inspectors' problems in enforcing the law, the Inland Revenue went on to the attack. A Customs and Inland Revenue Bill was due to pass through Parliament in 1889–90. Many of its provisions concerned specific commodities such as beer, whisky, and silver plate, but section 9 of the subsequent Customs and Inland Revenue Act 1890 (53 Victoria, c. 8) was phrased in vaguer terms which would not attract attention: "Every licence to carry on any trade or business (except the trade or business of an appraiser, auctioneer or hawker) which shall hereafter be granted, shall only authorise the person to whom the licence is granted to carry on the trade or business therein in one set of premises to be specified in the licence."<sup>159</sup> This section passed without discussion through a House of Commons more concerned about the excise duty on alcohol. As a result of this clause, Sequah Ltd would in future have to operate always at a "set of premises". If it

<sup>153</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 558.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 January 1889, 34: 36.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 July 1890, 37: 146; 13 September 1890, 37: 380.

<sup>156</sup> Note 16 above.

<sup>157</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 18 February 1888, 32: 212; W. E. Geddes, 'Licensing patent-medicine vans', *ibid.*, 13 June 1891, 38: 841–842. CMAC Sequah Archive, B. White to Kasper, 27 March 1890, "[Crichton] used to sell the unstamped stuff and then spend £5 a day on women and drink."

<sup>158</sup> E.g., *Chem. Drugg.*, 15 October 1887, 31: 473; 5 March 1892, 40: 336.

<sup>159</sup> *The law reports. The public and general statutes, passed in the fifty-third and fifty-fourth years of the reign of H.M. Queen Victoria 1890*, vol. 27, London, W. Clowes, 1890, pp. 126–138, p. 128.

operated at more than one “set of premises”, it would have to purchase a licence for each set.

The Act was signed by Queen Victoria on 9 June 1890. It will be recalled that in the first half of 1890 Sequah had been doing excellent business from Aberdeen to Hastings. During that time, arrangements were being made for a public company, the second “Sequah Limited”, to be formed on 19 June 1890; the prospectus, presenting a large and growing business, was published on 21 June; and the list of applications for shares was opened on 24 June. These arrangements were completed only a week or two after the Customs and Inland Revenue Act 1890 entered the statute-book.

The effect of the Act on the proprietary medicine business was not at first apparent. Even in October 1890, some Inland Revenue offices in the West Country were still issuing licences in the form laid down by an obsolete act of 1875 (pl. 7). Other Inland Revenue clerks continued to sell licences for the sale of medicines from travelling vans or waggons on the assumption that under the 1890 Act a mobile vehicle could be a “set of premises”.<sup>160</sup> The official position of the Inland Revenue, when it was revealed, would prove that assumption erroneous.

In August 1890, Sequah Ltd received an official letter from Somerset House stating that in the new Act “there is no provision for the sale of medicines from a cart or stall in the street, or elsewhere than at licensed premises, and no license for such a purpose will be granted after September 1st next [1890]”.<sup>161</sup> Obviously, this begged the question whether a cart or stall could be licensed premises, and Sequah Ltd refused to accept the ruling. On 1 and 3 September 1890, Hartley sent out form letters to all the Sequahs instructing them to buy a licence for each place in which they sold, and to describe their premises as, for example, “plot of ground adjoining such and such a place”. On 6 September, he issued another form letter:

We are sending you by this post a parcel of 1½d stamps, and as soon as you receive them you are to take all the stock you have left with 1½d stamps on and put *another extra* stamp on, thus making them 3d.

You must please bear in mind that this is of the *utmost importance* being a new regulation from Somerset House, and we are under a PENALTY OF £100 if we fail to comply with this order after to-day Saturday the 6th inst. Furthermore the government have instructed their Officials all over the country to watch our Wagons and buy a bottle here and there, so you must be *very careful* about this matter and see that every bottle is stamped 3d after to-day.<sup>162</sup>

The company was so confident that it could win over Somerset House that it held an extraordinary General Meeting on 4 September and its Statutory General Meeting

<sup>160</sup> Geddes, *op. cit.*, note 157 above.

<sup>161</sup> This letter was quoted by S. F. Isitt at an Extraordinary General Meeting of Sequah Ltd on 4 October 1895: see *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 October 1895, 47: 555. In 1895, Isitt was chairman of the company; in 1890, he had been a director and major shareholder. The reference in the letter to “the present Session” shows that the year of the letter was 1890, while the anticipation of 1 September shows the month to be August at the latest. It was therefore not correct to say, as was said by the then chairman at the A.G.M. on 4 September 1891, that Somerset House took action “in October of last year”: this looks like a more or less deliberate inaccuracy designed to explain why the shareholders were not told of the Inland Revenue’s interest at the September 1890 meetings of shareholders referred to in note 163 below. October 1890 may have been the time when the company yielded to Somerset House, but was not the date of Somerset House’s intervention. For the 1891 meeting see *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 September 1891, 39: 396–397.

<sup>162</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letters from Hartley to Kasper in Weston-super-Mare, 1, 3 and 6 September 1891.

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on 24 September, but on neither occasion were the shareholders told of the actions of the Inland Revenue: on the contrary, the board of Sequah Ltd told them that the waggon trade was bringing the company the cream of the business while the pharmacists were left with the low-margin retail trade.<sup>163</sup> But in October 1890, a test case arose after an Inland Revenue officer at Liverpool refused to grant them a licence to vend patent medicines from a chariot at “The Hollow”, Mill Street, Toxteth Park. In response to Sequah’s appeal, Somerset House sent a letter, dated 27 October 1890, which was clearly their last word on the subject short of litigation:

The collector stated that the place in question is simply a piece of waste land on which, as admitted by your agent, there is no house or building, and that he declined to grant the licence on the ground that the proposed place of sale was not a “set of premises” as required by section 9 of the act 53 Vict. cap. 8. The Board are now advised that the collector was fully justified in the course taken by him, and they desire me definitely to point out to you, for your future guidance in conducting the business of the Company, that an excise licence cannot be granted for the sale of medicines elsewhere than upon a set of premises, and that such sales as have been conducted at Liverpool must be at once discontinued both there and elsewhere.<sup>164</sup>

Sequah’s chief rival, the manager of St Jacob’s Oil, commented with glee, “This will, I think, be a death-blow to travelling vans hereafter.”<sup>165</sup>

AFTER THE ACT

Sequah Ltd had founded its business on the introduction of a singular and (in Britain) new method of marketing: now the Inland Revenue had put it in check by making that method illegal.<sup>166</sup> Although the chairman of the company later stated that it had fought against the Act in every possible way,<sup>167</sup> it does not appear that Sequah ever took the Inland Revenue to court, a surprising omission in view of the fact that the new ruling threatened to destroy the company.<sup>168</sup> But evasion of stamp duty may not have been the only objection to Sequah. Around 1890, there were fresh attempts in Britain to regulate fairs, stamp out freak-shows, and control other trades.<sup>169</sup> The *Chemist and Druggist* wondered, in an editorial, why it should be considered the business of the Inland Revenue to abate what some people may have regarded as a nuisance,<sup>170</sup> thus implying that the government was using the new Act to destroy Sequah on behalf of some other faction: the police? the fed-up

<sup>163</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 13 September 1890, 37: 363 (EGM); 27 September 1890, 37: 437 (Stat. GM).

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 September 1891, 39: 396–397.

<sup>165</sup> Geddes, *op. cit.*, note 157 above.

<sup>166</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 21 June 1890, 36: 826 (“The promoters are quite justified in claiming that they have established their business in an entirely novel manner”); 12 October 1895, 47: 560 (“the daring originality of his [Hartley’s] method”). However, “Market Quack”, *op. cit.*, note 27 above, mentions a precursor of Sequah, without the pseudo-Americanisms, and Sequah’s act had precursors in the USA (see note 66 above).

<sup>167</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 September 1891, 39: 396.

<sup>168</sup> “Market Quack”, *op. cit.*, note 27 above (“The restrictions of the Inland Revenue were undoubtedly very inopportune for the charioteers, but the difficulty could have been got over by taking halls and procuring licenses for each hall.”). The editor of *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 October 1895, 47: 560, could not understand why Sequah had taken the ruling so tamely.

<sup>169</sup> Duncan Dallas, *The travelling people*, London, Macmillan, 1971, p. 26; Howell and Ford, *op. cit.*, note 76 above, pp. 110–111; CMAC Sequah Archive, letters from Norman to Kasper, January–October 1891.

<sup>170</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 October 1895, 47: 560–561.

### *Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library*

pharmacists? or influential medical men? The company, too, found that some influence was at work against them, and they knew not whence it came.<sup>171</sup> They tried to persuade the Inland Revenue that a tent or even a specially constructed zinc building could be “a set of premises”, but in vain. Eventually, they took counsel’s advice and stopped selling medicines from waggons, at least officially.<sup>172</sup>

It may be that Sequah had already pushed its UK business to its greatest possible extent. One of the company’s more thoughtful imitators found his business did not pay because the costs of operating the waggons were too great as a proportion of turnover.

Yet, considering the enormous sales made by some of our competitors [i.e., Sequah], one would have thought a permanent and steady business had been established. This is not so. As a matter of fact, the public seem to have resented the way the remedies were introduced, or rather forced upon them, and expected the same miraculous results they had seen accomplished from the carriage. This is one reason why a return visit to the same towns proved a failure. Nobody objects to trying a well-advertised nostrum, and hardly feels justified in condemning its virtues because it has proved useless in his case; but the secret of the cure affected by those “Indian” remedies is mainly the massage, and when applied in the ordinary way the patient is disappointed if the miracle which he saw on the chariot fails to come off at home. Then he gives it a bad name upon every opportunity. The restrictions of the Inland Revenue were undoubtedly very inopportune for the charioteers, but the difficulty could have been got over by taking halls and procuring licenses for each hall; but the great rubbing bubble would have burst without the interference of Somerset House.<sup>173</sup>

The company now made several innovations. For reasons of propriety, women had never been treated on the waggons, and the impression was thus given that Sequah’s medicines were only good for men. To exploit the large market thus lost, Sequah Ltd set up a Ladies’ Massage Institute at 11 Wharton Road, West Kensington, where ladies could be rubbed and dosed with Indian Oil and Prairie Flower by a team of masseuses.<sup>174</sup> In the spring of 1891, Sequah Ltd founded the Diana Blacking and Polish Company Ltd, which would use Sequah’s distribution system for selling blacking, laundry powder, and other goods which were not subject to the Medicine Stamp Acts.<sup>175</sup> A few travelling Sequahs continued to do marvellous cures and give away some bottles of Sequah medicine, but only as a means of stimulating a demand which would have to be met through local pharmacists.<sup>176</sup> Finally, though England, Scotland, and Wales were now closed to waggon-sales (officially at least), Ireland, Europe, the Empire and the Americas were all still to play for.

It had already been suggested in the prospectus that Sequah Ltd would extend its operations overseas, though plans to send Sequahs to Russia and Austria had

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1895, 47: 555.

<sup>173</sup> “Market Quack”, *op cit.*, note 27 above, p. 123.

<sup>174</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 17 January 1891, no. 35.

<sup>175</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letter from Hartley to Kasper in Georgetown [Guyana], 9 June 1891. The papers of the company are at PRO. BT. 31. 5066/34050. Sequah Ltd held 4,993 out of the 5,000 shares and Emil Danziger was Managing Director. The papers in the PRO state that the company was formed on 20 May 1891, but the business already existed in March (CMAC Sequah Archive, letters from Norman to Kasper, 2 March and 12 April 1891).

<sup>176</sup> Presumably this was the purpose of the remaining waggon-trade, e.g. at Clapham in November 1890 (*Clapham Observer*, 22 November 1890), the scene illustrated in plate 1.

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apparently come to nothing.<sup>177</sup> Now some of the waggons used in the UK were called in, refurbished, and sent abroad. In September 1890, two Sequah waggons were shipped with their operators to Cape Town,<sup>178</sup> and another was taken by William Rowe to Madras.<sup>179</sup> In November, James Kasper was translated as Sequah from Cirencester, Glos., to Kingston, Jamaica.<sup>180</sup> In January 1891, Sequahs arrived in Buenos Aires and Gibraltar,<sup>181</sup> and in February and March, half a dozen Sequahs were introduced into Spain, where physicians were recruited to accompany each Sequah in accordance with the rules of the country.<sup>182</sup> In April 1891, a Sequah by the name of Charles Devonport was touring Belgium and the Netherlands.<sup>183</sup> The first Sequah in America, a Mr Herrman, arrived from England in June 1891, others followed during the summer, and some Americans were also recruited to the business by Hartley, who operated from the office of the Kamame Medicine Co., Windsor, Ontario.<sup>184</sup> In December 1891, a ship containing a Sequah and his gilded waggon set sail for Montevideo, Uruguay.<sup>185</sup>

Only through the letters of James Kasper can we recover the experiences of a Sequah abroad. Soon after arriving in Jamaica with his wife and child, he was handed the following message:<sup>186</sup>

Wolfe and Milholland, Solicitors,  
Kingston, Jamaica.  
15 December 1890

Dear Sir,

We are instructed by Mr John E. Healy of this city, of the firm of Healy and Bigelow of New Haven, Conn., to intimate to you that if you in any wise attempt to dispose of or sell any medicines under the names of "Sequah" or any like name, or in any wise use that or any similar sounding name, he will take proceedings in the Supreme Court to restrain you and recover damages from you. Messrs. Healy and Bigelow are proprietors of the trade name "Sagwa". The name under which you attempt to dispose of your goods is but an imitation of this, and we have to warn you against a continued use of it.

<sup>177</sup> Prospectus of Sequah Ltd, loc.cit., note 103 above.

<sup>178</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 4 October 1890, no. 4, p. 5 quotes from the *Surrey Leader*, 19 September 1890, "Sequah has left Redhill and is on his way to South Africa". At a meeting of the company on 24 September 1890 it was said that they had already sent out to South Africa two full equipments: see *Chem. Drugg.*, 27 September 1890, 37: 437. Anon., 'The man in the chariot. Extraordinary scenes on the Parade', *Cape Argus*, 2 December 1890, appears to be the first account of Sequah in Cape Town: it is one of the best accounts of him.

<sup>179</sup> *Sequah Chronicle*, 14 February 1891, no. 39, cites *Madras Mail*, 1 January 1891, for a description of Sequah, and the *Madras News*, 3 January 1891, for an announcement that he was operating on the Esplanade opposite Pacheappah's College at 5.30. p.m. See also W. Rowe in the *Daily News and Leader*, 10 February 1916, p. 3.

<sup>180</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, Kasper's ledger, p. 105.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Hartley to Kasper, 31 January 1891 (Buenos Aires); *Sequah Chronicle* 10 January 1891, no. 34 (Gibraltar).

<sup>182</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, letters from Sequah Ltd to Kasper, January-March 1891.

<sup>183</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 12 September 1891, 39: 397; his name is given as "Charles Devonpost" in a quotation in *ibid.*, 22 August 1891, 39: 318, but in a letter of 18 June 1891, Norman calls him "little Devonport" (CMAC Sequah Archive).

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, letters from Hartley and Sequah Ltd to Kasper in the West Indies, 9 June, 4 August, 1 September 1891; *ibid.* letters from Norman to Kasper, 18 June and 19 July 1891.

<sup>185</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 29 October 1892, 41: 632.

<sup>186</sup> CMAC Sequah Archive, loose letter in Kasper's Georgetown scrapbook.

*Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library*

This meant that Kickapoos were in town, and they were indeed advertising powerfully by means of free gifts of coloured cookery-books and story-books marked for sale at \$1.<sup>187</sup> Kasper was advised by Sequah Ltd in London to do his best to inveigle the people away from the opposition by using clairvoyance (his previous business),<sup>188</sup> and so successful was he in his performances on the Race Course that by 23 March he had sent Sequah Ltd takings to the amount of £1,200. He had less business in Mandeville and Montego Bay because the Kickapoos had already exhausted them.<sup>189</sup> He left Jamaica in April, and having heard that the Kickapoos had gone to Barbados, went one step ahead of them to Georgetown, Demerara (Guyana) (fig. 5).<sup>190</sup> There he was free from Healy and Bigelow's men but faced severe competition from two other medicine-men, Capt. Harry Horne, who extracted teeth and sold "Indian Schonker", and his companion Professor L. Luby, described as Medallist of Berlin, Paris, London, and Philadelphia. Kasper rented the Parade Ground while Horne and Luby worked on Bourda Green, Georgetown. According to Kasper, Luby went to the mayor, the town council and the police and told them that he was Sequah's agent and Kasper was an imposter. This set the authorities against Kasper, but he had the people on his side—in fact, they savagely beat up Horne when he appeared on Sequah's ground. Exasperated by the noise and disturbance introduced by the two sets of quacks performing similar cures, the town council set a deadline to the lease of the grounds of each of them: they were reluctant to stop Kasper immediately for fear that his numerous supporters would riot and wreck the town. To make matters worse, Kasper discovered that his Irish assistant, who had come with him from Cirencester, was stealing his medicines, counterfeiting his handbills, and secretly collaborating with his rival Luby. Eventually, Horne and Luby gave up and went to Barbados, leaving Kasper to sell from an office in Georgetown and to work on his wagon in New Amsterdam, Berbice.<sup>191</sup> Despite the continual fighting, Kasper managed to sell in Demerara between 27 April and 15 July 1891 7,833 bottles of Prairie Flower, 6,997 bottles of Indian Oil, and some 6,500 bottles of other medicines, which yielded takings of £2,638 1s. 10d.<sup>192</sup> He then left for Trinidad, leaving his treacherous assistant behind.

On arriving in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on 30 July 1891, Kasper was handed by mistake a large parcel of letters awaiting the arrival of "Dr Middleton", a Kickapoo agent who was expected from New York at any moment.<sup>193</sup> Luby and Horne had also been in Trinidad, so neither in Port of Spain nor in other towns (Arima, San Fernando) could Kasper do much business: "the confidence of the people has been

<sup>187</sup> Samples of these are in the CMAC Sequah Archive, together with similar items produced for Dr Morse's Indian Root Pills and other companies. Cf. Kasper to Sequah Ltd, 9 March 1891, *ibid.* (Kasper's letterbook, p. 5).

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, Hartley to Kasper, 20 January 1891.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper to Sequah Ltd, 23 March 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 8–11).

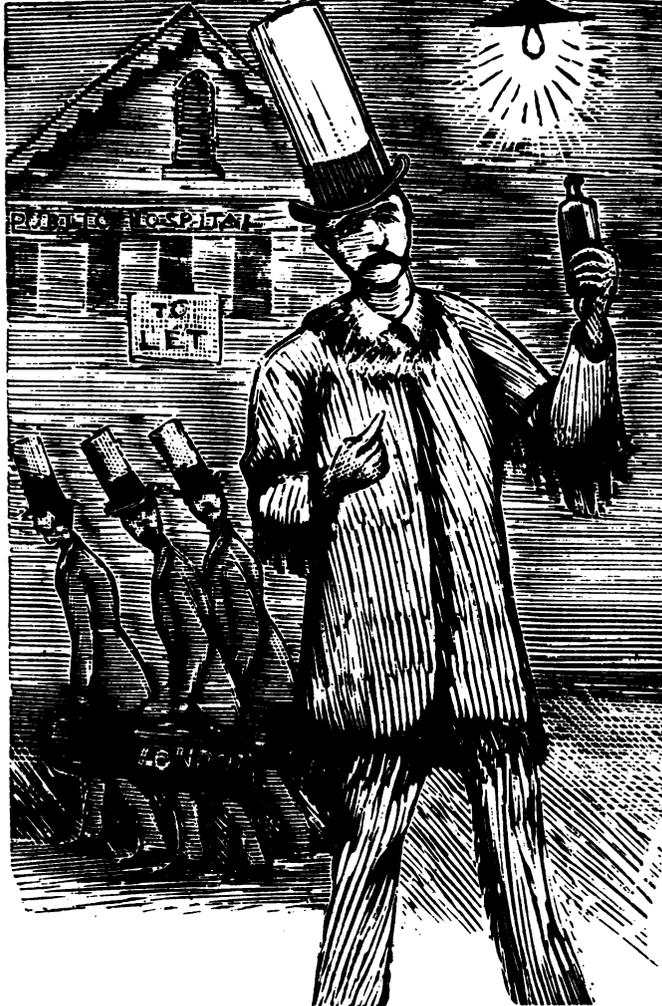
<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper on RMS *Orinoco* off Haiti to Sequah Ltd, 9 April 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, p. 13).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, letters from Kasper to Sequah Ltd, 22 April–28 June 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 19–59), and from Bessie Gordon (Esther Kasper), Georgetown, to James Kasper, New Amsterdam, 29 June 1891 (enclosing a sample of a counterfeit Sequah booklet). *Ibid.*, Kasper's Georgetown scrapbook, containing cuttings from the Demerara newspapers of the period.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's ledger, p. 22.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper, Port of Spain, to Sequah Ltd., 30 July 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 69–70).

abused", he complained hypocritically.<sup>194</sup> His takings in Trinidad, from 26 July to 5 September 1891 amounted to only £227 18s., about the same as his expenses.<sup>195</sup> In his nine months in the West Indies, Kasper had sent Sequah Ltd £3,200 and earned a commission of £1,015.<sup>196</sup>



**THE NEW SURGEON-GENERAL.**

*Figure 5* Anonymous engraving: caricature of James Kasper as Sequah in Georgetown, showing the local doctors and surgeons leaving the town for London, and the hospital to let. *Argosy* (Georgetown, Demerara [Guyana]), 2 May 1891, reproduced from Kasper's Georgetown Scrapbook, CMAC Sequah Archive, Wellcome Institute library, London.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper to Sequah Ltd, 26 August and 10 September 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 76–77, 83–84).

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's ledger, p. 26.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, seven receipted bank-drafts from Jamaica and Demerara, dated between 23 February 1891 and 13 July 1891. Sequah Ltd to Kasper, 12 September 1891.

Having exhausted the best parts of the West Indies, Kasper was ordered by Sequah Ltd to proceed to New York, where Hartley would give him further instructions. After a stormy voyage in which he lost many valuable possessions, he and his wife and child arrived in New York on 27 September 1891. There they spent a well-earned holiday sightseeing, before moving on to join Hartley and Herrman in Windsor, Ontario, as Sequah Ltd's previous plan, that Kasper should proceed to Cuba, the only island untouched by Healy and Bigelow, now seemed unpromising.<sup>197</sup> He and Herrman worked as Sequahs in Ottawa and Montreal,<sup>198</sup> but then Kasper received an unpleasant shock: Sequah Ltd in London had not been paying into his bank account his share of the money he had sent back to them. When he confronted Hartley with the evidence, Hartley laughed at him, told him he would never get a cent from them, tried to seize by force the incriminating evidence, and began to intercept his mail. When asked by Kasper to order the company to pay him his £1,015, Hartley denied he had anything to do with Sequah Ltd and claimed he was only working for them as a favour,<sup>199</sup> though he was actually the Managing Director of the company. It now dawned on Kasper that he was working for "a lot of swindlers",<sup>200</sup> which was not entirely true in respect of their employees, but was, of course, true in another sense which probably never even occurred to Kasper. He returned to London via New York in December 1891, determined to raise hell at Farringdon Street.<sup>201</sup>

There, however, he must have received his £1,015 and a satisfactory explanation, for when we hear from him next he is setting off from Victoria station with a new contract to start as Sequah in Cordoba, Spain, where he arrived on 6 March 1892.<sup>202</sup>

In Spain, he worked Cordoba (10 March—17 April), and then moved southwards through Montilla (24 April—c. 5 May), Lucerna (9 May—22 May), and Ecija (c. 30 May—27 June), but despite big, orderly, and friendly crowds and plentiful teeth for extraction, Kasper simply could not get money out of the people.<sup>203</sup> Cordoba was flooded on his opening night, 10 March 1892, houses were swept away and the poor people, having lost all their animals and possessions, could not afford patent medicines,<sup>204</sup> but business was little better in the other towns. On 5 June 1892, Kasper wrote in despair to Sequah at Barcelona:

You know that in England no money was ever taken (in this or any other show business) in the inland agricultural towns unless at fair times . . . . In my opinion the people are too poor, they will come to the office and tell their diseases but whenever the price of the medicine is mentioned they shrug their shoulders and either say they have no money or that they will come "mañana". I made an average of those who said "mañana", and I found that it was about 1

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's letterbook, pp. 87–101; Sequah Ltd. to Kasper, 1 September 1891; Hartley, Windsor, Ont., to Kasper, N.Y., 2 October 1891. Kasper was probably also deterred by rumours that smallpox and yellow fever were raging in Cuba (Kasper's letterbook, p. 47).

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper to his wife, 1 November 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 103–104).

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's letterbook, pp. 106–117 and p. 126.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper, Ottawa, to his wife, Detroit, 23 November 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, p. 116).

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper, New York, to Herrman, Windsor, Ont., 5 Dec. 1891 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 130–131).

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's ledger, pp. 130–131.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's ledger, pp. 132–141; his letterbook, pp. 135–192; letters from Sequah Ltd in London and in Barcelona to Kasper, March–June 1892.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's letterbook, pp. 151–154.

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person in 70 who came back . . . Last Saturday I counted 97 people who came to the office and my receipts came to 15 pesetas . . . now I am at the end of my tether . . . I am completely stuck for funds and some of my valuables are in pledge.<sup>205</sup>

Kasper thought he should have been sent to the coastal resorts: a company of Italian medicine vendors was doing splendid business selling from a waggon in Malaga.<sup>206</sup> He made immense efforts to recoup his losses in Seville (14–24 July 1892), but though he attracted crowds of eight or nine thousand daily, he only sold 226 bottles in five days, and net losses increased enormously.<sup>207</sup> Admitting that he had failed as Sequah in Spain, he resigned and set off for London on 3 August.<sup>208</sup>

A few minutes after Kasper had stepped on to the train leaving Seville, two drunken officials arrived at his former office there to serve a summons on him, his colleagues, and their accompanying physicians. The Spanish government had at last responded to agitation by physicians and pharmacists to put an end to Sequah's business in the country. By 19 August 1892, Sequah was at a complete standstill in Spain, and the factory in Barcelona which made Sequah's Prairie Flower and Indian Oil was taken into possession by the government. Apart from a Sequah called Freeman who was sucked down a whirlpool while bathing in Valencia, the English staff left the country soon afterwards, having paid what debts they could. The whole Spanish operation was abandoned at a considerable loss.<sup>209</sup>

Unfortunately for Sequah Ltd, their experiences in Spain were more typical of their foreign ventures than their experiences in the West Indies, for, apart from the latter, none of their operations abroad managed to repeat the success of the original home enterprise.

The Sequahs in South Africa did well at first, but operations there had to be closed down in 1892/93.<sup>210</sup> Rowe in India also got off to a good start, and his cures were the subject of earnest discussion in the Madras newspapers in January 1891, but the value of his takings was reduced by the dramatic fall of the rupee.<sup>211</sup> The Sequah in the Low Countries had to face numerous prosecutions for illegal practice of medicine and pharmacy,<sup>212</sup> and in Liège he was gaoled for a fortnight.<sup>213</sup> The Dutch customs harassed him because, having imported bottles of medicine with a stated value of 1½*d.* each, he offered them for sale at the equivalent of 2*s.* 1*d.* each.<sup>214</sup> He had a certain popular following, however: after he and his brass band had left Amsterdam in triumph, General William Booth of the Salvation Army arrived with *his* brass band

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's letterbook pp. 183–185.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, Adams to Emil Danziger, London, 11 April 1892, and Kasper to Sequah Ltd, Barcelona, 5 June 1892 (Kasper's letterbook, pp. 159–161, 183–185).

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's letterbook, pp. 193–198.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, Kasper's letterbook, pp. 199–202, and his ledger, p. 147.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, Adams, Seville, to Kasper, Islington, 21 September 1892; Alf Bailey, Barcelona, to Kasper, Islington, 19 August and 1 September 1892. *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559, and 7 October 1893, 43: 526.

<sup>211</sup> In addition to references in note 179 above, *Sequah Chronicle*, 14 February 1891, no. 39, refers to *Madras News*, 10 January 1891; *Madras Standard*, 12 January 1891; and *Madras Times*, 13 January 1891. See also *Chem. Drugg.*, 7 March 1891, 38: 337, and 8 October 1892, 41: 559.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 August 1891, 39: 318 (Bergen-op-Zoom, N. Brabant); 23 November 1891, 39: 763 (Amsterdam); 13 February 1892, 40: 223 (Antwerp and Ghent).

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 February 1892, 40: 258.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 May 1892, 40: 687.

and received a great ovation from a Dutch audience under the impression that the two English orators worked for the same firm.<sup>215</sup> Eventually, it was found more profitable to sell the stock to a Dutchman for disposal on the retail market and to withdraw the waggon.<sup>216</sup> Belgium was closed to Sequah after the influence of certain medical men induced the king to sign a decree giving him forty-eight hours to leave the country.<sup>217</sup> Neither in Montevideo nor in Buenos Aires would the government permit them to work.<sup>218</sup> In the USA, Hartley spent £4,000 on fitting out Sequahs who went down the country from Detroit to San Antonio, Texas but for a number of reasons the business was not good: the public was beginning to grow weary of the Red Indian nonsense, there were restrictions on medicine-selling in some areas, losses could be heavy when the weather was bad, and competition was everywhere.<sup>219</sup> A French venture failed.<sup>220</sup> Sequah in Java faced the same problem as Sequah in Holland, prosecution for illegal practice of pharmacy.<sup>221</sup> The only countries where the business was satisfactory were Burma, the Straits Settlements, and Japan.<sup>222</sup>

The failure of most of its foreign business drained away the company's funds to such an extent that by 1892 no less than £238,947 out of shareholders' capital of £250,000 was accounted for by the intangibles "goodwill and trademarks". The accounts for the year 1891–92 showed a loss of £24,050.<sup>223</sup> The nominal value of the shares was written down from £1 to 10s., the waggons remaining in Great Britain appear to have been sold, the blacking company, having failed to make money, was wound up in 1893, and nothing more was heard of the massage institute.<sup>224</sup> Having little capital and no income, the company was forced to cut its expenses including even advertising, the foundation of the business.<sup>225</sup> Thanks to a certain steady demand for the Sequah medicines from wholesalers and retailers in the UK, South Africa, and Australia,<sup>226</sup> supplemented by Hartley's gift of 10,000 of his own shares to the company,<sup>227</sup> Sequah Ltd climbed back into low-level profitability over the next two years,<sup>228</sup> but not to advertise a proprietary medicine business was equivalent to

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* A writer in the *Cape Argus*, 2 December 1890, had written "Sequah may be said to stand in the same relationship to the medical world that the Salvation Army does to the religious world. Like the army, he has quitted the ranks of prim and comatose respectability, and is making a noise in the world, both actually by the blare of music, which accompanies his operations, and figuratively by the fame of his cures. Like the army, people are beginning to discover that he is not all outside show, and the discovery of the merits of his remedies has in some cases converted scoffing and scepticism into respect and belief."

<sup>216</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 18 August 1894, 45: 285.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 October 1892, 41: 632. CMAC Sequah Archive, letter from Hartley to Kasper, 31 January 1891.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, Friedrich Chur, San Antonio, Texas, to Kasper, c/o Sequah Ltd, Barcelona, 8 (or 5) February 1892. McNamara, *op. cit.*, note 63 above, pp. 122, 128. *Chem. Drugg.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559, and 7 October 1893, 43: 526.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 January 1893, 42: 100 (Samarang).

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 October 1892, 41: 559.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1893, 42: 86. On the blacking company, PRO. BT. 31. 5066/34050.

<sup>225</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 7 October 1893, 43: 526, and 14 October 1893, 43: 556.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 August 1894, 45: 285.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 October 1893, 43: 556.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 August 1894, 45: 285.

letting it lapse. It was therefore decided in 1895 to wind the company up.<sup>229</sup> Among those who had lost money were the company's Sequah in Ireland, Alfred Wilson Hartley Snow (100 pref.); its Sequah in India, William Rowe (300 pref.); and the chairman, S. F. Isitt (16,085 pref. and 3,757 ord.). W. H. Hartley still held 23,391 ord. shares, but, of course, he had received these without payment at the company's flotation, together with £98,295 in cash. The biggest shareholder, however, was Sarah Ann Lambert, Hartley's mother, who owned 31,444 pref. and 28,873 ord.: the bulk of these shares must have been transferred to her from Hartley's scrip issue of 1890, but even so, she had lost a fortune.<sup>230</sup> On her death, fifteen years later she left only £94 10s.<sup>231</sup>

On 28 October 1895, a new company, the Sequah Medicine Company Ltd, was formed with a capital of £7,000 to buy the few remaining assets of Sequah Ltd, which it did for an unknown sum.<sup>232</sup> The new company had nothing to do with Hartley or the waggon business: it was dominated by the person and friends of John Morgan Richards, doyen of the American proprietary medicine business in England.<sup>233</sup> Born in Aurora, New York, in 1841, Richards had come to London in 1867 and had imported with enormous success the best-selling quack-medicines in America, such as Carter's Little Liver Pills, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and the Antikamnia tonic. He also imported Virginia cigarettes and the dental products of Sozodont and Colgate. He was the proprietor of the *Academy* from 1894 to 1905, and president of the American Society in London 1901–2, and from about 1903 lived in a castle in Ventnor, Isle of Wight, about which he wrote a book.<sup>234</sup> Why Richards wanted Sequah and what he did with it are not known. Presumably, the medicines were still being ordered, and he thought the demand would be increased by his undoubted flair for advertising. On 30 September 1906, he bought out all the other shareholders for 10s. a share.<sup>235</sup> Less than three years later, on 26 March 1909, the Sequah Medicine Company Ltd was dissolved, and the Sequah business came to an end.<sup>236</sup>

What happened to the Sequahs after the winding-up of Sequah Ltd? One of them, Charles Santor, became a refreshment-house keeper and herbalist, still using the name Sequah, in Pontypridd.<sup>237</sup> James Kasper washed his hands of Sequah and

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1895, 47: 555. The resolution to wind the company up was passed on 28 October 1895, but the actual winding-up did not occur until 13 June 1898: PRO. BT. 31. 4793/31733, nos 18 and 20.

<sup>230</sup> The register of shareholders of Sequah Ltd, 25 July 1895, is in the PRO, loc. cit., previous note, no., 17. For Sarah Ann Lambert's relation to Hartley see p. 283 above.

<sup>231</sup> *Register of wills*, Somerset House, London. She died on 3 January 1910, aged seventy-seven. Notice in the *Craven Herald* (Skipton), 7 January 1910, p. 5.

<sup>232</sup> The papers of the Sequah Medicine Co. Ltd are at PRO. BT. 31. 6505/45785.

<sup>233</sup> See John Morgan Richards, *With John Bull and Jonathan. Reminiscences of sixty years of an American's life in England and the USA*, London, T. Werner Laurie, 1905; an interview with him in *Chem. Drugg.*, 26 January 1901, 58: 176; and an obituary of him, *ibid.*, 17 August 1918, 90: 39. In 1903, he turned his business into a private joint-stock company called John Morgan Richards and Sons Ltd, which was put into voluntary liquidation in 1928 and dissolved in 1930 (PRO. BT. 31. 16983/76652).

<sup>234</sup> J.M. Richards, *Almost fairyland*, London, J. Hogg, 1914. Richards also published in 1911 a biographical sketch of his late daughter, the novelist "John Oliver Hobbes".

<sup>235</sup> PRO, loc. cit., note 232 above.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> 'Sequahstration', *Chem. Drugg.*, 9 November 1901, 59: 751; 4 January 1902, 60: 4.

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probably went back to New York to exhibit his mind-reading act.<sup>238</sup> In 1902, Rhoda and Sarah Crichton, who had been sacked by Sequah Ltd in 1890 after their disgraceful performance in Cork, were touring Cumberland under the style of “Father Sequah and Madame Sequah his wife”.<sup>239</sup> William Hannaway Rowe returned from India, found he had lost his money in Sequah Ltd, went on the music-hall stage and, in his own words, “gave what the public asked for and demanded: public dental exhibitions”.<sup>240</sup> In 1899, having been successfully prosecuted by a music-hall agent for non-payment of money owing, Rowe went up to the plaintiff in the smoke-room of a nearby hotel, called him a scoundrel, a liar, a gaolbird, and a music-carrier, threw the contents of a glass over him, struck him in the face, and earned himself a conviction for assault.<sup>241</sup> From 1905 to 1911, he worked as a medical botanist at 133 St Mary Street, Southampton.<sup>242</sup> In 1916, giving his address as Foster’s Dental Surgery, Selby, Yorks., he wrote a letter to the *Daily News* as a riposte to an obituary of “Sequah” (one in South Africa had died).<sup>243</sup>

Hartley’s partners in the first Sequah company, Leon Kokocinski and Emil Danziger, went back to their optician’s business at 167 Piccadilly, importing frames made by the American Optical Co. of Rochester, N.Y. In 1909–1910, they started building the elegant Piccadilly Arcade, opposite Burlington Arcade, to join Jermyn Street with Piccadilly, but after an argument about the lift installations, the partners split up: Kokocinski went to Paris and set up another optician’s, also called L. K. Leon, while Emil Danziger took over the London business as sole director and turned it into a limited company in 1910 (reg. 111516). He sold all his other business interests except L. K. Leon to finance a futile attempt to recover family property which was confiscated in the Russian revolution. He died at the age of sixty-six in 1923, and the business was taken over by his son, Alfred Danziger.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Odell, *op. cit.*, note 77 above, states that on 26 April 1893 Jesse[sic] Gordon gave a concert of English, Scotch, and Irish ballads at Hardman Hall, New York. This is probably Kasper’s wife, Bessie Gordon, whose musical performances are mentioned in the CMAC Sequah Archive and who signed a letter to her mother “Jessie” (*ibid.*, Kasper’s letterbook pp. 94–95).

<sup>239</sup> PRO. J. 15. 2671, p. 4325; PRO. J. 15. 2672, p. 4597. *The weekly notes: being notices of cases. . . High Court of Justice*, 1903, 3 Edw. VII, London, W. Clowes, part 1, p. 187; *Chem. Drugg.*, 14 November 1903, 63: 815; 21 November 1903, 63: 850; 19 December 1903, 63: 999.

<sup>240</sup> W. F. H. Rowe, contribution to ““Original Sequah” still alive. Mr Hannaway Rowe still practising his art’, *Daily News and Leader*, 10 February 1916, p. 3.

<sup>241</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 13 May 1899, 54: 755. It emerged at the trial that “music-carrier” (not in OED) was a term of reproach meaning a man who lives by carrying his wife’s music-bag.

<sup>242</sup> A resident of Clapham, J. London, now deceased, wrote in 1947 that he remembered Rowe, who had a house on Clapham Common called “The Prairies”. After the Sequah company failed, Rowe went to Southampton where he opened a herbalist’s shop, which also failed. J. London’s evidence is confirmed by the Post Office directories for Southampton, which record Rowe’s presence at the address given, 1905–1911, after which the address was occupied by the Walpole Herbal Stores. (This information was kindly communicated by Mr. E. E. F. Smith FSA, Hon. Sec., Clapham Antiquarian Society.)

<sup>243</sup> Rowe, *loc. cit.*, note 240 above. What happened to him after that is not known. J. London, *loc. cit.*, previous note, wrote that he died in poverty at the age of ninety-three. Neither his will nor a grant of administration of his estate is at Somerset House, and his name is too common to make a search for his death certificate worthwhile (E.E.F. Smith).

<sup>244</sup> Unpublished article typed by Mrs Kathleen Danziger in the 1950s and kindly made available by her with other information, September 1984. Information from Mr Mark Grabham, son of Mr Paul Grabham who bought the firm from Alfred Danziger in 1973.

What of William Henry Hartley, the creator of Sequah? In his letter to the *Daily News* in 1916, Rowe referred to Hartley, though not by name and added, surprisingly, “he has been a successful stockbroker for years”. Hartley lived in London between 1910 and 1924, but he was not a member of the London Stock Exchange around the date of Rowe’s letter, nor was he listed in the Post Office directory among brokers who were not members.<sup>245</sup> If Hartley dealt in stocks and shares at all, it must have been as an amateur, for there is another document which describes him as dealer in drugs and chemicals.<sup>246</sup> Whatever he did, it seems to have made him not richer but poorer, for at his death at the age of sixty-six he left only £734.<sup>247</sup> He died in his lodgings at 7 Sherwood Street, between Piccadilly Circus and Golden Square, on 16 January 1924, in the presence of Bessie Greig, a widow to whom he left a portion of his modest fortune and his rights in his business interests, whatever they were.<sup>248</sup> He had once been acclaimed as “the Koch of rheumatism”:<sup>249</sup> now his passing went unnoticed, Sequah was completely forgotten.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>245</sup> In 1910, the grant of administration of his mother’s estate (see note 65 above) gave his occupation as merchant and his address as 20 Sherwood Street, Middlesex [i.e., London W.1.]. This must have been his residential address, for he is not listed in the Post Office street directories among the businesses at that address. (He is not listed there in the *Registers of electors* either, though one other residential non-owning occupant of the house (Thos. Lawlor) was registered. Presumably Hartley was registered at his business address, wherever that was.) In 1913, nos. 16–28 Sherwood Street, forming the entire west side, were demolished for the construction of the monstrous Regent Palace Hotel, and Hartley appears to have moved across the road to 7 Sherwood Street: from 1919 to 1923, he is recorded in the *Registers of electors* as sharing the residential accommodation there, presumably the upper floor(s), with William John Lyons, while the rest of the building, presumably the ground floor, was occupied by the business premises of the yachtbroking firm of George Wilson & Co. (from 1920, George Wilson & Co. (London) Ltd [reg. 166183, dissolved in 1975]). Hartley’s address is also given as 7 Sherwood Street in his will of November 1923, and in his death certificate of January 1924 (see note 248 below). Owing to the massive rebuilding in the street between 1910 and 1924, only five residents were there in both years, including Hartley and the yachtbroker George Wilson (or, after his death in 1911/12, the firm George Wilson & Co.). In view of Rowe’s letter, one wonders if Hartley had become not a stockbroker but a yachtbroker. The site of his final address, 7 Sherwood Street, is now occupied by the Piccadilly Theatre.

<sup>246</sup> His death certificate: see note 248 below. He must have operated under a trade-name and from a business address, for the London Post Office directories do not mention any Hartley or any firm in Sherwood Street among druggist, drug-brokers, chemical brokers, or patent-medicine brokers between 1910 and 1924.

<sup>247</sup> *Register of wills*, Somerset House.

<sup>248</sup> General Register Office, *Register of deaths*, St Martin district, vol. 1a, p. 805, registered 17 January 1924. Hartley’s will at Somerset House appoints Bessie Greig as his executrix and grants her 37½ per cent of the residue of the estate (after personal bequests). Eloise Russell Lloyd, wife of Russell Lloyd of Melbourne, is also left 37½ per cent. Rose Hartley, of 23 Yeoman’s Road, Brompton Road, Kensington, is left 25 per cent. Hartley’s gold watch is bequeathed to Graham Sanders of 138 Leadenhall Street [the address is an office block], and two paintings of the Colosseum and the Roman Forum are bequeathed to Miss Hadfield of Maidenhead.

<sup>249</sup> *West London Advertiser*, 20 December 1890, cited in the *Sequah Chronicle*, 3 January 1891, no. 33, p. 5.

<sup>250</sup> Of course, many people remembered Sequah’s performances, but Hartley’s death appears to have attracted no attention—ironically, for the earlier death of a minor Sequah had made headlines in the *Daily News* (‘Death of Sequah. King of Quack Doctor’s Tour in England Recalled’, 7 February 1916, p. 5; ‘Cure Guaranteed’, *ibid.*, p. 4; ‘“Original Sequah” still Alive’, *ibid.*, 10 February 1916, p. 3; cf. *Clapham Observer*, 11 February 1916, p. 2). Harry Price, ‘Short-title catalogue of works on psychical research [etc.]’, *Proceedings of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research*, 1929, 1: 67–422, included in the preface a fraudulent account of Sequah in Shrewsbury, recalling, among other uncorroborated details, that Sequah operated in the morning and that his dental patients were strapped down: the imposture was exploded by Trevor H. Hall, *The search for Harry Price*, London, Duckworth, 1978, pp. 55–59 (though

The painting survives as a witness to Sequah's days of glory. "Sequah on Clapham Common": how fittingly those words combine the exotic and the banal! Sequah visited Clapham over several weeks in November 1890, but as our picture (plate 1) seems to show a summer night, that may not have been his only visit. Sufficiently remarkable cures were made on that occasion to ensure sales of the medicines via Messrs Grice and Son, the Stores, Clapham, who were given a franchise. The local newspaper printed an account of Sequah's triumphant finale, and gave the names and addresses of thirty-two local men who had been successfully treated for disorders described as rheumatism.<sup>251</sup>

As usual in pictures, the time sequence is taken for granted and not illustrated, but we are shown the different stages of the performance. Sequah stands on the wagon holding up a tooth he has extracted (plate 2). He is probably either Hartley or Rowe.<sup>252</sup> At the wagon door on the right the next patient prepares to step up. Behind them, two cowboys in the middle of the wagon are rubbing a rheumatic patient of whom nothing is visible except his right arm and hand, thrown up in agony or in an attempt to struggle free. At the back of the wagon is the band, in which the clarinet, E-flat tuba, euphonium, French horn, and bass drum may be discerned among the instruments. In the foreground, the painter shows us patients before and after treatment: on the right one walks towards the wagon on crutches, helped by a Red Indian, while on the left another strides away from the wagon unaided, holding his broken crutches over his shoulder and in his hands.

As well as being a unique depiction of Sequah, the picture has its place in the age-old iconography of tooth-extraction, which flourished above all in the seventeenth century, sometimes as an illustration of the sense of touch.<sup>253</sup> One of the finest of all such works is the picture by Theodoor Rombouts, c. 1628, in the Prado, Madrid, the contemporary reputation of which is indicated by the existence of several old copies (plate 3).<sup>254</sup> Comparing it with the mood of the Sequah picture, we note that both show a smiling or leering operator who dominates a suffering victim, but the attitudes of the audiences are different. The observers of Rombouts'

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Sequah certainly visited Shrewbury). B.R. Townend, writer on dental history, asked for reminiscences of Sequah in *Notes and Queries*, 11 November 1939, 177: 350, and received some (H. Southam, Wm. Jaggard, loc. cit., note 10 above; E.H. Visiak, loc. cit., note 30 above; "Hibernicus", *Notes and Queries*, 9 December 1939, 177: 428; F. R. Gale, J. Ardagh, *ibid.*, 6 January 1940, 178: 14). Eric Jameson, *The natural history of quackery*, London, M. Joseph, 1961, pp. 184–85 has a brief account of "Sequah" [*sic*], and Eric Maple, *Magic, medicine and quackery*, London, R. Hale, 1968, p. 159, an even briefer one with the same mis-spelling. Sequah also has a walk-on part, albeit mis-billed as "Sequar", in McNamara, *op. cit.*, note 63 above, p. 33.

<sup>251</sup> *Clapham Observer*, *Tooting and Balham Times*, 22 November and 29 November 1890.

<sup>252</sup> J. London, loc. cit., note 242 above, said that Rowe performed as Sequah both on Clapham Common and on a vacant plot in the High Street called "Foster's ground", but a label formerly attached to the frame of the Wellcome picture read "W. H. Hartley. Sequah on Clapham Common".

<sup>253</sup> Curt Proskauer, *Iconographia odontologica*, Berlin, H. Meusser, 1926 (*Kulturgeschichte der Zahnheilkunde in Einzeldarstellungen*, IV). Maria Elisabeth Wasserfuhr, *Der Zahnarzt in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 2nd ed., Cologne, Forschungsstelle des Instituts für Geschichte der Medizin der Universität, 1977 (*Kölner medizinhistorische Beiträge* no. 1).

<sup>254</sup> Proskauer, *op. cit.*, previous note, no. 26; Wasserfuhr, *op. cit.*, previous note, no. 14. D. Roggen, 'De chronologie der werken van Theodoor Rombouts', *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, 1935, 2: 175–190.

*Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library*

operation are anxious, studious, or horrified, while Sequah's spectators have come to laugh. "The crowd crows with delight every time a tooth is drawn", said an observer of Sequah in Cape Town,<sup>255</sup> while W. Hannaway Rowe found that exhibitions of tooth-drawing were what the music-hall public really wanted to see.<sup>256</sup> It was, for the spectators, "a cheap and amusing entertainment".<sup>257</sup> Suffering had to exist, but if turned into a show it was easier to accept, both for sufferers, who would have leading roles, and for the audience. It was through exploiting this insight that Sequah's show became a popular success and Hartley a national hero. The show came to an end not because he had swindled the public—of course he had—but because his freelance doctoring touched a nerve in those whose more rigorous schemes of organization allowed no place to the carefree tribe of Sequah.

<sup>255</sup> Loc. cit., note 178 above.

<sup>256</sup> Rowe, op. cit., note 240 above.

<sup>257</sup> *Chem. Drugg.*, 13 April 1889, **34**: 501 (Swansea).