

Any physician who is conscious of the sublimity of his mission, and solicitous about his professional honor, will not keep secret a discovery that is useful to suffering humanity; on the contrary, he will be the more eager to make it known in proportion to his convictions of its greater importance. Those who pursue an opposite course of conduct, are, by the unanimous opinion of the medical corps, left to themselves, and regarded as outside of the pale of the profession; but fortunately, for our honor, such persons are rare amongst us. The code of etiquette adopted by the Canada Medical Association is very explicit on this point. After having declared it to be contrary to the dignity of the medical profession for medical men to have recourse to public notices, to circulars for attracting the attention of persons afflicted with any particular kind of disease, to offer publicly their services gratis to the poor, or to warrant cures; to publish their operations or cases in non-medical journals, to boast of their cures or their remedies, to produce certificates of cures, and, in fine, to resort to any of the means generally employed by charlatans. The code continues, Art. 1, sec. 4.

. . . . A physician degrades his professional character by obtaining a patent of invention for any remedy or surgical instrument whatsoever, and by prescribing a secret remedy, the knowledge of whose composition, or the exclusive right of which belongs to himself or others. . . . Equally reprehensible are physicians who give certificates attesting the efficacy of secret or patent medicines, or, in any other manner, favor their use.

In preventing the advertising and sale of all secret preparations, it may seem as though a wrong would be done to the inventors of appliances really useful, by taking from them the power to enjoy the advantages accruing from their labors. When, however, a physician is the inventor of a beneficial remedy, it is seldom that he has any objections to its being made known,—he does not wish to retain it a secret,—and more especially when he knows such conduct would be contrary to the liberality and benevolence that ought to distinguish a professional man. And it is certainly more seldom that a person, unacquainted with medicine, becomes the discoverer or inventor of any means of unquestionable utility in the healing art.

But to prevent the science of medicine from suffering in any case, by being deprived of useful

discoveries, there is nothing to hinder the adoption of a law similar to what regulates such matters in France. Studious to prevent charlatanism there, the law strictly prohibits the sale of all secret remedies, and traffic in them for medicinal purposes, all exhibitions of drugs and medicinal preparations upon stands or in stalls at fairs, markets, and other public places; all advertisements and printed handbills that set forth secret remedies under whatsoever name or title they may appear. Act of the 11th April, 1803, Art 32, 3 C. And by a decree of the 18th of August, 1810, permission could not be given to the originators of any remedy, either simple or compound, while they maintained the composition of it a secret. Any person who might discover a new remedy, and who desired to turn it to advantage, must deposit the recipe of its composition with the Minister of the Interior. The Minister then appointed a commission for the purpose of: 1st, examining its composition, and deciding whether its administration might, in certain cases, be dangerous and hurtful or not; 2nd, if the remedy was not dangerous in itself, whether it had produced, or whether it was still producing beneficial effects on mankind; 3rd, what price should be paid the inventor of a remedy adjudged to be useful, for the secret of its composition; proportioning the price: 1st, according to the merit of the discovery; 2nd, to the benefits which have arisen or which may be hoped for, from it in the relief of human suffering; 3rd, to the personal advantages which the inventor had received, or which he might expect to receive from it. In cases where the inventors were dissatisfied, a commission of revision was appointed. After this, the Minister of the Interior entered into an agreement with the inventors, and the secret was directly published.

Since the ordinance of the 20th December, 1820, establishing the Academy of Medicine, the examining of secret remedies has belonged to that learned body. In France, then, the inventor of a new remedy cannot legally gain personal advantages from it as a secret remedy. He can of course keep his secret, but it would be in his hands a property that brings him no return; and as the law prevents druggists as well as others from selling secret remedies, druggists have no advantages over others in this matter.

Should a person desire to reap the benefit of