

der that I, your fellow sufferer, have met some friends of yours? The small boy, for example, who bursts into your store while you are busy, goes back and loudly demands immediate attention to his wants, which wants, you find, are merely an empty cigar box; or his delicate mate of the fairer sex, scarcely whispering her modest pleadings for a picture card; the man, woman or child who asks for a bottle thrown in with half an ounce of glycerine because they have so many empty ones lying useless at home; the chronic repeater of the same old "chestnut" that your average profit is three hundred per cent., to say nothing of the fiend who modestly asks 50 per cent. discount on a package of dye.

I know all these as well as you do. Some other friends of mine. The creature who tears open the wrapping of a patent medicine bottle and brings it back to be exchanged for something else; the criminal who asks you to fill with Canada balsam a bottle with a constricted neck; the hardened villain who wants a 25 cent pair of spectacles in the middle of a busy market day; and the veterinary crank who wishes each ingredient of a complex condition powder tied up in a separate parcel.

It is a noble army this of the plagues of the druggist, and the half of it has not yet been told.

Do you know the man afflicted with a little pharmaceutical knowledge who gets all the ingredients of a mixture at almost cost and compounds it at home himself? And the wholesale buyer who finds out the price per pound and ends up by buying a single ounce. Have you met the irritant who wants the best in the store and takes in the end the cheapest and the worst? Have you yet come across the man who tells you how much cheaper he can buy goods in a city far away, and expects you to meet the price of the largest wholesale house in the land? If you know of all these and have been charmed with their acquaintance, you are, to a certain extent, familiar with but the smallest proportion of the many plagues that pester the life of the long-suffering being who goes under the name of "the druggist."

Foreign Patent Medicine Regulations.

It has long been the excellent practice of the United States Government, on occasions when it appears desirable to obtain a comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the manner in which some trade is carried on, or of the action of laws upon a given subject in the various countries of the world, to instruct its consular representatives to gather the necessary information and to publish the replies as a whole for the benefit of persons specially interested in the question. The most recent instance of this practice has been the issue of a circular letter to the American consuls abroad, asking for information concerning the laws affecting

the sale of proprietary medicines in their districts. The answers received present an interesting epitome of the way in which this important branch of industry is regulated in the chief countries of Europe.

In Austria-Hungary patent medicines in the strict sense of the term do not exist, for the law affords no protection to any medicines or medicinal compounds the formulae of which are not kept at the pharmacist's shop for the inspection of qualified medical men. Unless that condition is complied with, the article may not even be offered for sale, even by a pharmacist. Dietetic and cosmetic preparations (including dentifrices), mineral waters (natural or artificial) and spring products, and surgical dressings of all kinds are exempt from this regulation.

In Belgium the trade in patent medicines is regulated by a royal decree of March 1, 1888, which provides that such medicines shall be sold or exposed for sale only by pharmacists or other persons authorized to deliver compounded medicines. The seller must affix his seal either as a substitute for or in contiguity to that of the manufacturer. Pharmacists assume the responsibility of the product delivered on these conditions. The bottle must bear a label mentioning the substances contained in the composition of the patent, but if the remedy is inscribed as an official Pharmacopœia (Belgian or foreign) it is only necessary that the label should show the official denomination. This label must bear the name and address of the pharmacist in printed characters.

In Denmark not only the sale, but also the importation of patent medicines is restricted to qualified pharmacists. An old law enacted in 1779 still remains in force in that kingdom, under which the advertising of patent medicines in public journals is absolutely prohibited; but at the present time that Act has partly fallen into desuetude, and advertisements are allowed to appear provided that they do not name any persons other than qualified pharmacists as sellers of the article. As there are only 160 such chemists in business in the country, the patent-medicine trade is a lucrative accessory to the business of these favored few. It is, therefore, not likely—in Denmark, at least—pharmacists will give much support to the resolution adopted at the recent meeting in Copenhagen by the pharmaceutical section of the Congress of Scandinavian Scientists, expressing regret that there are no legislative restrictions in Denmark and Norway on the importation of patent and secret remedies, and urging pharmacists to co-operate in the most earnest manner in putting down the trade in such preparations.

France has always maintained a reputation for the Draconic severity (on paper) of its laws on the subject of patent medicines, yet there is no country where the "specialite" industry has assumed such immense proportions. The principal Act relating to the sale of these goods is the famous pharmacy law of 1810, though

various modifications have since been grafted upon it. It originally prohibited the sale of any medicine of which the formula had not been inserted in the "Codex," but in 1850 a concession was made to the spirit of the time by the admission for sale of medicines recognized as new and useful by the National Academy of Medicine and of which the formula has been approved by the Ministers of Agriculture and of Commerce. This official sanction does not appear to be difficult to obtain, for it is rare to find a French pharmacien who has not invented from one to a dozen medicinal compounds, while the English community experience little difficulty in obtaining their favorite proprietary pill or potion unless they insist on store prices.

The Frankfort-on-Maine Consul reports that in Germany patent medicines may be imported duty-free unless they contain ether, alcohol, sugar, or some other ingredient which is subject to duty. In such case the mixture is assessed for duty at the rate which is applicable to its ingredients which bears the highest rate of duty. They may only be sold, however, by qualified pharmacists, who are held responsible by law for their effects upon the patient. The consul therefore recommends exporters of such goods to Germany to label them, "for the information of the apotheker," with a slip designating the ingredients which they contain—a piece of advice not likely to be widely followed. An old Prussian law (now applicable to the whole of the Empire, but rigorously enforced in Prussia and Baden only) forbids the advertising of patent medicines in public journals. This law is circumvented by many foreign dealers. Thus the proprietor of a well-known American remedy for diabetes and kindred diseases, who had maintained for years an agency at Frankfort, has obtained a concession which permits him to advertise his goods in Wurtemberg; for the remainder of Germany he has adopted the plan of making his medicines in this city for sale through authorized apothekers, but sends out his advertisements from London as circulars or pamphlets, to be folded in the German newspapers where this is permitted.

In Italy, since 1887, no patent medicines (in fact, no medicinal drugs or compounded medicines of any kind) are allowed to be imported unless approved by the Central Board of Health (*Consiglio Superiore di Sanità*), to which a statement of their composition must be furnished by the petitioner along with his request for approval of the remedy. The punishment for the infringement of this law is cumulative, beginning with a minimum fine of 200f., and increasing to fifteen days' imprisonment for each offence. The Central Board of Health is composed of five doctors of medicine, two sanitary engineers, two naturalists, two chemists, one veterinary surgeon, one pharmacist, one lawyer, and two business experts.

Russia has recently distinguished itself by the enactment of one of the most stringent laws ever drafted against the