

to stringent business relations that explain the condition. While the science of medicine has made great progress in the methods of diagnosis and treatment, the physician finds that his vocation, although more honorable and useful, is really less remunerative, and his legitimate practice is proportionately curtailed. There is no less sickness in the world, but the number of patients has markedly decreased. In fact, the sick ones are inclined to get the better of the doctor, and to act more or less independently of his direct ministrations. It is not difficult to understand why this is so, when we consider the vast number of persons who willingly yield to the growing habit of prescribing for themselves. This tendency is fostered by the belief, in the majority of cases, that such prescribing is tacitly sanctioned by the profession itself by the use of many of the legitimate remedies so frequently ordered for the relief of the more common ailments. There is a very reasonable foundation for this conviction, and its responsibility rests more or less on the prescriber himself. At the bottom of the whole business is the prevailing practice of delivering private clinical lectures to the patient on the nature, extent, progress, and outlook of his malady, and the indications for the use of special drugs in the treatment of certain conditions. While this may give evidence of remarkable learning on the part of the medical adviser, and may help for the time being to establish his methods in the confidence of his client, it too often educates the recipient into the presumption of thinking and acting for himself. The most superficial knowledge is all that is necessary to this end, and, easily persuading himself that he has a repetition of the malady of which he has had such an authoritative opinion, he either repeats the prescription at will or purchases his former remedy in open market at the counter of the obliging pharmacist. Quinine, phenacetin, salol, morphine, pepsin, the mineral laxatives, and a host of other much-used medicines are given the currency of indispensable household articles. To such persons a diagnosis is a useless refinement, it being sufficient for their special purpose that their physician has given explicit directions how to use the supposed harmless remedies under what the patient believes to be similar circumstances. Not only this, but the remedy is freely prescribed to all his friends who are willing to trust to the blind chances of having a like ailment.

With shame be it said, that very many of the pharmacists, far from discouraging such practices, not only willingly abet them, but offer special inducements to purchasers by peddling the favorite prescriptions of well-known physicians. These drug sellers, for they deserve no more dignified title, do not prescribe themselves, but are willing to