

to be of long duration, it devolves on us to search out the most effectual means of suppressing the abuse referred to. On entering a little deeper into this question, we perceive that it involves so many points, important to the public in general, and to the profession in particular, that to treat of it properly in all its bearings, would demand more space and time than we are able to devote to it.

It would require us to take into consideration the means of elevating the standing of the medical profession in this country, the laws which regulate physic and pharmacy, the laws affecting the liberty of the press, and even the moral law itself, in their relation to it.

Notwithstanding this, we may take some notice of it, and we proceed by stating that charlatanism makes its inroads into our society under two principal forms. The first is by means of remedies, called, both in Canada and elsewhere, "patent medicines," with which the country is literally flooded, and which are for the most part pernicious drugs: and the second is by those persons, in the proper sense of the word charlatans, who sell their medicines and bestow their personal attendance on the sick. In our present state of society, the former of these is more difficult to suppress than the latter; nevertheless, both are susceptible of being modified.

Evils produced by the use of patent medicines, amongst the classes that allow themselves to be imposed upon by the startling announcements with which such medicines are set forth for the very purpose of deceiving public credulity, must be frequently met with in the course of practice by physicians of even the most limited powers of observation.

Persons who would think it derogatory to their characters to purchase medicines from a mountebank who launts himself on a public stage, are not at all backward in risking their lives, perhaps, on the faith in another equally as vile, who makes use of the press to resound the marvelous cures wrought by the virtue of his elixir!

Patent medicines are good, bad, or indifferent; and are, in either case, capable of producing incalculable evils.

If we take the first case, and allow that they are good in themselves, it cannot be supposed for a moment that, for this reason, they are applicable to a large majority of diseases, if the slightest refer-

ence is made to the organization of the human body, and the causes that disturb its functions. The universal remedy yet remains to be discovered.

Admitting still further that physicians know the composition of these preparations and even prescribe them in certain cases, and that they are recommended to the public for definite and specified affections only, they are, even then, capable of doing real harm, when persons wholly unacquainted with medicine are allowed to be the judges of the applications to be made of them. For the true physician, who properly comprehends the nature of his high calling, does not prescribe according to the name of a disease; but seeks to penetrate, as far as possible, into the intimate folds of the life of the individual; and it is, in making this research, that he discovers the most valuable indications of treatment.

Every one possesses his own peculiar life, and hence the modifiers of that life ought to vary accordingly. The same disease often requires in one person, remedies altogether different from what it does in another.

The causes of disease are not the same, and their characters are unlike: age, sex, and constitution modify their course, changes necessarily take place, complications arise, and the system of medication varies at different times—all of which are circumstances that impose upon the physician the duty of carefully studying each particular case—so that he may be able to generalize diseases, and individualize his patients to the fullest possible extent.

The physician who has devoted his life to the study of the different manifestations of even one disease, can sometimes hardly find the proper thread to guide him in his conscientious researches; and yet, the first adventurer that comes, has his pretensions to be able to judge of the indications of treatment admitted by the public, on account of his pompous and often lying advertisement.

Secondly, a great number of these patent medicines are in their nature injurious, over and above the injuries which they cause by the abuse which certain persons make of them. "We are not now speaking of those great "female remedies," the advertisements of which, we regret to see, still continue in the columns of French newspaper, after having been the object of reiterated denun-