

any hurtful preparation, and a great dereliction of duty, should they fail to denounce what they may be incited to consider a trade matter, and keep silent regarding such manufactures. At the recent meeting of the American Medical Association, Bartholow delivered a pronunciamento against the sects in Medicine, and alluded to the methods of their propagation, as set forth in the recent pamphlet publications of a St. Louis drug house. He said the multiplicity of drugs was to be deplored, and urged an abridgement of the official list of the pharmacopœia. These views may fairly be considered as representing those of the leading members of the medical profession everywhere, who, while steadily tending to the reduction of the use of drugs as remedial agents, become increasingly anxious to have as complete a knowledge as possible of the physiological action and therapeutic uses of those which they do employ. The need for a firmer protest against the indiscriminate use of remedies must be further apparent to every one who reads the advertisements of the city press, and even of many, if not all, religious journals. To such an extent has this abuse grown in the United States and, if we mistake not, even in Canada, that the Arkansas State Medical Society presented a memorial to the recent meeting, asking the co-operation of the National Association and of State Societies, in endeavoring to suppress the evil.

The memorial stated that personal certificates from clergymen, and the editorial endorsements of newspapers gave quackery a standing which otherwise it could not obtain. To accept such advertisements for the support of the paper was doing evil that good might come, and was inconsistent with the moral pretensions of the clergy. These strictures have, unfortunately, too good a foundation in fact, and it were not unwise of the annual meetings of our medical associations to take cognizance of these facts and take action similar to that of the American Medical Association. We wish, however, that the profession, and, still more, the general public should discriminate in their denunciations of all advertised remedies. It would be as untrue as unjust to accuse all of our largest drug manufacturers of fostering this for the sake of the sale of some alkaloid, or extract, as the panacea for some serious disease, and which can alone be prepared by them; since many of these supply to the profession, carefully prepared drugs in such pure,

convenient and palatable forms, as to make them a boon to both physician and patient. Especially is this the case with those preparations as of cod-liver oil, beef extracts, malt extracts, phosphate compounds, as well as of the standard alkaloids, etc. But even these should be subject to supervision and regulation. Pepsins and pancreatics become too often positively injurious, putrefaction having destroyed their active principles; while the retail drug stores are laden with such a profusion of beef-peptones, that a god might well be congratulated, did his mighty brain retain and set forth accurately the superior qualities and virtues of each brand.

But the affair becomes serious when the line of quack nostrums is reached, the cordials, the elixirs, the safe-cures, the pectorals, the bitters, vegetable discoveries, and so *ad infinitum*. The witch's cauldron of modern days may be found boiling with its pristine force in many a druggist's shop.

"Witch's mummy,* maw and gulf,
Of the raving salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd in the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew, etc."

The druggist shrugs his shoulders, when asked how he can conscientiously keep and sell these innumerable mixtures, and replies, "We are merchants and keep what people wish to buy." The papers, by cleverly worded advertisements, tell the people that these compounds exist, and they go, as we have too frequently seen, to the druggist, and say, "Have you any so-and-so?" "Yes; What do you think of it? is it any good?" "Some," he says, "think so." The better druggists shirk all responsibility, for how can they honestly tell, both from a limited knowledge of the disease, and a still more limited knowledge of the ingredients of the mixture? We have long failed to understand how, morally, a druggist can, by virtue of the fact that he calls himself a merchant of drugs, while the physician calls himself a professional man, be relieved of the responsibility of selling for undiagnosed or misunderstood ailments, or perhaps none at all, remedies which may be asked for, and of

* Sir Thomas Browne says: "The common opinion of the virtues of mummies bred great consumption thereof, and princes and great men contended for this strange panacea wherein Jews dealt largely, manufacturing mummies from dead carcasses and giving them the names of kings, while specifics were compounded from cross and gibbet leavings."