

a few drugs thoroughly, rather than of knowing many drugs imperfectly.

Partly as a result of this relegation of drugs to a secondary place in the treatment of disease; partly as the result of a lessened confidence in the beneficial action to be obtained from the employment of our old official drugs; and partly also from a desire to exploit new drugs and new preparations, the physician to-day, I fear, is gradually using the drugs and preparations of the *Pharmacopœia* less and less, and in their place is prescribing the ready-to-hand formulæ of the manufacturing chemists, and not infrequently their proprietary preparations under patented names.

Large manufacturing houses of limited liability and immense capital, employing a skilled and highly educated staff, have been certainly in many ways of much service to our profession. Their triturate tablets, hypodermic tablets, and compressed tablets; their sugar-coated and chocolate-coated pills; their delicately flavored and brightly-colored elixirs, and their sterile ampoules, have been of great assistance in our prescribing, and will be so long as the manufacturers are obliged to maintain a high standard of strength and purity. This, however, will require government supervision. Undoubtedly such preparations as I have mentioned tend to favor economy for the patient, and add greatly to the convenience of such physicians as are obliged to dispense their own prescriptions. Much caution, however, must be exercised, and an absolute veto be placed on the use of proprietary combinations with patented names, or on any preparations of which the formula is hidden or obscure.

The profession should speak on this matter in no uncertain tone, for to-day many of these manufacturing houses and many brazen-faced pharmacists have gone much further than to offer us our official drugs put up in form convenient for administration, or blended in special formulæ of their own devising, stated to be suitable for all constitutions and conditions. Many of them now attempt to give advice to physicians as to the latest treatment of disease and foist prescriptions upon us containing some so-called new chemical agent—otherwise a well-known drug under a new proprietary name. Still worse, in our own medical journals, which we are supposed to control, proprietary nostrums are ethically (!) so they state, offered only to the profession with highly exaggerated and totally unproven statements, claiming for their special combination all kinds of miraculous powers. Their agents, fresh from schools of plausible advertising, flood our shelves with their free samples and our desks with their blotters emblazoned with the