

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT MEETING OF P. E. ISLAND MEDICAL ASSOCIA- TION, JULY, 1891.

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(Continued.)

Co-operation for mutual protection is now more necessary than ever, for without any such vexatious prosecutions we all know that the responsibilities of the regular physician with the advance of the science and art of his calling, are becoming more and more exacting. But outside the regular profession we find those who are not disturbed with any such responsibilities. First in importance as to numbers and as to advertising value to the newspaper are the patent medicine manufacturers. I do not intend to include just now in this category the druggist, who, of all men, should guard most jealously the rights of regular practitioners, but who I regret to say occasionally steps out of his own proper sphere and takes up the role of the patent medicine man. We all know the patent medicine man and his methods. A description of him by Dr. Chas. F. Chandler is so graphic and true, that as possibly some here present may not have read it, I offer no apology in reproducing it in full: "These firms of manufacturers of proprietary medicines nine out of ten live solely by the newspapers, and sometimes are admirably managed. I know some establishments in which there is a regular staff employed. I know something about them because they try to bribe me to certify to the value of their concoctions. As I say, there is a regular staff. There is the literary man who writes the letters, giving marvelous accounts of marvelous cures; there is the artist who shows the patient before and after taking twenty-two bottles of the medicine; there is the poet who composes poems on the subject; there is the liar who swears to what he knows isn't true, and the forger who produces testimonials from his own imagination. Without exaggeration I should say that nine out of ten of these proprietary medicines are frauds pure and simple; the real business is advertising for dupes. The medical part of it is but a side issue. I am pretty sure if I were to pound brickbats and spend \$100,000, in offering it at a dollar an ounce as a sure cure for some disease which cannot be cured, I should get back at least \$110,000. Thus

giving me \$10,000 for my trouble. Nineteenths of the medicines sent out in this fashion have no more curative properties than brickbats." And what of the other one-tenths that *has* medical properties? Those who use these are their own diagnosticians and prescribers! Not a wise practice!!

An ancient Chinese medical author wrote upon six sorts of distempers, the sixth and last being about those who credit impostors (this distemper is not now unfortunately extinct). But what are the facts to-day? What do we see? Why hundreds of the noblest and best intellects of the age devoting their lives to the discovery of the hidden meaning of the processes of life and disease, and their discoveries no sooner made than given a world-wide circulation—not kept secret for the purposes of gain, but quickly made the common property of all the followers of the healing art. The New York *Tribune*, quoted by the *Medical Record*, puts this fact fairly: "Physicians are almost the only members of the community who do not make money out of their important discoveries. It is a point of honor among them to allow the whole world to profit by their researches when they find a new remedy for wide-spread disease. Their reward is in the benefit which the sick and helpless receive, and in the gratitude which should not be stinted of the community at large." And the editor adds, "Koch's discovery will not be valueless if it only impresses on the profession and the laity those facts."

But this creature of the age—the patent medicine man—he has, or pretends to have, a secret, and he means to turn the sufferings of his fellow-man to his own private gains, for he knows that the greedy multitudes will swallow anything well advertized, with sublime faith:

When a threatening lung disorder,
Shows its first proclivity,
Do not let it cross the border,
Jude it with activity.

Many a patient, young or older,
Owes a quick recovery
All to Dr. Pierce's golden
Medical Discovery!

A golden discovery indeed! There are millions in it! What need he or any of his ilk care if he mocks the most pathetic of all human hopes—that of the consumptive—or cheats the dying or the hopelessly incurable of his last dollar? Who are his victims? The illiterate and ignorant? Not always or