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## NOSTRUMS AND PROPRIETARY MEDICINES.

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THE attention of physicians, through articles in the medical press, as also that of the laity, by the effective and fearless exposures made by such journals as *Collier's Weekly* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*, is being aroused to the evils arising from the more or less indiscriminate use of secret, patented, or trade-marked nostrums, and the commercial products known as proprietary medicines. In dealing with these subjects time and space only permit of their brief consideration under two heads: I. Existing Conditions; II. Remedial Measures.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS.

It is as true in medicine as in morals, "That whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and the malevolent effects of ignorance, indifference or indolence become quite as apparent in the medical as they do in the physical world when "thorns and briars" are allowed to usurp the place of the "olive and myrtle trees." Contrast the character of the harvest reaped, down through all the past centuries, from the unselfish, unwearied labors of the "great masters," with that of the harvest we are now reaping, from the utterly unscrupulous and mercenary methods by which pharmacy and therapeutics are exploited.

In anatomy, physiology, pathology—in fact in every other branch of medical science, practitioner and student alike can turn to a very extensive, scientific, pure literature uncontaminated by mercenary motives, but alas, alas, for pharmacy and therapeutics, have we not allowed, nay, worse still, have we not aided, business acumen, with unlimited capital, and inspired by insatiable greed, to use every device at its command to sow "tares" in these fields? We have robbed ourselves of the plausible excuse of the husbandmen in the biblical parable for avariciousness did not need to wait for professional slumber. Our ignorance of materia medica, and our wanton apathy in regard to rational and scientific therapeutics, have left these fields practically uncultivated hence the luxuriant crop of "tares" in the way of nostrums and proprietary medicines.

Are we not as physicians hand in hand with forces as so fully degrading to every sense of professional ethics as they are astounding