

by his customers, shaking his head knowingly, and treating their symptoms.

There are some druggists who do an enormous business in counter prescribing. The average person who is out of sorts does not wait to consider that a druggist has had no medical training; that he knows little or nothing of the true significance of certain symptoms; that the underlying causes of disease are a sealed book to him. The patient sees the druggist's array of bottles—usually a much more imposing array of bottles than is to be found in a doctor's dispensary; he is aware that the druggist understands the properties of drugs, and that he is skilled in mixing them in an attractive manner. The patient is convinced that he needs a bottle of medicine, and he goes to the druggist and asks for it. The druggist is seldom chary of supplying it, either from the habit-producing "patent" or the so-called "now-secret remedies" supplied by certain wholesale manufacturers, or from his own make up.

Now, while the average druggist knows very little of the science of medicine, he knows that certain drugs, in requisite doses, will relieve certain symptoms. The patient cannot sleep; then he shall have a sedative mixture. He has pains in his head; then he shall have a box of pellets or powders. He has pains in his joints; then he shall have a liniment. He has a skin eruption; then he shall have a pot of ointment. He has a sore throat; then he shall have a gargle. In the majority of cases no harm is done; but there are instances where this sort of unskilled treatment is disastrous.

The patient's sleeplessness may be an early symptom of grave disease of the brain; and so may the headache. The joint pains may be anything, from mild rheumatism to malignant bone disease. Whatever it is, skilled treatment is called for. Mild rheumatism, if neglected, may lead to permanent heart weakness and premature death. The skin eruption may be a symptom of serious infectious disease, for which a pot of ointment is worse than useless. The sore throat may mean diphtheria, for which something a great deal more powerful than a mere gargle is needed.

The danger of the prescribing druggist is no fancy picture. It is a very real

danger, as every doctor who has been in practice for any length of time can testify. It is he who sees the patients, after the druggist's amateur treatment has failed, and some of his stories are rather horrifying.

It will be seen that the question "Should doctors dispense?" is a far-reaching one. With it is bound up a great deal that is not apparent at first sight. First and foremost it opens up another question, "Should druggists prescribe?"

It should be plain to everybody that the reply to both questions is "No." If the law were to forbid doctors to dispense, except in emergencies, and druggists to prescribe, a great step forward would have been taken. The doctors would be freed for work which is essentially theirs; while dispensing would be done far better than it is at present—for druggists dispense a great deal better than doctors; and people would be saved from amateur, and therefore dangerous, doctoring.

A. G. PRACTITIONER.

The Dairy Farmer's Side.

Sir:—It has occurred to me that the dairy farmer deserves to have his side of the case considered in all this discussion as to pure milk and dairy regulation. In an effort to secure justice, a fair return for his labor, and immunity from unwarranted criticism, the farmer needs organization and this organization should be provided for him by a Dairymen's League. The purpose of such league would be to oppose and prevent monopoly in the production or sale of milk, and to encourage competition therein, and to protect its members and the consumers of milk against monopoly, or any unlawful combination of any kind, whereby the producers or consumers of milk are injuriously affected, to promote legislation, to assist authorized boards of health in passing ordinances which will be beneficial to the farmer and stockholders, who are producers of milk for metropolitan districts, and other markets, and to act as their agents in marketing their products.

There is not a man to-day who can take a herd of cattle, twenty-five in number, of the best milk producers, and purchase them at an average rate of \$65 per head, and milk them two years, and in