THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY BY UNQUALIFIED PERSONS.

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THERE probably never was a time when the State through the local health authorities made more numerous and more praiseworthy efforts for improving the general health of the community, and yet at the same time showed such a curious neglect of a few plain facts that go a long way towards neutralizing its own efforts. One can hardly be much surprised at this after reading the report recently issued from the Privy Council Office as to the "practice of medicine and surgery by unqualified persons in the United Kingdom." A more incomplete report has rarely been issued from any public department, for, while on the one hand it contains practically but little information as to the extent and effects of unqualified practice on the public health beyond what any man of the street could have put together with little trouble, on the other hand the replies of several of the medical officers of health to the questions addressed to them were evidently written without having made any serious attempt to obtain first-hand information. As explained in the preface to the report, it originated in a resolution passed in November, 1908, by the General Medical Council to the effect "that the General Medical Council being of opinion that the present Medical Acts do not sufficiently enable persons requiring medical aid to distinguish qualified from unqualified practitioners, and that it is contrary to the interest of the public that medical and surgical practice should be carried on with impunity by persons holding no recognized qualification, request the Government to take steps for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the evil effects produced by the unrestricted practice of medicine and surgery by unqualified persons." On receipt of this resolution the Privy Council sent copies of it to the Local Government Board, the Scottish Office, and the Irish Government, and asked that medical officers of health should be invited to give their opinions as to whether unqualified practice was assuming larger proportions and as to the effect on the public health. This was done and replies were received from over 1,600 medical officers of health in England and Wales and from a considerable number in Scotland and Ireland. A more unsatisfactory method of obtaining information on such a subject can hardly be imagined unless the object was merely to obtain a *prima facie* case for further inquiry. It may, perhaps, seem natural that a Government department should apply in the first instance to medical officers of health, but the least reflection ought to show that, at any rate, in the larger towns, where the evil is the greatest, the medical officers of health are not in the best position to give the information desired. They may, perhaps, be in a good position to institute a systematic investigation, but they were not required to do so, and only in comparatively few cases was this done. Proper investigations, such as that carried out in such a thorough manner by Dr. Lyster, the Medical Officer of Health for Hampshire, and a few others, were evidently the exception. No part of the duties of a medical officer of health for a large town brings him into such intimate relations with the personal habits of the people as to enable him to form any idea as to the extent to which the ordinary working classes resort to quacks, and any ordinary general practitioner or even any ordinary clergyman visiting the people in their own homes knows far more about this subject than the medical officer of health of a town, while the part-time medical officers of health who are in general practice are mostly in country districts where quackery is less evident. This is not merely a personal opinion, for the Scottish Office, in summarizing the replies of the Medical Officers of Health for Scotland, says, "Such information as the medical officers of health may normally acquire must be largely in the nature of hearsay." This is certainly a true statement of the position, and in the absence of systematic investigations the opinions expressed by many of the medical officers of health are of no more value than the opinions of any private person who has no special reason for taking note of quackery.

But further than this I feel justified in asserting from personal knowledge that in not a few cases the replies given by certain medical officers of health are altogether wrong and misleading and could have been given only by men whose opportunities of observation are very limited. Before making any specific references, it may be as well to draw attention to the character of the questions addressed to the medical officers of health. They were asked to state whether unqualified practice exists in their district, and if so whether it is assuming larger proportions, and also what effects are produced by it on the health of the district. Surely it ought to have been evident that in the complete absence of anything in the nature of comparative statistics or indeed of statistics of any kind it was impossible to give anything more than a vague and almost useless opinion as to whether unqualified practice was increasing or not in a large town, and for the same reason I shall, of course, avoid criticism of replies on that head. Confining myself, then, to the other part of the questions, I have to assert that in not a few towns with which I am intimately acquainted the replies of the medical officers of health as to the existence and effects of unqualified practice are entirely wide of the mark, and bear evidence of having been hastily and carelessly given without that full inquiry which so important a subject demanded, and it would certainly have been nearer the mark if the replies had been more generally to the effect that "the medical officer of health has no information." It is, of course, assumed that the report gives what it professes to give—a fair summary of the replies received.

The following are a few out of many other instances of towns about which the information given in the report is entirely misleading. The first is a town of over 40,000 population, of which it is stated that, except for prescribing by chemists, unqualified practice is non-existent. The fact is that in that town there is a resident bonesetter who varies his practice by opening whitlows and treating any kind of minor injuries; five, if not more, herbalists, one of whom visits patients at their own homes and sells more cough and diarrhoea mixtures than probably any two of the doctors prescribe; while certainly less than half of the dentists are registered.

In another town of about the same size with which I am well acquainted it is also stated that no unqualified practice exists except prescribing by chemists. Here it is a fact much complained of by the medical practitioners that a large proportion of the so-called slight cases of illness are attended by the district nurses, who go practically wherever they are summoned, the doctors being called in only when a case becomes serious. Here also there is at least one resident bonesetter, and the place is simply infested with itinerant quacks, who are not content with setting up their stands in the market-place, but have been known to visit people at their own homes. There are six or seven herbalists, and one at least visits patients at home, and is commonly known as "Doctor." There are also two or three eyesight testers and spectacle specialists, and, in spite of the Midwives Act, no small number of the confinement cases are attended by Mother Gampe, who are "not paid for the confinement" but for the housework they do while the mother of the family is in bed. In addition to this there is a Christian Scientist who sees quite a large number of cases. Several of the chemists act as unregistered dentists, stitch up wounds, and open abscesses and boils, while one is commonly called "Doctor." The sale of opium pills, especially to the factory girls, is notorious in this place, and several of the chemists openly advertise in their shops drugs which are known to be used simply as abortifacients. It is also a fact that numerous sweetshops and grocers, and even greengrocers, sell considerable quantities of headache powders, which appear to consist mostly of antifebrin.

With regard to another town of considerably over 100,000 population, and not far from Manchester, it is stated that unqualified practice is practically non-existent and the effects "*nil*." The real truth is that nearly every chemist prescribes, and most of them do some minor surgery; there are several bonesetters, and at least a score of herbalists, several of whom are known as "Doctors"; one of them at least professes to be able to cure cancer, while another largely advertises a consumption cure. The herbalists do a roaring trade, especially in selling broom-tops for dropsy where the dropsy is non-

existent but only feared; saffron, which is given in whisky as the common remedy for measles; and comfrey, which is more used for every imaginable ache and pain than any drug in the whole *Pharmacopoeia*. In addition an enormous quantity of pennyroyal and hierapicra is sold for what are sometimes correctly, but perhaps oftener euphemistically, called "irregularities." Here, again, headache powders are commonly sold by sweetshops and grocers, and some of the chemists do a considerable trade in the sale of opium to the factory hands. It is quite a common thing for young factory girls to go into a chemist's shop, lay a few pence on the counter, and receive three or four opium pills without saying a single word, as they are known and regular customers. And all this happens in a town of which the report says that unqualified practice is non-existent. The only explanation that suggests itself to me is that the medical officer of health may have understood by the term "unqualified practice" the engagement of unqualified assistants by medical practitioners. At any rate, that is the only sense in which the report is correct.

The towns alluded to above are, as I have said, places with which I am well acquainted, and of which I can speak with the greatest confidence. In several other cases where unqualified practice is said to be non-existent, I have sufficient passing knowledge to make me feel fairly sure that the statement would not be borne out if proper inquiry were made from resident general practitioners.

Turning next to some of the largest towns in the North, it is a matter of regret that in so many instances the statements made in the report are not worth recording. In the case of Liverpool we are simply told that "there is no material change in the amount of unqualified practice during the last few years, and that it is impossible to state the effect of such practice where so many factors are in operation." In Blackburn unqualified practice is said to be "not increasing," but the extent of it is not stated, and the effects are said to be "nil." At Bury it is said to be "practically non-existent." At Chester there is said to be no evidence of such practice except prescribing by chemists, which is "occasionally detrimental." From Leeds we are told that it is apparently not increasing, but the effects are "dangerous." About Oldham the statement is made that it is "practically non-existent," and the effects are "nil." From Preston we are told that such practice does not prevail to any extent, and is not increasing. At Rochdale it is said to be not increasing, but the extent is not stated, and the effect is said to be "very little." Similar statements are made about Stockport, except that as to the effects we are told there is "no evidence available," and something like the same account is given of Wigan. This meagre amount of information given about what are some of the most important centres of population is deplorable, and though I cannot lay claim to have any very intimate personal knowledge of some of these towns, I feel justified in stating with some confidence that the reports are in many cases altogether misleading, and I am confirmed in this opinion by information obtained from medical practitioners in most of these towns. In several cases it is self-evident that not the least attempt has been made to deal with the questions properly, the reason being, as far as I can gather, that altogether insufficient time was allowed before the replies were expected to be sent in. So far as that can be pleaded as the reason for the scantiness of the information given, the blame must be shifted from the shoulders of the medical officers of health to the Local Government Board, but in either case it is little short of a scandal that on a question of such vast importance to the public health such a miserably feeble attempt should have been made to obtain information from the most important centres of population.

As regards London, the report says, "The amount of unqualified practice does not appear to be so great as in the provincial towns." I am not in a position to deny this categorically, but the actual information given is far too scanty to justify the acceptance of such a statement. And when we are told, further, that in seven of the metropolitan boroughs unqualified practice is "non-existent or very small," it is impossible not to think of the ostrich burying its head in the sand.

Of Manchester and Salford I can speak from the most

intimate knowledge, as well as from information received from time to time as Honorary Secretary of the Salford Division and of the Joint Committee of the Manchester and Salford Divisions of the British Medical Association. With regard to Manchester, the medical officer of health says there is an increasing practice by bonesetters and Christian Scientists, and the sale of abortifacients by some chemists and others is believed to be increasing. He simply mentions "herbalists, occasionally isolated instances, and chemists prescribing." As to the effects, he says: "Injurious effects cannot be positively ascertained. There may be some effect from the use of diachylon, but it is one that is difficult to gauge." With regard to Salford, it is said that unqualified practice is "not increasing; many unqualified persons, chiefly chemists, practise, but their number is not increasing, and simple ailments only are commonly treated; the effect of such practice cannot be stated, but it is not thought to be important."

The meagre simplicity of these reports from two of the largest towns in the North of England has astounded general practitioners, any one of whom knows from personal experience in the homes of the people—an experience that the medical officers of health cannot possibly have—how inadequate the reports are, and how calculated they are to foster a feeling of false security in a matter of the most serious import to the health of the community. The fact is Manchester is simply the great breeding place for quacks of every description, and thousands of people from the rural districts and the smaller towns of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire flock to Manchester, where they can find a quack specialist for almost every variety of disease. The bonesetters have a most lucrative practice with the football clubs, and not long ago the practitioners of the district had to complain that a large workmen's medical club in connexion with the Great Central Railway Company had a rule—which, as far as I know, has not been rescinded—which provided for the payment to a bonesetter of fees amounting often to a guinea for attending members who were at the same time under the care of a medical officer of the club, who received only 4s. per year per member. The evil effects of the practice of bonesetters has been seen by numerous practitioners in Manchester in the shape of tuberculous joints irretrievably damaged by forcible movements at a time when rest was imperative. Again, there are in Manchester several large advertising firms of quacks trading under the name of companies, keeping a large staff of typists to reply to correspondence, and with extensive ramifications and branches and canvassers, who go round to the mills and factories in the surrounding towns to induce the workpeople to have their treatment or to buy their nostrums. One of these firms professes to make a speciality of the diseases of women, though it is quite ready to treat men or children either personally or by correspondence. On numerous occasions large rooms in Sunday schools or even in town halls have been engaged and lectures given on diseases of women, with limelight illustrations of the female genital organs. I have in my possession a verbatim report of one of these lectures, which by instruction of the Salford Division of the British Medical Association was submitted to the Chief Constable, but the unsatisfactory state of the law made it impossible to proceed further in the matter. One of the firms recently boasted that it treated 600 patients per week, and from what I have seen the figure is probably no exaggeration. The fees charged are double, and even quadruple, those charged by medical practitioners, and few patients escape without buying some form of apparatus for which they pay between 20s. and 30s., though the market value cannot be over 3s. Patients have come under my own care who have attended for years without benefit one or other of the dispensaries of one of these firms. In one case a poor widow had been attending one of the dispensaries for about three years on account of a small uterine polypus hanging down into the vagina by a long thin pedicle. She said "the doctor" had been trying to "sweal it away" by medicines, and she had paid him over £30 during that time. Her earnings had never exceeded a few shillings a week, and the greater part of the money she had paid had been provided either by a married daughter little better off than herself or from the poor-box of a Methodist chapel. She was considerably surprised when I informed her that there

was no qualified medical man in connexion with the firm, as she had shared what is the common idea of the district that the firm consists of eminent qualified medical specialists. This impression was fostered by the fact that the founder of the firm had an American doctorate, not medical, and had always been referred to as "the doctor." There was not the least difficulty in quickly removing the growth, which was innocent, though some ulceration had commenced, and for the last eighteen months she has been in perfect health. It may be added that this firm has on several occasions been prosecuted for mistreatment and mulcted in damages to the extent of several thousand pounds, but with the enormous number of patients all paying good fees it can afford to smile at the damages, and to boast that after all it runs no greater risk of prosecution than fully qualified and registered medical practitioners.

Another large firm, also employing a staff of typists, makes a speciality of certain skin diseases, especially varicose veins and ulcer. Probably the bulk of its treatment is undertaken through the post, so that the patients have practically to diagnose their own complaint, but the advertisements state that every case is considered by a "qualified medical man." It should be noted that it does not say "registered" medical man, and I have been quite unable to find out the name of any registered medical man who is connected with the place. The character of the preparations sold by this firm has already been exposed in the "Secret Remedy" columns of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, but it still remains a fact that enormous numbers of people who can ill afford it are induced to pay very considerable fees for its preparations, and on numerous occasions I have had to explain the possible difference between a "qualified" and a "registered" medical man to persons who had been misled by the advertisement.

Again, Manchester is well known as the home of unqualified sight-testers who often call themselves "optologists" or "sight specialists." Taking Manchester and Salford together there are scores of opticians who profess to be eye specialists, and large numbers of small clock and watch repairers or even electricians without any previous training who undertake to test the sight and supply spectacles. It must be a matter for the greatest concern that many school children obtain their spectacles from small opticians or watch repairers. Only recently I found a school child wearing myopic glasses of three dioptries who was really suffering from hypermetropic astigmatism. There was not the least excuse for this as the education authorities would have arranged for proper testing, but the parents thought they could get spectacles more cheaply themselves, and they were misled by the optician's advertisements. One large firm is specially noted for always recommending gold frames for which the ordinary charge is 50s. with an extra charge of 10s. if astigmatic glasses are supplied. Of course in all cases the testing is supposed to be free, only the glasses being charged for. It is not generally the practice to use mydriatics or retinoscopy, and practically the patients, even children, test themselves.

The number of unqualified specialists for venereal diseases is appalling, though most of them hide their real character by only advertising remedies for "loss of manly vigour" or "neurasthenia." The principal and by far the most profitable part of the trade of many so-called herbalists is in the treatment of venereal diseases. Mercury is freely used by some of these herbalists, but, in deference to a popular objection to "minerals," they create confusion by selling the herb *Mercurialis perennis*. By no means a small proportion of the patients of these herbalists or specialists are married men who are afraid to go to their ordinary medical attendant, and it is no rare thing for medical practitioners to have to treat respectable married women for venereal diseases communicated by their husbands, who, when no longer able to pay the high charges of the "specialist," have been assured that they were cured. Another large part of this miserable trade is with men who, after excesses, get an idea that they are becoming impotent, and it is quite astonishing to find working men willing to pay a goodly proportion of their wages to a quack to enable them to resume their excesses as soon as possible. The favourite drug used for this purpose seems to be damiana, which is included in the

"special stock" of many herbalists. There is an enormous sale, too, of herbs supposed to be abortifacients. Especially common is a mixture, popularly called "hiccory piccory mixture," which appears to be a decoction of pennyroyal with hiera-picra, the latter being supposed to be a decoction of aloes in drastic doses with canella bark. But all these remedies for "irregularities" are now giving way to diachylon, which is freely sold by many herbalists and chemists, who know perfectly well the purpose for which it is intended. Far more profit, however, is made out of diachylon by selling it in the form of pills. I recently had to attend a woman three months advanced in pregnancy who was suffering from lead colic with obstinate constipation, the distinct "blue line" leaving no possibility of mistake. The case was undoubtedly serious, and under fear of death she told me she had spent £4 in pills, some of which she gave me, though she absolutely refused to say where she had purchased them. Fortunately she recovered without abortion, and had a normal confinement at full term, but the infant was a puny little thing hardly over 5 lb. in weight. The pills were simply bits of emplastrum plumbi roughly rolled into pill shape, worth perhaps 1d. for a score, but sold by "an experienced nurse" as a "certain specific" at 5s. for a box of a dozen.

The "cancer curers" of the Manchester district are of world-wide notoriety, and the "famous Reddish doctor" must have treated many thousands of cases. Most of them strongly advise against anything in the nature of operation, and persuade the patients that the growth can be "swealed away." This generally means the application of the strongest caustics, arsenical paste being perhaps the commonest. The suffering caused by the treatment is incalculable. The most innocent growths are irritated in a quite unnecessary way, while the futile attempts to treat malignant growths by utterly useless medicines and local applications involve delays, the consequences of which it is frightful to contemplate. If there were no other reason whatever for drastic legislation against quackery, the terrible ravages of the "cancer curers" of the Manchester district would afford ample ground for the most stringent repression. The same remarks equally apply to the "consumption curers." Among the other unqualified specialists who freely advertise and apparently drive a large trade in Manchester are the medical electricians and sellers of electric belts, the haemorrhoid curers, the curers of rupture without operation, and others far too numerous to mention, all of whom ply their nefarious trades under the protection of the law.

I have said but little about the habit of self-drugging by patent medicines, tablets, and pills, though there can be no doubt it is more common than ever; but closely connected with this is one matter that deserves the urgent attention of the health authorities, and that is the frequency with which infectious diseases are treated from beginning to end by chemists and herbalists. This is quite common in mild cases of scarlatina, while diphtheria has often been treated as "mumps" or "enlarged glands." With regard to epidemic diarrhoea it is almost the exception for a medical man in certain districts of Manchester and Salford ever to see a case that has not first been treated by a chemist; and what is even more surprising is the fact that in several of the neighbouring towns the sanitary committees directly encourage parents not to call in a doctor by offering to supply diarrhoea medicine free to anyone who applies at the town halls. But the case of measles is by far the worst of all. The authorities are often apparently at a loss to understand the rapid spread of epidemics of measles, and quite recently the Lancashire County Council confessed itself unable to account for the recent epidemic, which had made it necessary to close no less than thirty elementary schools. The explanation is perfectly obvious to general practitioners. It is no exaggeration to state that 50 per cent. of the cases of measles, whooping-cough and mumps are first treated by chemists, generally without being seen. They simply accept the parents' account that the children have a "spring rash" or a "teething rash," or that "their blood is out of order," and isolation is never suggested until the epidemic has spread. The statistics for Manchester show that measles is accountable for nearly twice as many deaths as any other of the infectious diseases, the next on the list being epidemic diarrhoea, and in view of the facts stated above, which are confirmed

by the reports from medical officers of health in several other parts of the country, there is no ground for surprise. The law strains at the gnat and swallows the camel.

Reviewing the subject as a whole, it may perhaps be difficult to prove from statistics anything as to the growth of quackery, but the ominous fact about it is that quackery is undoubtedly becoming more organized and systematic. The itinerant quacks of the market-place still flourish as much as ever, but the characteristic of the day is the phenomenal growth of the large and well-organized schemes and companies carrying on their business on a scale almost incredible, and in most cases succeeding in defrauding the public into the belief that their treatment is in the hands of qualified medical men. The report issued through the Privy Council Office, incomplete though it is, and bearing on the face of it such obvious signs of imperfect inquiry and hasty replies, nevertheless contains sufficient to warrant the statement that the quackery that is proved to exist is a grave danger to the public health, and that further inquiry by a Royal Commission is urgently necessary in the interests of the community. To general practitioners this may appear superfluous, but it is not clear that statesmen and the more intelligent part of the public have yet realized the dangers arising from the imperfect state of the law and the failure to apply even the powers that exist. It may possibly be suggested that if the Government scheme for sickness insurance is carried in anything like its present form, the facilities for obtaining proper medical advice will be so easy that the day of the quacks will be over, as a registered practitioner will be at the beck and call of the working classes without expense. But experience shows that the high fees demanded by quacks are in no way a hindrance to their success, as the speciousness of their advertising seems to be sufficient to overcome all the dictates of common sense and economy.

In short, the public needs protecting against itself, and I see no possibility of this without a radical amendment of the Medical Acts. I would therefore strongly urge that a petition should be prepared pressing on the Government the necessity, in the public interest, of appointing a Royal Commission with the reference, first, to inquire into the whole subject of unqualified medical practice, including the trade in secret remedies; secondly, to ascertain the extent of existing statutory powers, and to show how best they may be made operative; and, thirdly, to suggest such amendments of the Medical Acts, or other Acts, as are necessary to prevent the existing evils of unqualified practice.

QUACKERY IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

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THE following notes are founded not only on the personal experience of the writer, but on the answers to inquiries of many medical men practising in villages and small country towns in the south of England, and the examination of the advertisements in forty newspapers circulating in the same district. There is no need in this JOURNAL to define what is meant by quackery, and I do not intend to discuss the question of prescribing by chemists, nor that of the irregular practice of medicine by nurses and midwives, nor the supply of patent foods; they are subjects of importance, but each one requires separate consideration.

In examining the nature and extent of this practice, we have to consider the different sorts of drugs, the various mechanical and other appliances, and the specialist practitioners and treatments. The first group includes the remedies of herbalists and wise women, domestic remedies, cancer cures, and patent medicines. In the second group are appliances for the treatment of hernia, deafness, and rheumatism, rings and electric belts; and in the last group bone-setters, masseurs, unqualified oculists, aurists, and dentists, asthma and phthisis cures, and faith healers and all their genus.

Herbalists at one time no doubt were very numerous, and had extensive practices, but they are fast becoming extinct; in all the newspapers examined only one herbalist's advertisement was found. Of thirty-four medical men who

have been good enough to give me the benefit of their experience on this point, all but six write that herbalists do not exist in their neighbourhood; in the six districts where they are reported to exist they only visit the district occasionally, and except for the sale of aperient pills their trade is not large; they are sometimes found in the market-place on a busy day, but the resident herbalist, who had often some local fame, has been ousted by the advertising quack.

Wise women have become rarer than herbalists. In one district only have I any record of them; that is a small colliery district, where there are two or three with "the evil eye"; they are still feared by a few, but their influence is decidedly on the wane. One of them makes and sells elder ointment for all diseases of the eye.

Neither from medical men nor from the newspaper advertisements have I any evidence of the existence of a cancer curer. One occasionally even now hears a whisper about violet leaves; and a doctor in a small town in Somerset told me that some years ago a patient of his, in spite of all advice, insisted on having a cancer of the tibia treated by a herbalist, who guaranteed to cure it with slippery elm sawdust poultices.

Domestic remedies are also being driven out of the home by the army of advertised remedies, and district nurses must have done very much to stop the use and abuse of many of them—certainly of such things as marshmallow poultices for sprains and cuckoo-pint leaves for boils—though there still are some who use them; but I doubt if even a district nurse could dissuade the old woman who explained the use of rabbits' scybalæ as pills by saying: "The rabbits eat the lovely herbs, and they must contain the virtue of the herbs and must be beneficial."

The use of patent medicines has become so enormous that it is difficult to form anything like an accurate estimate of its extent or its exact nature. From every medical man, from every district comes what is practically the same reply—that in every house are to be found patent medicines; that they are sold alike by chemists, grocers, stores, and little shops; that their use has increased enormously of late years. This statement is borne out by the fact that the revenue from labels on patent medicines increased from £266,400 in 1899 to £334,000 in 1908. From the official returns as to stamps it has been calculated that the sale of patent medicines in 1908 amounted in value to about £2,500,000, and the proportion of about 20s. spent for every sixteen of the population is apparently much the same in the country as elsewhere, for in one small town which with its neighbouring villages has a population of about 9,000, the chief chemist and grocer between them sell £600 worth of patent medicine in the year. This seems a large sum for one small district, but it is probably the same in other places. In another small town the chemist said that a quarter of all his sales was patent medicines. A grocer in a town with a population of 10,000 in an agricultural district said that his bill from one firm for patent medicines, enema syringes, etc., amounted to £40 a month, and this did not include certain proprietary articles which he purchased direct from the makers. The leading chemist in this same town said, "Speaking generally, I sell more quack medicines than ever, in spite of grocers selling them." In a large village on Salisbury Plain the amount sold is estimated at £200 a year.

Taking the case of individuals, a doctor in Cornwall writes that a pauper patient of his spent £11 in a stock of a well-known kidney cure, and died the next week. A dispenser, at one time a chemist in a large agricultural village, said that a man earning 12s. a week would regularly buy a patent medicine at 2s. 9d. a bottle. Both chemists and grocers are agreed as to the enormous increase in these sales of late years, both among the well-to-do and the poor, more especially the former. Another source of information about this trade is found in the newspaper advertisements. I referred to forty newspapers that had been examined; they were mostly local papers, but some were London papers with large circulation in the country, such as the *Daily Express*, *Lloyd's Weekly News*, the *People*, *Answers*, and the *British Weekly*, and two of the better-class society papers. Omitting advertisements of physical culture, these papers contained 622 advertisements of patent medicines, an average of 15