phasia and to leave the marketing of nostrums to the pseudo-pharmaceutical and chemical concerns which have too long humbugged our profession and disgraced American medicine and pharmacy.

Analysis of Nostrums in North Dakota.

It is gratifying to note that the officials of some of the state health boards have realized the true scope and responsibility of the work placed in their hands and appreciate the great injury to public health from the fraudulent manner in which many medicines are advertised and sold. In the eighteenth annual report of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, the food commissioner, E. F. Ladd, and the pharmacist, L. A. Brown, call attention to the evils arising in connection with the "patent medicine" business. Mr. Ladd says: "The more I have had occasion to look into the subject of 'patent medicines' and their use, the more fully I become convinced of the great fraud that is being practiced. Among the 'patent medicines' there are some possessed of merit, but the greater proportion of those now sold are nothing more than worthless products, often 'dope.'" He also quotes a drug merchant to show the attitude of others with regard to some of these products "which claim to be ethical and, therefore, are supposed to be recognized and used under the direction of physicians, but which, in reality, seldom are recommended by physicians of standing."

Mr. Ladd makes the further comment: "By reference to the report of Professor Brown given further on, one will see something of the character of 'patent medicines' which have been sold in this state and have thus far been under examination. Their worthlessness in many cases is clearly indicated. They are often so prepared as to deceive and mislead and make victims of those who use the products. That there is necessity for a more stringent law than any which we now have is clearly indicated, and I can fully endorse the report of Mr. O. C. Beale, who was commissioned by the Australian government to make an investigation of the nostrums sold as 'patent' and proprietary medicines in all English-speaking countries."

Professor Brown's report shows a large amount of good work accomplished during the year. A long list of proprietaries containing cocaine is published. Vin Mariani is in this list and receives an exposure occupying over two pages and leading to the conclusion that whatever the claims made by the manufacturers, "according to our analysis of samples of Vin Mariani it does contain cocaine, and regardless of whether its presence is due to coca leaves or not, it constitutes it a cocaine preparation." Evidently hair-splitting distinctions are not very popular at the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station.

The results of the analysis of some "dyspepsia remedies" are very interesting. The report states: "Only a few preparations of this nature have been analyzed in this laboratory, owing to a limited amount of time and help trained in drug analysis, but enough has been done here and elsewhere to arouse in our minds the suspicion that there are very few preparations put up as aids to digestion that have any efficacy whatever." Among the preparations analyzed were Vigni and Malt Papaya, Borscherdt's. The first showed no digestive power and the second a slight action on starch, but none on albumin. It is suggested that in the combination of diastase and papayotin in the second preparation the two ferments mutually destroy each other as has been shown to be the case with mixtures which contain both pepsin and pancreatin in solution.

It is to be hoped that we may have more investigations of similar nature by the responsible boards which are equipped to do work in this field. One advantage of work done under public authority not connected with the medical profession is that the suspicion of medical bias is removed and the advice given in such reports as these ought to be of immense value to the people to whom they appeal and who are liable to be misled by the specious advertisements of nostrums which are both an injury to health and a fraud on the purse.

Correspondence

Priority in Regard to Patellar Synovial Fringes.

NEW YORK, June 18, 1908.

To the Editor:—The rapid increase of years renders it hardly probable that I can accomplish much further work of novelty or interest in surgery. Hence, I may be pardoned for calling attention to what I have done in the past in connection with a lesion presented in an able form by Dr. Abbott of Portland, in *THE JOURNAL*, May 23, p. 1675. He ascribes the recognition and the requisite surgical treatment of an unusual form of joint-locking due to a duplication of the synovial membrane on the under surface of the patella to Dr. Goldthwait, who operated for this condition in 1902. I venture to state that in the *Medical Record* of July 16, 1892, it will be found that I called attention to this lesion and, by a similar procedure to that used by Dr. Abbott, removed the projecting fold in two instances, though I did not then, nor do I now claim to be the originator of the operation or the discoverer of the disease. It was only recognized as a unique affection.

R. F. WEIR.

Medical Economics

THIS DEPARTMENT EMBODIES THE SUBJECTS OF ORGANIZATION, POSTGRADUATE WORK, CONTRACT PRACTICE, INSURANCE FEES, LEGISLATION, ETC.

Sentences for Charlatans in the German Courts.

The last number of the *Gesundheitslehrer*, the official organ of the Antiquackery Society, mentions nearly 20 suits brought against quacks, the penalty ranging from fines of \$5 to \$75 and imprisonment for from two weeks to three years. Among them is L. Bauer, of "antidiabeticum" fame, this being the eighth suit that has been brought against him. One Witte was given a year's imprisonment for treating a woman with cancer and promising to cure her. It says of another, a shoemaker, that he grew tired of working on shoes and determined to take charge of the health of his fellowmen, "and of course he found people at once to trust their health in his hands." He treated a lad with a tuberculous suppurating process in the pelvis and promised his father a cure in six weeks. He applied a plaster cast, never cleaned, but charged \$2.50 for each inspection. After the boy's death suit was brought and he was condemned to two weeks of prison, the fourth penalty for the same practices.

Systematic Organization in Kansas City.

The Jackson County (Missouri) Medical Society has taken up systematic methods of organization, following the plan of the Chicago, Philadelphia and St. Louis medical societies, and dividing the county into districts. A representative from each district has been appointed on the general organization committee, thus forming an organization committee of twenty-seven, one for each ward in Kansas City and Independence, and one for each township in the surrounding country. The secretary, Dr. E. L. Stewart, has begun the compilation of a card index of all the physicians of the county, and is endeavoring to obtain personal data regarding all members of the profession in the county. Without doubt, the work in Jackson County will be as productive of good results as that in the other large cities which have adopted this method.

Local Regulation of Nostrums.

Following the movement on the part of the national and state governments for the regulation of the sale of dangerous and fraudulent medical preparations, a number of cities have passed similar local ordinances. Such an ordinance was adopted recently by the council of Huntington, Ind. This example is being followed by a number of other cities in the state. Logansport has just passed an ordinance providing that any itinerant physician or other traveling person desir-