

Correspondence.

VANCOUVER, B.C., March 17th, 1906.

To the Editor of DOMINION MEDICAL MONTHLY :

Sir,—The Vancouver Medical Association, at its regular meeting of March 12th, 1905, resumed the discussion of Patent Medicines. There was unanimity in the conviction that laws should be enacted to eradicate the existing evils. It was pointed out that in their promiscuous sale there exists a real danger to the public and that gross frauds are being perpetrated and that in their advertisements morally dangerous literature is being circulated.

As is well known, the drugs that are commonly used in patent medicines are opium or its derivatives, as found in consumption or colic cures and soothing syrups; cocaine in catarrh mixtures, acetanilid in headache powders, chloral hydrate in drink cures; belladonna, ergot and cotton root in preparations recommended as abortifacients; and alcohol which is used in medicines represented to cure all diseases. Most of these are poisonous and so immediately dangerous to life; opium in any form is so particularly dangerous to children. On the other hand, all are even more objectionable if taken for any length of time. At first they relieve symptoms or supposed symptoms or create pleasant feelings. This impels the user, who is unconscious of what he is taking, to continue their use until a habit is acquired, which eventually leads to the ruin of his mental, moral and physical nature. Yet these are the drugs which are sold in a secret way and without license.

The majority of these preparations, as well as being dangerous, are fraudulent, because the vendors of them, in their advertisements, claim to cure many diseases which scientists know are incurable. But there is another class of preparation which is absolutely fraudulent. They contain no drug of any medicinal value, but depend for their sale entirely upon the extravagant and false claims of the manufacturer. Thus the despairing chronic of the imaginative neurotic is preyed upon.

Then again in the advertisements which appear in our periodicals, both religious and secular, very corrupting literature