

largest towns is composed of many nationalities, and there is probably no *clientele* which does not include patients of nearly every race on the face of the earth. The study of the aboriginals, now fast disappearing, and the manner in which their medicine-men and wise women diagnose and treat disease, is most interesting and instructive. The manner in which Cingalese, Kanakas, Hindoos, Chinese and Japanese adapt themselves to their changed environment, and the result of such a change in the form of their diseases, is well worthy the close study which we believe it is receiving from some of our profession. There is no lack of observers, careful and scientific observers, but, so far as we know, there is a great lack of published observations, and this serious "but" it is the purpose of this paper to remove.

Short papers, notes of cases, personals, and items of interest to the profession generally will be gladly received, and will be hopefully looked for by the associate editor.

Prince Edward Island.

DR. R. MACNEILL, Associate Editor for Prince Edward Island.

SECRET NOSTRUMS.

In the Province of Nova Scotia there is a company organized to manufacture and sell a preparation under the style of "K. D. C.," said to be a great remedy for dyspepsia—the newspapers are full of testimonials.

We recently sent a sample to Philadelphia for analysis and examination. "Dr. Walling who examined the sample, states that it is composed principally of sodium bi-carbonate, mustard and a very small and unimportant trace of aromatic bitters, probably added to disguise it. Therapeutically it exerts the power of soda and if people choose to pay a dollar for a half cent's worth of this valuable drug they have the privilege. If anyone wants to see for himself how much soda there is in it, all he has to do is to drop in a little *vinegar* after mixing the powder with water, and see it effervesce."

Is it not time to have a general law passed in this Dominion requiring all patent medicine and secret nostrum vendors to publish their formula

with the Government or on the label attached to each package or bottle? Why should the public be defrauded and why should men be allowed to put up drugs of the ordinary kind or general class under a euphonious name which the combination will not warrant? Legislation is demanded upon this question, and medical men must do some talking and show up the scoundrels who are fleecing the people, and hold the press and the drug trade in their grasp as subsidized agents.

MEDICAL PRESCRIPTIONS.

Prescriptions sometimes cause a trouble legally as to ownership, and in consulting members of the profession we find that hardly any two of them are agreed as to the principles that should govern a prescription. Who owns it, the doctor who formulates it or the patient for whom it is prescribed? If medical men were agreed among themselves as to the nature of the contract, or the principles underlying it, lawyers would not be called upon to define the matter for them—and their own practice would decide before our judges. First, then, a prescription is a literary production, formulated by the doctor to suit a patient in a particular case, and he sells the *usufruct* of it once to the patient. The patient doubtless has a *fiduciary* ownership in the paper and might hold an action against a third party, but the real ownership of the prescription is vested in the doctor as the author. The law of authorship governs. The discussion of this problem is essentially a new one, as there are few, if any, discussions to be found upon the unauthorized use of medical prescriptions, and in order to discuss it fairly it should be done on the lines of (1) the legal character of a prescription, (2) the rights acquired by the patient in it, (3) the legal relations of the druggist to it.

As already observed, the prescription is the *property* of its author, and he may repeat it, or resell it as often as he pleases, for he only disposes of the right of use to another, and the absolute ownership still remains in himself, and the patient on his part only pays for the *use* of that advice or prescription for that one time only. True, the prescription consisting of the paper and formula, and being written for the party who pays for it, the patient would have a right of property in the