

MANITOBA, NORTHWEST AND BRITISH COLUMBIA LANCET.

DRINKING AND ITS CURE.

Under this heading a late edition of the *Toronto Globe* gives the result of a series of interviews held with members of the medical profession in Toronto, as to the so-called Russian remedy for dipsomania, which is simply subcutaneous injection of strychnia in the proportion of 1 to 200 parts of water, five minims to be injected every 24 hours. The Toronto faculty seem to be unanimous in their opinion as to strychnia having no such property as that claimed for it by the Russian physician, Dr. Portugoloff. That strychnia, by its well known therapeutic action as a nerve tonic and stimulant, is valuable in counteracting the effects of alcohol, is familiar to every medical man, but that it possesses any such property as that which is now claimed for it by our Russian confrere, must be received with extreme doubt. We believe in but one cure for the inebriate, if the case be capable of cure; and it is not to be sought for in the pharmacopœia, but in the patient's own person, and consists in the awakening of that will power that perfect man possesses, and which all such are capable of exercising. When this fails the inebriate must be considered of faulty organization, and must have special legislation to meet his case, legislation which "we have not yet got the particulars of," but which the Imperial Parliament has recently enacted. Man stands at the pinnacle of the mammalian order, superior to all by his reasoning power, the powers of his mind. Physically, he is greatly their inferior, and the instincts with which the brutes are gifted will not unfrequently tax all man's reasoning faculties. If this reasoning power cannot be awakened and brought to bear on the habitual inebriate, clearly he is an unreasoning being, and it is but just and right that in his own interests and in those of the community at large, that he should be so treated. If greater effort were to be made by those many admirably intentioned people, who

are apostles of total abstinence, and prohibitionists, the latter a utopian idea that so long as the world exists and is peopled, will never become a reality. If these good people would concentrate their energies in endeavoring to awaken the drunkard to a sense of his degradation, get him to grasp the fact that by his own wilful act he is placing himself below the beasts of the field, and by persistence in his vice he demonstrates unmistakably that he is devoid of reasoning and will power, and therefore of inferior organization to the majority of the human race, their exertions would yield better results. To keep a man from debasing himself, to argue it necessitates that he should be treated as a cow who longingly looks at a fresh clover field but is carefully fenced out to prevent her entering and gorging herself until she bursts, would be to admit that man is of an inferior organization to what the Creator intended. But as this is an inadmissible argument, and we know that the majority, by far the largest majority of the human race, possess sufficient will-power, if they chose to exert it, to overcome the enticing pleasures of the wine cup, awaken that will into action either by argument or the knowledge that its continued disuse gives a right to others to consider and treat a chronic inebriate as one not entirely responsible for his actions. There can be little doubt that the fear of the latter will prove the most potent and that stringent legislation applicable to the habitual inebriate will have a greater effect in mitigating the evil than all other means that have been hitherto tried. The man who constantly loses his reason by the imbibition of stimuli knowing the inevitable results affords positive evidence of an inferior mind and irrefragable proof of inferiority to his fellow, who can use without abusing nature's gifts. That the day will ever come when prohibitionism will become law and the distillation of alcoholic compounds a thing of the past is a chimerical idea which none but a visionary enthusiast can entertain. Alcohol is a product of as inestimable value, and benefit to mankind when used, as it is degrading in its influences and effect when abused. That