

A NEW BASIS FOR CANTHARIDES PLASTER.—A paper on this subject was read by Mr. A. W. Gerrard at the late meeting of the British Pharmaceutical Conference. The author thought that the present basis of the plaster lacked adhesiveness and flexibility. In winter, especially, it was found to become crumbly, and to separate from the surface on which it was spread. These results were attributed to the use of mutton suet. The author made many experiments, but finally fixed on the following formula as giving a more satisfactory and workable plaster;—Cantharides, in fine powder, 5 ounces; Canada balsam, 8 ounces; yellow wax, 5 ounces; and lard, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces. During the winter months the proportion of lard might be doubled. Compared with the B. P. plaster the blistering effect was found to be in favor of the new basis. The treatment of the powdered flies by caustic soda, and afterwards with hydrochloric acid, for the purpose of liberating cantharidine, as recommended by a German authority, was tried, but found to result in no advantage. In the discussion which followed the reading of this paper the new plasters did not appear to meet with much favor; most of the members thought that, with proper manipulation, the B. P. basis might be made to yield a good plaster, and that, at all events, it would not be proper to make it more adhesive

GALLIUM.—In a paper in *Comptes Rendus*—for a translation of which we are indebted to our contributor "Monad"—M. Lecoq de Boisbaudran gives additional particulars regarding the new element. In the liquid state the metal is of a beautiful silver-white colour, but, in crystallizing, it assumes a very distinct bluish tint, and its brilliancy diminishes considerably. Isolated octahedral crystals may be obtained by carefully cooling the melted metal. Former experiments gave the fusing point at between 29° to 30° C., but from recent trials of samples of purified gallium, perfectly free from potassium, the point was found to be 10.16° C., (about 86° F.) At 30.06° C., crystals were formed slowly. The calculations of Mendeleef for a hypothetical body, which seems to correspond with gallium, give a specific gravity of 5.9, and M. Boisbaudran's experiments show the actual specific gravity to be near this point, or 5.935. The process for the extraction of gallium is given in detail by the author, but it will not be appropriate or necessary for us to follow him, as the subject is not of sufficient general interest to our readers.

TOUGHENED GLASS CHIMNEYS.—A correspondent of the *Toronto Mail* cautions the public against the use of the La Bastie chimney, and confirms the statements of others in regard to the