

## CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT, . . . Wm. ELLIOT, Esq.

The regular meetings of the Society take place on the first Wednesday evening of each month, at the Mechanics' Institute, when, after the transaction of business, there is a paper read, or discussion engaged in, upon subjects of interest and value to the members.

The Society admits as members, Chemists and Druggists of good standing, and their assistants and apprentices, if elected by a majority vote, and on payment of the following fees:

Principals . . . . . \$4 00 per Annum  
Assistants & Apprentices, 2 00 "

The JOURNAL is furnished FREE to all members.

Parties wishing to join the Society may send their names for proposal to any of the members of the Society. A copy of the Constitution and By-laws of the Society will be furnished on application.

HENRY J. ROSE, Secretary.

## CANADIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS.

## PRIZES.

PRIZES are offered for collections of indigenous medical substances of vegetable origin, as follows:—

1ST PRIZE—FIFTEEN DOLLARS—a copy of Griffith's Medical Botany, and Certificate.

2D PRIZE—TEN DOLLARS—a copy of Wood's Class-Book of Botany.

3D PRIZE—FIVE DOLLARS—a copy of Wood's Class-Book of Botany, and Certificate.

Conditions of competition to be—

1st. Competitors to have been engaged in the drug trade, and for not more than three years, and to be members of the Pharmaceutical Society previous to 1869.

2. Specimens to be forwarded (carriage paid) to the Secretary of the Society, Toronto, by 1st September, 1869, with a sealed letter, enclosing the address of the competitor, a certificate from his employer that the collection has been made by the competitor solely within a year; that he has been engaged in the drug trade during that time, and that he has not been more than three years so engaged at the date of this notice.

3. Each specimen is to be carefully prepared ready for sale or use, and packed in a paper bag. On each shall be written legibly, the common and scientific names, the date and locality of collection, and a private mark, which shall also be put on the outside of the letter accompanying the collection.

4. Three judges shall determine the order of merit; they shall be at liberty to withhold any or all of the Prizes, if the collections do not warrant an award, and to select such specimens as they may deem meritorious for the Museum of the Society, which specimens will have the name of the collector put upon them.

5. The points of competition to be number of specimens, condition, correctness of naming, and general excellence; quantity a secondary consideration.

Collections to which Prizes are awarded will be sent to the Provincial Exhibition at the expense of the Society; and any Prizes secured there, shall be for the benefit of the collector.

Address—Collections,

Canadian Pharmaceutical Society,

H. J. ROSE, Secretary,

September 15th, 1868. Toronto.

## THE CANADIAN

## Pharmaceutical Journal.

E. B. SHUTTLEWORTH, EDITOR.

TORONTO, ONT., JULY, 1869.

**Correspondence** and general communications, of a character suited to the objects of this JOURNAL, are invited, and will always be welcome. The writer's name should accompany his communication, but not necessarily for publication.

**Subscriptions** will not be acknowledged by letter, as our sending the paper may be taken as sufficient evidence of the receipt of the money.

All communications connected with the paper to be addressed, post-paid,

"EDITOR CANADIAN PHARMACEUTICAL JOURNAL,  
TORONTO."

## THE FALL OF THE CHOLAGOGUES.

A belief that mercury increases the biliary secretion has been, heretofore, almost universal. It has been asserted by the highest medical authorities, promulgated by all the authorized schools, and unconditionally believed in, from time immemorial, by a medicine-taking public generally. To cast the slightest doubt on this long-established article of faith, was to sap away the chief corner-stone of medical practice; and he who attempted the sacrilege was at once denounced as an unmitigated heretic. It is true that men have been found bold enough to brave, for a time, the anathemas of the schools, but they have generally had to succumb to the all-prevailing cry of quackery, and are, thereafter, pointed at as examples of the fatal effects of therapeutical temerity.

Of late years, however, a formidable rival has appeared in the field; and, on this side of the Atlantic, at least, the followers of podophyllin have increased and waxed strong. Removed far from the loyal influences of British colleges, fostered by the care of the mother which gave it birth, and nurtured by the innovation-loving proclivities of our American neighbors, the resin of mandrake has proved itself a powerful enemy, if not a victor. Our Eclectic friends would have us believe that the death-blow has been already struck, and that podophyllin is master of the field. With that courtesy, however, to which a powerful but vanquished foe is entitled, they have allotted to mercury a sort of supplementary existence amongst a number of "obsolete remedies," there to linger out in exile a waning existence, like Napoleon on the desolate Helens.

Antagonistic influences have, also, been at work in Britain. That growing liberalism, which respects neither age nor position; which has been overturning, one by one, the time-honored institutions and ideas of our

forefathers, and which has grown, of late, to such a degree of political audacity, has infected that most conservative body, the medical faculty, with unexpected force. The British Medical Association caught up the spirit, and naturally enough, one of the first blows was struck at the veteran mercury, and its rival, podophyllin. So serious were the doubts entertained of the action of these remedies, that a committee, composed of members of the Association, was appointed to investigate the matter. This investigation, which was undertaken by Drs. Hughes Bennett, Rutherford, and Gamgee, has lasted during the past two years, and has now terminated. The literary researches were conducted by Dr. Rogers, formerly of St. Petersburg, who carefully examined the writings of previous observers to find out what had already been ascertained on the subject. He arrived at the conclusion "that no exact information had yet been obtained as to the influence of mercury on the secretion of bile, or as to any other action it may exercise on the liver."

The labors of the committee were of an exceeding unpleasant character, but were, nevertheless, pursued with an ardor and endurance which could only be actuated by a love for truth, and a sense of the great importance of the work in which they were engaged. "If," says Dr. Bennett, "the refutation of a wide-spread error be as important as the establishment of a new truth, the practical advantage of demonstrating that mercury is not a cholagogue cannot be too highly estimated." We agree with a contemporary, who thinks that the refutation of a wide-spread error is far more important than the establishment of a new truth, as the injury inflicted by the assumption of a false rule in medical practice may be beyond estimation.

After the preliminary enquiry by Dr. Rogers, the labors of the committee were directed in ascertaining whether the amount of bile secreted by the liver could be ascertained by an examination of the feces. The conclusion arrived at was that the feces afford no indication whatever. The action of purgatives did increase the amount of unchanged bile in the stools; but this only arose from the rapidity of its passage through the intestinal canal, thereby preventing its absorption and decomposition. The method resorted to was the making of fistulous openings into the gall bladder, tying the common ducts, and measuring the quantity of bile produced.

Having previously ascertained that the action of mercury on dogs and men was similar; experiments were tried on forty-one dogs. The bile was collected, analyzed, and the liquid, solid and inorganic matter carefully noted. In addition to this, the bodies