

action; they first allay the pain, and they isolate the inflamed parietes. In the second stage the sulphate of zinc or the belladonized sulphate of zinc bougie is really efficacious, but does not appear to be much more so than analogous injections. In chronic gonorrhœa or gleet, their efficacy is unequalled by any other treatment. The twenty cases submitted to that treatment all recovered; requiring, on an average, the introduction of but nine bougies. This rapid curative action of the bougies can be readily explained by its double action; the three-fourths of a grain of sulphate of zinc contained in each has an undoubted therapeutical action on the chronically inflamed mucous membrane; moreover, they act mechanically, by remaining in contact with the diseased membrane acting as an irritant body, modifying, by its presence, the vitality of this membrane.

It might be suggested that the success of the treatment, in these cases, was due, in a great measure, to the hospital regimen, but this applies, *a fortiori*, to acute gonorrhœa. It has been objected that this bougie might induce orchitis, but its irritating action is but temporary and necessarily modified by the belladonna; moreover, in the eighty cases treated with them, there did not occur a single case of orchitis.—*American Journal of Syphilography and Derm.*

### THE CANADIAN MEDICAL TIMES.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF

MEDICAL SCIENCE, NEWS, AND POLITICS

KINGSTON, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1873.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications and reports solicited. Correspondents must accompany letters, if intended to be printed anonymously, with their proper signature, as a guarantee of good faith.

#### TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

THE MEDICAL TIMES is supplied six months for ONE DOLLAR. Address orders and remittances to JAMES NEISH, M.D., Kingston.

POSTAGE ON THE MEDICAL TIMES.—The rate of postage on the Medical Times is Five Cents per quarter.

We have pleasure in directing attention to the College announcements in our advertising column. The Medical Department of Victoria University, in Toronto, and the Medical School in Kingston have both issued their sessional programmes.

As is well known, the British Medical Association takes charge of the publication of a weekly serial, the *British Medical Journal*. This would appear to be a great offence in the eyes of the *Lancet*, which is continuously putting forth objections, stigmatising the publication as a "commercial enterprise" with which the Association should have nothing to do, and noting from time to time the heavy charges upon the finances of the Association of which the *Journal* is the cause. In spite of all these regularly propounded objections and gratuitous advice, the Association nevertheless sticks to the publication of its journal, and is evidently determined to continue it. The objections of the *Lancet* smack too strongly of the shop to command respect; and there are sufficiently substantial reasons why the members of the Association should possess an organ of their own, so

that it is not to be presumed that the Medical Association will allow the *British Medical Journal* to pass out of its hands, much less to allow it to be discontinued at a time when the paper has begun to do more than pay expenses.

Some few months ago the municipal corporation of Troy, N.Y., anxious to obtain information relative to water supply and the purity of the available sources, referred the question to the Albany Medical Society, by whose members the subject was ably discussed in a very creditable and instructive debate. The fact of such a reference having been made has been seized upon as an example of one of the modes in which medical men may become public advisers, and whereby the special knowledge which is almost exclusively confined to the medical profession may be made available for the public good. As to the honour of such a reference being made, we presume it will not be questioned, but we feel free to say that municipal corporations should not make such services merely honorary. There should be an *honorarium*. No one would think of asking special services of architects and lawyers without fee, but in the case of doctors this seems often to be the case.

It is very annoying to the medical practitioner to have his prescriptions criticised by druggists and prescription clerks, more particularly so when the remarks are made before the patient or some member of his family. Such conduct is a gross breach of courtesy, and calls for severe animadversion. A case of the kind recently occurring in England suggests the subject, but instances are sufficiently numerous in this part of the world to make a reference to the matter reasonable. A medical man having prescribed the large doses of tincture of digitalis introduced in the treatment of delirium tremens by Dr. Jones, of Jersey, the druggist to whom it was sent, on reading it, openly declared to the messenger that it was "enough to kill anybody," and declined to put it up. We have heard of druggists who have been similarly discourteous over much more harmless medicines. In one case sulphate of soda having been prescribed, it was foolishly characterized as "horse medicine," and in another case we have heard of a druggist who so far forgot himself as to say that he could give something better! No doubt a well-educated pharmacist has it in his power to correct mistakes and inadvertencies that might possibly occur in a physician's prescription, but this he should only do after quietly communicating with the doctor, unless indeed it should be of a kind not requiring such a procedure, say in the case of some purely pharmaceutical matter. With some prescribers it is a practice to underline large doses or to tick or mark the line so as to show that it has not escaped attention. Any method that would check officiousness is worthy of adoption; but druggists require to know that disregard of proper courtesy in so delicate a matter as a physician's prescription is calculated to excite retaliation, and may end in loss of custom; certainly it is a course than which nothing is so likely to drive medical men for their own protec-

tion to do their own dispensing, and so to withdraw a profitable class of business from the druggists.

### THERAPEUTICS.

#### ERGOT IN THE TREATMENT OF NERVOUS DISEASES.

Dr. Daniel Kitchen, Assistant Physician to the New York State Lunatic Asylum, makes, in the July number of the *American Journal of Insanity*, an interesting report of the action of ergot in certain nervous affections. He used the fluid extract prepared by Squibb, and the aqueous extract, or ergotine, made by Merck, of Vienna. The dose of the former is from one to two drachms; the latter from six to ten grains. One drachm of the alcoholic extract of Squibb's preparation is equal to about six grains of the ergotine. He also used a few ounces of a solid extract, made by Squibb, which is about equal in strength to imported ergotine. The full physiological effect of ergot will last from one half to three quarters of an hour.

"There is probably no condition so annoying to the patient as headache, and certainly it is the most common. In the following forms we have used ergotine with much benefit and comfort to the patient: 1. Headache, depending on plethora or fullness of blood; 2. Headache from anæmia; 3. Headache, depending on changes in brain substance and the membranes; 4. Epileptic headaches; 5. Migraine; 6. Headache depending on disordered menstruation. The most common form of headache is the first, or that depending on a plethoric condition of the blood-vessels of the brain. Of course we cannot estimate correctly the amount of pain endured at each sickness, but it depends largely upon the constitutional character and nervous susceptibility of the patient. In plethoric headaches the course is either very short (a few hours at most), or they last for some days. The pain is usually referable to the back of the head, and there is much throbbing of the temporal arteries. In this class of headaches we have used ergotine largely; about one hundred patients have been prescribed for, and in almost every instance relief was given in less than half an hour, and the attack thoroughly cut short.

"In headache from an anæmic condition of the brain the blood-vessels are usually lax, and as a consequence there is a slowness of the circulation. Ergotine contracts the blood-vessels, thereby giving tone to the arterial system; the blood is forced more quickly and regularly through the brain, and of course in greater quantity. Our cases of cerebral anæmia are comparatively few, and experiments are therefore limited; yet in those cases where we have had an opportunity of using it happy results have followed. In epileptic headaches and in epilepsy we have used ergot largely. In *petit mal* there are muscular twitchings, congestions of the face, suffusion of the eyes, and a rush of blood to the head. We have in many of these cases been able to ward off the *grand mal* by large doses of ergotine. We have often combined it with conium, and it seems in this combination to work even more satisfactorily