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ON THE USE OF SOLVENTS IN CASES
OF RENAL CALCULUS.

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IN a paper that I read before the Toronto Medical Society some weeks ago, and which was published in the CANADIAN PRACTITIONER for Jan. 1 of this year, on the treatment of cases in which the lithic acid or brick dust deposit was a prominent symptom, I pointed out the following facts:—That a patient who, not merely occasionally, but habitually passes this deposit, will, sooner or later, develop symptoms of gout or stone; that the deposit in these cases was not the result of any defective action on the part of the kidney, but was due to defective assimilation on the part of the organs associated with or forming the *prima via*—a condition commonly spoken of as that of an "overloaded" or "torpid" liver. I further pointed out that this condition was remediable, not by giving drugs that merely caused the deposit to be held in solution, and so not appear, but by the proper use of those drugs which we know have the power of unloading the liver; the remedies which I believe to be most efficacious for this purpose being the sulphates of magnesia and soda, and these preferably in the form of natural mineral waters.

My object in this paper is to show that in a later stage of this condition, when we have reason to believe that a calculus, probably of small size

and composed of uric acid, is forming, or has formed, in the pelvis of the kidney, we have an efficient means at hand by which such a stone may be dissolved, at least to such an extent as to allow of its easy passage down the ureter, followed probably by its expulsion from the bladder.

Before I proceed to speak in detail of a treatment that has, in my hands, proved most satisfactory, it will be interesting to see what has been done hitherto with solvents. This subject is one that every now and then claims the attention of the profession at large, and then seems to be again forgotten. The idea of being able to dissolve a stone in the kidney, without injuring the delicate structure of that organ, thereby lessening the probability of an operation for the removal of stone in the bladder at a future date, would be such a triumph of our art that it seems to me wonderful that more has not been written on this subject. In a capital little book, written by Sir Henry Thompson, I find that calculus was recognized, and a cutting operation, at least in the case of boys, was practised some centuries before the Christian era. But the idea of the destruction of stone by solvents does not appear until the writings of Pliny, who says: "The ashes of burned snail shells are good for expelling the stone." Aretus prescribed "quick-lime in honeyed water" for the same purpose. In the 7th century Paulus Ægineta quotes authors who had unbounded faith in goat's blood. A prescription of Avicenna's, translated by Sir Henry Thompson, is very interesting, and gives,