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NOTES ON CANTHARIDES.

BY THE EDITOR.

Read at the Recent Meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association in Philadelphia.

The fact that we have in America several species of Cantharides, as well as some other closely allied vesicating insects which might at any time be used as a substitute for *Cantharis vesicatoria* (the Spanish beetle), has long been known. The species, however, to which attention has heretofore been chiefly drawn, are some of the smaller ones found in the more northern parts of the country, especially *Epicauta* (*Cantharis*) *vittata* and *cinerea*, while the larger species south and west have been almost overlooked. The northern species referred to compare very unfavorably in size with the European *vesicatoria*, a feature which adds to the cost of collecting them; it would also appear that this difference of size has often carried with it the impression of a corresponding inferiority. Another bar to their successful introduction has been found in their color. By a strange misconception the presence of the brilliant green particles of the wing-cases in the powdered imported insect, has been associated with their activity, and any sample of powdered cantharides or of prepared emplastrum, where these brilliant particles are wanting, would by many physicians be at once condemned. The recent introduction of the Chinese beetle *Mylabris cichorii* has done much to remove the latter objection; still, notwithstanding that it has been shown by Prof. Maisch (see Proc. Am. Pharm. Assoc., 1872) that the *Mylabris* is much stronger than *vesicatoria*, yielding, according to his analysis, fully double the quantity of cantharidin, the relative market price of the insects belonging to the two species indicates that popular prejudice still favors the use of *vesicatoria*. Our *vittata* and *cinerea*, when powdered, nearly resemble the *Mylabris* in color.