

THE CANADA LANCET.

A Monthly Journal of Medical and Surgical
Science, Criticism and News.

Communications solicited on all Medical and Scientific subjects, and also Reports of Cases occurring in practice. Address, DR. J. L. DAVISON, 12 Charles St., Toronto.

Advertisements inserted on the most liberal terms. All Letters and Remittances to be addressed to DR. C. SHEARD, 320 Jarvis St., Toronto.

AGENTS.—DAWSON BROS., Montreal; J. & A. McMILLAN, St. John, N.B.; GEO. STREET & Co., 30 Cornhill, London, Eng.; M. H. MAHLER 23 Rue Richer, Paris.

TORONTO, MAY, 1892.

The LANCET has the Largest Circulation of any
Medical Journal in Canada.

CANTHARIDES INTERNALLY ADMINISTERED.

The *Therapeutic Gazette* for March, '92, contains an interesting article upon the internal uses of this drug, so commonly used externally, and so little internally. The key-note to its use—the general principle underlying its exhibition, is the stimulating effect it has upon epithelial cells. This stimulation, of course, if allowed to go too far, readily becomes irritation. Apart from its external use as a blister, irritative action should always be avoided, as the therapist will defeat his own ends by securing more than a stimulating action. The epithelia readily subjected to its action, are two, that of the skin and that of the genito-urinary tract, the latter being subdivisible into the three areas, renal, vesical and urethral. Bearing this anatomical division of our subject in mind, we may intelligently proceed to our therapeutics. No one is likely to use cantharides for its local effect upon any part of the alimentary canal. Its action is secured only after the entrance of its active principle cantharidine into the blood. First as to its action thereafter upon the skin. Eminent French dermatologists have highly recommended it in psoriasis, eczema, lichen, and prurigo. The dose should be cautiously begun at half one drop three times a day, and the urinary secretion watched. It need not be persevered in if good results do not follow from a dose of two or three drops at most.

Secondly, as to the effect of cantharidine when

excreted by the renal epithelium. Its action will be exerted here first on the renal epithelium itself. If in sub-acute or chronic Bright's, following on an acute parenchymatous attack, the urine remains albuminous or bloody, or is scanty, minute doses may be given, 1-2-3 minims of the tincture three times a-day, or every four or six hours, and the good effect is often very prompt. Ringer recommends it highly, and says that while the urine becomes less albuminous the controlling influence of the drug over the hæmaturia is much more marked. In the passive congestions, accompanied by albuminuria, which result from circulatory or pulmonary disturbance, such as cardiac asthma, valvular incompetency, or portal obstruction, the drug often acts well, by "stimulating the depressed and inactive secretory epithelium of the kidney to increased action." Its use is recommended both in the fatty kidney of parenchymatous nephritis, and in the chronic contracted kidney with œdema and threatening eczema or ulcer of the legs, its action on the latter condition being two-fold, both local, and through the medium of the kidneys, by stimulating them to increased and derivative action. If small doses, say two drops three times a-day, are not effective, they need not be increased, or harm will be done, as "there is the danger of inflaming the secreting cells in an injured kidney, and so disabling the entire organ temporarily or permanently."

Following the excreted cantharidine down with the urine, we find that in certain forms of urinary incontinence, depending mainly upon want of control of the vesical sphincter, it is of great service. The partial incontinence that often follows childbirth, or is due to debility following prolonged illness, characterized by the escape of a few drops of urine on any sudden movement, singing, laughing, etc., or the same incontinence sometimes accompanying chronic bronchitis, is often much benefited by cantharides. Ringer says that it is even of service not infrequently in incontinence due to paralysis, and sometimes in the enuresis of children, though belladonna is usually better in the latter case. The *rationale* of its action in these forms of atonic incontinence is that its stimulant effect upon the vesical mucosa is reflexly felt by the spinal centre, which is urged to resume control of the situation. It may be employed with good results in cystitis, sub-acute, or