MELLITA.

PREPARATIONS OF HONEY.

A MORE correct knowledge of the operation of those medicinal substances which have been named *Balsamic* or *Pectoral*, has set aside the high opinion which formerly prevailed of the efficacy of honey as a remedy in pulmonary diseases. It is, however, still employed in pharmacy, and has some advantages over syrup, particularly where it is to be employed as a local application; but, for internal purposes, its use is to a certain degree limited, owing to the unpleasant effects which it produces on the bowels of some individuals. The Edinburgh College has altogether rejected this class of preparations, but a few of them are retained by the London and the Dublin Colleges. They are not apt to spoil, and, therefore, require less care to preserve them than the syrups.

MEL DESPUMATUM, Lond. Dub. *Clarified Honey.*

"Melt the Honey in a water-bath; then remove the scum."

Syn. Miel despumé (*F.*), Geschäumter Honig (*G.*), Mele Schiumato (*I.*).

By thus liquefying honey, the wax, which it may have retained when expressed from the comb, rises to the surface; and at the same time any sand or other impurities, with which it may have been fraudulently mixed, fall to the bottom or rise with the wax, and are easily separated. The specific gravity of purified honey is 1·31. It is chiefly employed for forming the other preparations into which honey enters. It is less apt to gripe than the crude honey, owing, probably, to its being less liable to ferment. It is, undoubtedly, more agreeable to the taste and smell than crude honey.

Officinal preparations. *Confectio Rutæ*, L. *Linimentum Æruginis*, L. *Mel Boracis*, L. *Mel Rosæ*, L. D. *Oxymel Colchici*, D. *Oxymel Scillæ*, L. D. *Oxymel Simplex*, L. D.

MEL BORACIS, Lond. *Honey of Borax.*

"Take of Sub-Borate of Soda powdered, *a drachm*; Clarified Honey, *an ounce*. Mix them."

This is a cooling, detergent, useful application to the tongue and fauces in aphthous affections. Dissolved in water it forms an excellent gargle for allaying the pain attending mercurial salivations.

MEL ROSÆ, Lond. *Rose Honey.*[1]

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[1] Mel Rosarum, P. L. 1720. Mel rosaceum, P. L. 1745.

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"Take of the Petals of the Red Rose dried, *four ounces*; Boiling Water, *three pints*; Clarified Honey, *five pounds*. Macerate the Petals in the water for six hours; then to the filtered liquor add the Honey, and boil it down to a proper consistence by means of a water-bath."

Dublin.

"Take of the Petals of Red Rose-buds, dried and freed from their claws, *four ounces*; Boiling Water, *three pints*; Honey, *five pounds*. Macerate the Petals in the Water for six hours; then mix the Honey with the strained liquor, and boil the mixture to the consistence of a syrup, taking off the scum."

Syn. Miel rosat (*F.*), Rosenhonig (*G.*), Mele rosato (*I.*).

This honey has the pleasant flavour of the Rose, and a slight degree of astringency. In making it, the clarified honey ordered by the London College is to be preferred. It is chiefly employed as an adjunct to detergent and astringent gargles."

OXYMEL SIMPLEX, Lond. Dub. *Oxymel.*[1]

"Take of Clarified Honey, *two pounds*; Acetic Acid (distilled vinegar), *one pound*. Boil them in a glass vessel, by a gentle heat, to a proper consistence."

Syn. Oxymel (*F.*), Essighonig (*G.*), Ossimele (*I.*).

Simple oxymel in doses of ʒj. or more, dissolved in barley-water, forms a pleasant and cooling beverage in fevers and inflammatory affections; but in some individuals it has a griping quality like honey, which prevents it from being generally used in these affections. It is often added to gargles in cynanche tonsillaris, and is a common vehicle of other remedies in catarrhal complaints. The Dublin College orders it to be prepared with unclarified honey, skimming it during the boiling; but the London directions are to be preferred.

OXYMEL COLCHICI, Dub. *Oxymel of Meadow Saffron.*

"Take of the Fresh Root (bulb) of Meadow Saffron cut into thin slices, *one ounce*; Distilled Vinegar, *a pint*; Clarified Honey, *two pints*. Digest the Colchicum with the Vinegar, in a glass vessel for two days; then to the liquor strongly expressed from the Root, add the Honey; and lastly boil down the mixture to the consistence of a syrup, frequently stirring it during the boiling with a wooden spoon."

The active matter of the Colchicum is apt to be injured by the boiling; and therefore this preparation is very uncertain in point of strength. It is given in humoral asthma, and in

[1] Mel acetatum, P. L. 1787.

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dropsies. The dose is f℥j. gradually increased to f℥j., given in a cupful of gruel, twice a day.

OXYMEL SCILLÆ [1], Lond. Dub. *Oxymel of Squill.*

"Take of Clarified Honey, *three pounds*; Vinegar of Squill, *two pints*. Boil in a glass vessel, over a gentle fire, to a proper consistence."

Syn. Meerzwiebelhonig (*G.*).

Oxymel of Squill is principally employed as an expectorant, and as such is very useful in humoral asthma, and chronic coughs, in doses of from f℥ss. to f℥ij. It is generally given in some aromatic distilled water, to prevent the nausea which it is apt to induce: in larger doses it is given to excite vomiting, and at the same time clear the chest, in hooping cough.

When kept for a considerable time, this oxymel lets fall a precipitate which has the aspect of crystallized honey. Vogel found it to consist of citrate of lime, tannin, and honey. [2]

SYRUPI.

SYRUPS.

THESE are saturated solutions of Sugar in Water, either simple, or united with some vegetable principle, with the view either to colour, flavour, or medicinal virtue: but for the last intention, this is perhaps the worst of all forms for obtaining the medicinal qualities of substances: and, therefore, as syrups seldom possess much activity, they are chiefly employed to render more active remedies palatable. Upon the whole, however, they are not well adapted even for this purpose, few persons thinking that sweetness renders a nauseous drug more palatable; and, with a few exceptions, they might be properly rejected from the Pharmacopœias.

In making syrups, refined sugar should always be employed, or, if coarser sugar be used, the syrup should be clarified, by beating to a froth the white of eggs with a small portion of water, and adding it to the solution of sugar and water before boiling. The albumen coagulates as the syrup boils, and, involving the impurities which the sugar contained, rises to the surface in the form of a scum, which must be carefully removed. If too much sugar be used, or if the syrup be too long boiled, the sugar soon crystallizes; and if it be in too

[1] Oxymel scilliticum, P. L. 1720, 1745.

[2] *Annales de Chimie*, vol. lxxxiii. p. 157.