It has also been found highly useful in the cure of several species of cutaneous affections ; as in Lepra, Psoriasis, &c. which diseases generally appear to have some connection with a morbid state of the digestive functions ; see *Form* : 149. Dose of the solution of potass, ♏x to f3ss, in veal broath* or table beer ; this latter vehicle disguises its nauseous flavour completely. In many cases, the infusion of some bitter tonic will be the most eligible liquor in which it can be exhibited, especially where our object is to promote its absorption : the theory of such a combination has been already explained in the first part of this work, p. 157. Officinal Prep. *Potassa fusa*, L.E.D. *Potassa cum calce*, L.E.D. *Liquor Sulphureti Kali*, D. *Antimonii Sulphuretum præcipitatum*, L.E.

LIQUOR POTASSÆ SUB-CARBONATIS. L.

Aqua Sub-carbonatis Kali. D.

Aqua Kali præparati, P.L. 1787.

Lixivium Tartari, 1745.

Oleum Tartari per deliquium, P.L. 1720.

Qualities. It is a clear, colourless, and inodorous solution ; *Spec. grav.* 1·446. Dose, ♏x to f3j. See *Potassæ Sub-carbonas*, and *Form* : 39, 41. The proportion of the salt contained in any quantity of the solution may be learnt by referring to the *Dynameter*.

LOBELIA INFLATA.

Indian Tobacco. Herba.

[This is a plant very common in the United States. It has an acrid taste, very similar to that of green tobacco. By analysis it is found to contain an acrid principle, caoutchouc, and extractive. It is soluble both in water and alcohol. In its medicinal effects, the lobelia is analogous to common tobacco, and varies very much according to the dose in which it is given. It may thus be made to act either as an emetic, antispasmodic, expectorant, or diaphoretic. The diseases in which it has been found useful are asthma, croup, hooping cough, and catarrh. The tincture is the best preparation and is prepared by digesting, for ten days, 3ij of the plant in a pint of diluted alcohol. The dose is from 3j to 3iv—of the powder the dose to prove emetic is from 10 to 30 grs.]

MAGNESIA. L. Magnesia Usta. D.

Calcined Magnesia.

Qualities. *Form*, a white, very light, soft powder ; *Specific gravity*. 2·3 ; it turns to green the more delicate vegetable blues. Solubility. Although it requires 2000 times its weight of water to hold it in solution, yet it has the property of considerably increasing the solubility of camphor, opium, and resins in the same fluid ; it is soluble in solutions of the alkaline carbonates, but not in those of caustic alkalies. Chemical Composition. It is an oxide of a peculiar metal. Medicinal Uses. Antacid, and when acidity prevails, purgative ; it is preferable to the car-

* Dr. Chittick's Remedy for the Stone. This celebrated nostrum consisted of a fixed alkali in veal broth; the broth was usually made by his patients, and sent to him fresh every day, in order to be medicated. A.D. 1766.

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bonate whenever the bowels are distended with flatus, (*Form:* 150); in other respects, its virtues are the same. See *Magnes. Carb.* The Medicinal Dynameter will shew the equivalent doses of the pure earth and its carbonate; it will be seen for instance that 12 grains of the former will be as efficient, as an antacid, as 25 grains of the latter. INCIDENTAL IMPURITIES. It ought not to effervesce with acids, and if magnesia and muriatic acid be placed at one time in separate cups, in a scale of a balance, no diminution of weight should take place on mixing them. Lime is detected by its solution in dilute sulphuric acid affording a precipitate with oxalate of ammonia; the *sulphuret of lime* betrays itself by yielding, when moistened, the smell of sulphuretted hydrogen.*

MAGNESIÆ SUB-CARBONAS. L.

CARBONAS MAGNESIÆ. E. MAGNESIA. D.

Olim, Magnesia Alba.

Carbonate of Magnesia, vulgo, *Common Magnesia.*

This preparation was formerly considered by Mr. Phillips to be a mixture of carbonate and sub-carbonate of magnesia, an opinion which he has lately retracted; it is, says he, evidently a *carbonate*, i. e. magnesia combined with one proportion of carbonic acid, or forty-eight of carbonic acid to forty-three of magnesia. Dr. Thomson entertains a different opinion, he observes that it seems to be a mechanical mixture of carbonate of magnesia, caustic magnesia, and perhaps of hydrated magnesia; he found too great a diversity in its composition to permit the conclusion that it was a definite chemical compound; in a specimen purchased at Glasgow, he also found six per cent. of *sulphate of lime.* I take this opportunity of stating that in some specimens which I have examined, I have also detected portions of *gypsum*; and from the experiments of Dr. Percival, it appears that if *hard water* be employed for its preparation it will be less light, and will contain a portion of lime. Magnesia will be also liable to contain traces of siliceous earth, derived from the alkali used in producing it. INCOMPATIBLE SUBSTANCES. *Acids, and acidulous salts; alkalies and neutral salts; alum; cream of tartar; nitrate of silver; acetate of mercury; oxy-muriate of mercury; acetate of lead; sulphates of zinc, copper, and iron.* MEDICINAL USES. Antacid, and purgative. In cases of lithic calculi, carbonate of magnesia, in doses of ℈j to 3j, has been proposed by Mr. Hatchett, as a valuable substitute for alkaline remedies. Its insolubility must render its absorption equivocal; its beneficial operation must therefore principally depend upon its neutralizing any excess of acid in the primæ viæ, and in this way there can be no doubt of its lithonthryptic agency; "but," says Dr. Marcet, "such is the tendency which the public has to over-rate the utility of a new practice, or to take a mistaken view of its proper application, that there is every reason to believe that the use of magnesia has of late years become a frequent source of evil in calculous complaints. See page 127. OFFICINAL PREP. *Hydrag. cum Magnesia.* D. *Magnesia.* L.E.D. ADULTERATIONS. *Chalk* may be de-

* Magnesia was originally a general term, expressive of any substance which had the power of attracting some principle from the air, from Magnes, the Loadstone. The peculiar body which we now denominate Magnesia, was first sold as a panacea, by a canon at Rome, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, under the title of Magnesia alba, or Count Palma's Powder.

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tected by adding dilute sulphuric acid to a suspected portion, when, should any be present, the solution will be loaded with a white and insoluble precipitate ; *gypsum*, by boiling a sample in distilled water, and assaying the solution by a barytic and oxalic test.*

MAGNESIÆ SULPHAS. L. Sulphas Magnesiæ. E.D.

Magnesia Vitriolata. Sal catharticum amarum.

Bitter purging Salt. Epsom Salt.

Qualities. *Form*, small needle-like crystals. *Taste*, bitter and nauseous ; when pure, it effloresces. Chemical Composition. In its crystallized state, it may be considered as composed of 1 proportional of dry sulphate (Magnesia 18·5, and sulphuric acid 37·5) and 7 proportionals of water. Solubility. f℥j of water dissolves ℥j, and the solution measures f℥xj½ ; it is insoluble in alcohol. Incompatible Substances. *Muriates of ammonia, baryta, and lime ; nitrate of silver ; sub-acetate*, and *acetate of lead. The fixed alkalies* and *their carbonates*, precipitate from it magnesia and its carbonate. *Phosphate of soda* occasions no immediate precipitate, unless ammonia be present, in which case the triple *ammoniaco-magnesian phosphate* will be produced. The addition of ammonia, which in the form of *Spiritus ammoniæ aromat.* is not unfrequently prescribed in conjunction with a solution of this sulphate, forms also a triple salt, and a portion of Magnesia is precipitated : whenever therefore this ammoniacal stimulant is ordered with a purgative salt, the scientific physician will prefer a solution of the sulphate of soda. Forms of Exhibition. Dissolved in the *Infusum Rosæ*, or in a suitable quantity of beef tea, gruel, or any aqueous vehicle, its cathartic powers are increased by dilution, as well as by the addition of a little common salt ; *magnesia* renders the taste of its solution less nauseous ; and tartarized antimony quickens its operation. Dose, ℥ss to ℥ij, taken either at once, or in divided doses. *Form.* 37, 69, 72, 76. Officinal Prep. *Enema Catharticum. Enema Fœtid.* D. Adulterations. *Sulphate of Soda* is often substituted for this salt, which it may be made to resemble by stirring it briskly at the moment when it is about to crystallize ; the fraud may be detected by a precipitation not ensuing on adding carbonate of potass ; if only a part of the salt be sulphate of soda, the degree of sophistication can be learnt by the quantity of the precipitate formed ; 100 parts of sulphate of magnesia, if pure, will yield between 30 and 40 of the dry carbonate. Epsom salt, as it commonly occurs, contains *muriate of magnesia*, which, disposes it to deliquesce, but lately this salt has appeared in the market in a state of great purity and beauty ; the mode of purification is founded upon the well known chemical law, that *a saturated solution of one salt is*

* Dalby's Carminative. This consists of Carbonate of magnesia ℈ij, oils of Peppermint, ♏j, of Nutmeg, ♏ij, of Aniseed ♏iij, of the tinctures of Castor ♏xxx, of Assafœtida ♏xv, Tincture of Opium ♏v, Spirit of Pennyroyal ♏xv, of the Compound Tincture of Cardamoms ♏xxx, Pepermint water f℥ij. There are cheaper compositions sold under the same name. In examining the pretensions of this combination, it must be allowed that it is constructed upon philosophical principles ; this however is no reason why the physician should recommend it ; the mischievous tendency of a quack medicine does not depend upon its composition, but upon its application ; we ought to remember, says an eminent physician, that in recommending this nostrum we foster the dangerous prejudices of mothers and nurses, who are unable to ascertain the circumstances under which it should be given, or even the proper doses ; if its composition is judicious, why do not physicians order the same in a regular prescription, rather than in a form in which the most valuable remedy will be abused?

still capable of dissolving another; in the present instance, therefore, the impure crystals are washed in a saturated solution of the same sulphate, which, although unable to act upon its kindred salt, can dissolve with facility the muriate, and any other saline contamination. I confess, however, that I am induced to regard this process as rather chemically ingenious than as medicinally useful, for the usual saline impurities of Epsom salt are not only harmless, but capable of increasing its purgative powers; the *double refined* sulphate is certainly less efficient as a cathartic. The presence of the *muriate* may be at once detected by dropping upon the suspected sample some sulphuric acid, by which the disengagement of muriatic acid vapour will be produced. Since the publication of the fourth edition of the present work, I have received samples of the Sulphate of Magnesia, prepared by Mr. West of Lymington, and I can confidently recommend the article to the profession; he contrives to obtain them in large and beautiful crystals, which cannot be so easily mistaken for those of oxalic acid, a circumstance of no small importance to the drug vender; the form of these crystals is that of a square prism, having its edges replaced, and commonly terminated by a pyramid of four planes; the only cleavage is parallel to one of the diagonals of the prism. The numerous accidents which so frequently occur from mistaking Oxalic acid for Epsom Salts have given rise to many suggestions for obtaining an easy and popular test which may at once distinguish these bodies; it is evident that no test can be so simple as that afforded by the taste: but if such accidents are in future to be prevented, it must be done by imparting to the acid some external character by which it may be at once recognised; *if a test were even discovered a hundred times more sensible than any which we possess, what would it avail?*

MANNA.* L.E.D.

(Fraxinus Ornus. *Succus Concretus.*)

Manna.

Qualities. *Form*, flakes of a granular texture; *Colour*, whitish, or pale yellow; *Odour*, slight, but peculiar; *Taste*, nauseous sweet, with some degree of bitterness. Chemical Composition. This concrete vegetable juice, besides sugar, appears to contain mucilage and extractive, to which its taste and other peculiar properties are owing. Solubility. It is entirely soluble in water and alcohol. Med. Uses. It is now merely regarded as a laxative for children, or for weak persons. It generally requires some laxative adjunct, as castor oil, with which it may be combined by the medium of mucilage. Dose, for children from ʒj to ʒiij, in warm milk. Officinal Prep. *Confectio Cassiæ* L E.D. *Enema Cathart.* D. *Enema Fœtid* D. *Syrup. Sennæ.* D. Adulterations. There are several varieties in the market, the best of which is flake manna, *manna canulata*, in a stalactitic form. An article, entirely factitious, consisting of honey or sugar, mixed with scammony, is sometimes sold for genuine manna, but its colour, weight, transparency, and taste, must instantly lead to its detection.

MASTICHE. L.

(Pistachia Lentiscus. *Resina.*)

Mastich.

The use of this resinous substance is to fill the cavities of carious

* "Manna, vox chaldaica est, admirantis interjectio, deducta ab Hebraico Manhu, sive quid est hoc?" Chrystom. Magneni Exercitat. de Manno.

teeth ; a solution of it in oil of turpentine is sold as an odontalgic. The Turkish and Armenian women use it as a masticatory for cleaning the teeth, emulging the salivary glands, and imparting an agreeable odour to the breath. It forms a constituent of the *Dinner Pills*. See *Aloes*. Sonnini tells us that, in Egypt, the smoke of Mastich is supposed to kill any sick person that inhales it.

MEL. L.E.D. Honey.

This well known substance appears to be merely collected from the flowers, and not elaborated by the internal economy of the insect ; when properly diluted it undergoes vinous fermentation, the product of which is the beverage well known by the name of *Mead*. The English honey is more waxy than that from the south of Europe. *Virgin honey* is that wrought by young bees which have never swarmed, and permitted to run from the comb without heat or pressure. Chemical Composition. Sugar, mucilage, wax, an acid, and occasionally some essential oil. *Clarified Honey*, (*Mel Despumatum*. L.D.) has not the agreeable smell of crude honey ; it does not however ferment so readily, nor is it so apt to gripe. Uses. It is principally employed for forming officinal preparations, i. e. *Mellita*, viz. *Mel Boracis*, L. *Mel Ros.* L.D. *Oxymel.* L.D. *Oxymel Colchici* E. *Oxymel Scillæ*. L.D.* Sir John Pringle considered it as useful in nephritic disorders ; it possesses also a laxative property, which renders it on many occasions preferable to Syrup. Adulterations. *Flour* may be detected by diffusing the honey in tepid water, by which it will be separated, and, by subsequent boiling, converted into a thick paste.

MENTHA PIPERITA. L.E.D.

Mentha Piperitis. D. *Peppermint.*†

All the qualities of this plant depend upon an essential oil and camphor ; it readily and strongly impregnates either water or spirit, by infusion ; its infusion, and the water distilled from the plant, are carminative and antispasmodic ; they also serve as vehicles for other medicines, to correct their operation, or to disguise their flavour. Officinal Preparations. *Aq. Menth. Piperit* L.E.D. *Spir. Menth. Pip.* L.D. *Ol. Menth. Pip.* L.D. If this plant be cut in wet weather, it turns black, and is worthless.

MENTHA VIRIDIS. L. Mentha Sativa. D. *Spearmint.*

Cold water extracts the more agreeable and active parts of mint in a few hours ; a longer maceration extracts the grosser and less agreeable portions ; hot water more quickly extracts its virtues, but if it be boiling it dissipates the aroma. Officinal Preparations. *Aq. Menth. virid.* L.D. *Infus. Menth. comp. D. Ol. Menth. virid.* L.D. *Spir. Menth. virid.* L.

MEZEREI CORTEX. L.E.D.

(Daphne Mezereum. *Radicis Cortex.*)

Mezereon.

The inner bark of this plant, when fresh, is corrosive and even vesica-

* Honey Water.—The article usually sold under this name is a mixture of Essences coloured with Saffron ; some add a small quantity of Honey, the effect of which is to communicate a clammmess which retains the scent longer.

† Essence of Peppermint.—A spirituous solution of the Essential Oil, coloured green by Spinach leaves.

tory ; the fruit is equally so, but neither have any smell ; its virulence is counteracted by camphor. It contains, besides extractive matter, an acrid resinous substance, which, according to Plaff, bears a strong resemblance to the active principle of Cantharides. It is now seldom used except as an antivenereal remedy, or in cases of chronic cutaneous disease. Forms of Exhibition. In a decoction, made by boiling ʒss of the bark, with an equal quantity of Liquorice root, in oiij of water down to oij ; of which fʒss may be given twice a day. From its pungency it is one of the substances used by fraudulent brewers to communicate a strong flavour to their beer. Where a discharge from issues cannot be kept up by the common means, it is said that the introduction of a little of this bark, instead of the pea, will in a few hours produce the desired effect. Officinal Preparations. *Decoct. Sarsaparill. comp.* L. *Decoct. Daphnes. Mezerei.* E. The *Daphne Laureola* is very generally sold for Mezereon.

MISTURÆ. L.E.D. *Mixtures.*

The principles upon which this form of preparation is to be constructed, are fully detailed in the first part of this work, page 204.

Officinal Mixtures.

Mistura Ammoniaci. L. This mixture is expectorant, and may be exhibited with tincture of squills, &c. (*Form.* 115, 136). It is slightly curdled by *vinegar*, *oxymel*, *æther*, and *oxy-muriate of mercury*.

Mistura Amygdalarum L. *Emulsio Amygdali communis.* E. *Lac Amygdalæ.* D. It is a useful demulcent and diluent, and forms an elegant vehicle for more active medicines. *Incompatibles—Acids, Oxymel, Syrup of Squill, Spirit, and Tinctures* unless added in very small quantities, decompose this mixture ; *tartaric acid, super-tartrate of potass,* and *oxy-muriate of mercury*, also disturb it. *Form.* 137.

Mistura Assafœtidæ. L. A nauseous preparation ; and where its use is indicated, it will be more judicious to prescribe it as an extemporaneous mixture. See *Assafœtida*.

Mistura Camphoræ. L. This solution of camphor forms an elegant vehicle for more active stimulants. The camphor is separated from the water by a solution of pure potass, by sulphate of magnesia, and by several saline bodies. See *Form.* 7, 24, 25, 32, 47, 72, 116, 117, 123.

Mistura Cornu Usti. L. *Decoctum Cornu Cervini.* D. This is nothing more than a simple diffusion of phosphate of lime in a thin mucilage—*Cui bono ?* It was retained in the Pharmacopœia in deference to the opinion of some experienced practitioners.

Misutra Cretæ. L.D. A common and useful remedy in diarrhœa, and may be combined with opium, catechu, or any other astringent. *Form.* 52. It is of course incompatible with acids, and acidulous salts.

Mistura Ferri Composita. L. This is nearly the same as the celebrated anti-hectic mixture of Dr. Griffith ; to the result of the decompositions which took place from the mixture of its ingredients it is wholly indebted for its medicinal energies ; thus, a *proto-carbonate of iron* is formed, i. e. the iron combined with carbonic acid is at its *minimum* of oxidation, which renders it more active than the common carbonate, and probably less stimulant than the sulphate ; this product, by means of the saponaceous compound formed by the union of the myrrh with the excess of alkali, is *partly* diffused and suspended in the mixture, and *partly* dissolved, whilst at the same time a *sulphate of potass* is formed, which

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serves to correct the astringent influence which iron is apt to exert upon the bowels. The iron in this preparation is disposed to combine with an additional proportion of oxygen. hence its ingredients should be quickly mixed together, and it ought to be considered as an extemporaneous preparation, and be preserved in a closely-stopt vessel. Its change of colour will generally indicate its loss of efficacy. This preparation must be regarded as permanently serviceable in Chlorosis, and the numerous sympathetic affections connected with it. In the painful swellings which infest the breasts of chlorotic young women, I have found it almost a specific. Dose f℥j—f℥ij. The proportion of *Proto-carbonate of iron*, contained in any given quantity of this mixture, may be found by referring to the Medicinal Dynameter; for instance, bring the preparation to 12, and we shall perceive that this number of fluid-drachms contain 1 grain of *Protoxide*, or rather more than gr. iss of *Proto-carbonate* of iron; and we shall at the same time, perceive that to give an equivalent quantity in the form of *Pil. Ferri comp* we must prescribe ℈j. See *Form.* 96.

Mistura Moschi. This is an eligible form for the administration of Musk. *Dose*, f℥j—f℥ij, to which may be added extemporaneously, ammonia, æther, and other diffusible stimulants.

The Dose of the above mixtures is f℥j, to f℥ij twice or thrice a day.

MOSCHUS. L.E.D. *Musk.*

Qualities. *Form*, grains concreted together, dry, yet slightly unctuous. *Colour*, deep brown with a shade of red; *Odour*, aromatic, peculiar, diffusive, and durable; and it has the curious property, when added in a minute quantity, to augment the odour of other perfumes without imparting its own; this renders it a valuable article in perfumery, on which account it is a usual ingredient in lavender water. *Taste*, bitterish and heavy. Chemical Composition. Resin combined with volatile oil, and a mucilaginous extractive matter, with small portions of albumen, gelatine, muriate of ammonia, and phosphate of soda. Solubility. Boiling water dissolves it perfectly; rectified spirit takes up most of its active parts, although the odour is only discovered upon dilution; sulphuric æther is its most complete menstruum. Incompatible Substances. The solutions are decomposed by *Oxymuriate of Mercury; Sulphate of Iron; Nitrate of Silver;* and the *Infusion of Yellow Bark.* Med. Uses. Stimulant and antispasmodic. As early as the time of Meade it was employed in typhus fever; Pringle administered it in gout of the stomach, a practice which received the concurrence of Cullen; conjoined with ammonia it has been celebrated for its powers in arresting the progress of gangrene, and of imparting fresh excitement to the nervous system. It has been also administered with success in epilepsy, hooping cough, and other spasmodic affections. Forms of Exhibition. The best form is that of bolus, combined with ammonia or camphor, or some other similar remedy, (*Form.* 21); it may be also administered in a mixture, for which purpose it requires five times its weight of mucilage, consequently the London College has not directed a sufficient quantity to retain the musk in suspension: by previously triturating it with sugar, its minute division is much facilitated Dose, grs. x to xxx. See *Form.* 22, 30. Officinal Prep *Mist. Mosch.* L. *Tinct. Mosch.* D. Adulterations. The bag containing the musk should have no appearance of having been opened: the presence of *dried blood* may be suspected, by its emitting, as it in-

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flames, a fetid smoke ; *Asphaltum* is discovered by its melting and running before it inflames : the artificial bags are known from the deficiency of the membrane which lines the real musk bags. To increase the weight of the musk, fine particles of lead are frequently added ; this is easily detected, for by rubbing it with water the metallic particles will subside.

Moschus Factitius. *Artificial Musk*, strongly resembling the real, may be formed by digesting f℥ss of *Nitric Acid*, for ten days, upon ℥j of fetid animal oil, obtained by distillation ; to this is to be next gradually added oj of *rectified spirit*, and the whole is then to be left to digest for one month : or—

2. Drop f℥ iiiss of nitric acid upon f℥j of rectified oil of amber ; after standing twenty-four hours, a black, resinous pellicle, exhaling the odour of musk, will be formed.

MUCILAGO ACACIÆ. L.E.

Mucilago Gummi Arabici. D.

This preparation consists of one part of gum and two of water ; in preparing it, the dispenser is particularly recommended to pulverize the gum, and never to employ that which is purchased in the state of powder, as it is always impure and incapable of forming a pellucid and elegant solution.* Incompatible Substances. Neither the *strong acids* nor *alcohol*, when considerably diluted, occasion any disturbance in it ; but *sulphuric æther* and its *compound spirit*, *the tincture of muriated iron*, and *subacetate of lead*, produce very dense precipitates : the *acetate of lead* only occasions decomposition, when an alkaline salt is present in the formula ; the *volatile alkali* curdles the mucilage, and *hard calcareous waters* render the mixture difficult and often impracticable. In the pharmaceutical application of this mucilage, it should be remembered that it contains in its composition an astringent principle, which is perhaps of but trifling consequence except in the exhibition of some very few active metallic salts, which are certainly decomposed by it (e. g grs. x of *nitrate of mercury* are decomposed by ℥ij of gum arabic †) It contains also lime in combination with some vegetable acid. Uses. Diluted with four times its bulk of water, this mucilage forms a demulcent mixture of appropriate tenacity, which affords a convenient vehicle for several efficient remedies ; the pharmaceutical use of this mucilage depends upon the fact of its rendering expressed and essential oils, balsams, resins, gum-resins, resinous tinctures, and fatty bodies, miscible with water, but if a syrup be added, the union will be more perfect ; the proportions necessary for this purpose vary according to the nature of the substances ; thus, *oils* will require about three-fourths their weight, *Balsams* and *Spermaceti* an equal part, *Resins* a double quantity, and *Musk* five times its weight ; the following *Formulæ* illustrate this property, 9, 19, 22, 135.

MUCILAGO AMYLI. L.E.D.

Mucilage of Starch.

This is a strong, insipid, inodorous mucilage, which is principally employed as a vehicle for exhibiting Opium in the form of Enema, see *Amylum*.

* If the Gum Arabic be adulterated with that of the Cherry-tree, the solution will be ropy, in consequence of the presence of Cerasin. See Mucilago Tragacanth. (Note.)

† The mucilage is at the same time converted by this salt into a beautiful peach blossom colour.

MUCILAGO ASTRAGALI TRAGACANTHÆ. E.D.

Tragacanth Mucilage.

Tragacanth is, strictly speaking, not soluble in water, but imbibes a large portion of it, and swells into a considerable bulk, forming a soft but not a liquid mucilage ; on the farther addition of water, a fluid solution may be obtained by agitation, and the liquor is turbid ; but on standing, the mucilage subsides, the limpid water on the surface retaining a little of the gum ;* it differs from all gums in giving a thick consistence to a larger quantity of water, its power in this respect being to that of gum arabic as twenty to one ; one part converts twenty of hot water into a stiff mucilage. Tragacanth is not increased, but actually diminished in solubility by the addition of any other gum, it accordingly separates from water with much greater facility when gum arabic is present. This preparation, according to the Edinburgh college, consists of one part of gum and eight of water ; the resulting mucilage is stiff, and is principally employed for making *troches*. The Dublin preparation contains four times that quantity of water.

MYRISTICÆ NUCLEI. L. E.

Nux Moschata. D. *Nutmeg.*

All the properties of this well-known substance depend upon an essential oil, filling the dark coloured veins which run through its substance, and which is dissipated by decoction ; the other components are starch, gum, wax, and a fixed oil. The oil obtained by expression is improperly called *oil of mace*, for it would appear to be a triple compound of fixed oil, volatile oil, and wax, and which, although limpid when first drawn, soon acquires on cooling the consistence of spermaceti. *Mace* is the involucrum of the nut. Med. Uses. Stimulant, and in large doses, as from ʒij to ʒiij, narcotic, frequently producing delirium. *See Cullen Mat. Med. ii.* 201. Officinal Prep : *Spir : Myristicæ*. L.E.D Frauds. Nutmegs are frequently de-poiled of their essential oil, by being punctured and submitted to the operation of decoction, the orifices being subsequently closed by powdered Sassafras ; the imposition is detected by the comparative lightness of the nutmeg, and by its extreme fragility ; the holes may also be discovered by carefully examining the surface of the nut, after having steeped it in hot water.

MYRRHA. L.E.D.

(Arboris nondum descriptæ. *Gummi resina.*)

Myrrh.

Qualities, *Form*, irregularly shaped pieces, translucent, of a reddish yellow colour ; *Odour*, peculiar and fragrant ; *Taste*, bitter and aromatic. Chemical Composition. Resin, gum, essential oil, and some extractive. Solubility. When triturated with soft, or distilled water, nearly the

* This variety of gum, which is characterised by its gelatinizing, but not dissolving, in water, occurs in several vegetable substances; and as it predominates in the Cherry-tree, Dr. John has distinguished it by the name of Cerasin ; but as Tragacanth consists almost entirely of this substance, the term Tragacanthin would have been much more appropriate. Although Cerasin will not dissolve in pure water, it undergoes solution in that menstruum, at the temperature of ebullition, provided a portion of a mineral acid be added.

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whole appears to be dissolved, forming an opaque, yellowish solution, but by rest the greater part is deposited, and not more than one-third is actually dissolved; its solubility, however, in water may be increased by trituration with camphor or an alkali; rectified spirit dissolves it, and the resulting tincture, when diluted, becomes turbid, although no precipitate occurs. MED. USES. Stimulant, as in *Form.* 103. Expectorant, 132, 133, 138. Emmenagogue, 95, 98, 99. It is also tonic, and agrees with some constitutions better than any of the bitters. FORMS OF EXHIBITION. No form is so eligible as that of substance. DOSE, grs. x to 3j. The alkalies, in their crystalline state, when triturated with myrrh, reduce it to the form of a tenacious fluid. OFFICINAL PREPARATIONS. *Tinct. Myrrh.* L.E.D. *Tinct. Aloes et Myrrh.* E. *Tinct. Aloës Ætherea.* E. *Mist. Ferri comp.* L. (G L) *Pil. Aloes cum Myrrha*, L.E.D *Pil. Ferri cum Myrrha.* L. *Pil. Galb. comp.* L.D. (B) *Pil. Assafœtid. comp.* E. (B) *Pil. Rhei. comp.* E. (G) ADULTERATIONS. It is subject to a variety of frauds, being frequently mixed with adventitious gums, which are to be detected by their foreign odour, their white or dark colour, and by their opacity.

NUX VOMICA. (Strychnus Nux Vomica.)

Nux Vomica.

This seed has not at present a place in the British pharmacopœiæ; it presents however several points of interest to the physiologist, the physician, and the chemist. Its virulent action upon animals has been long known; and it has been administered in combination with gentian in intermittents,* (*Ludovic Phar.* p. 113,) and as a narcotic in mania; it also constituted an ingredient in the famous *Electuarium de ovo*, (*Ph. Angl. p. 263.*) *Nux vomica has been said to produce benefit in the plague*; the German writers have strongly commended it in mania, epilepsy, and hydrophobia; as well as in chronic rheumatism, gout, scrophula, lues venera, and cutaneous eruptions; in Sweden it is stated to have displayed very beneficial effects in Dysentery. Dr. Fourquier has lately introduced its use in the Hopital de la Charité, in cases of partial paralysis, and it is said, with very great success.† The value of the practice has been since confirmed by the experiments of Dumeril, Majendie, Hebreard, Husson, and Asselin. The dose is four or five grains of the powder in pills, during the day. The French codex contains two alcoholic extracts of this substance; the one prepared with a strong spirit (22, 32, Beaumé, i. e. from sp. gr. ·915 to ·856,) is much more active and powerful than that made with a weak spirit. (12, 22, Beanmé, i. e. from sp. gr. ·985 to ·915.)

M. M. Pelletier and Caventou have discovered in this substance, a peculiar proximate principle, to which its virulence is owing; it was named *Vauqueline*, in honour of the celebrated French philosopher, but in deference to the opinion of the French Academy of Sciences, the discoverers have substituted the name *Strychnia*, because "a name dearly loved, ought not to be applied to a noxious principle"! ‡

* Sir Hans Sloane published a Paper in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 249, Vol. xxi. p. 44, entitled "An account of the Nux Pepita, or St. Ignatius's Bean (Ignatia Amara, Lin.) A Simple in common use in the Philippine Islands, as a Tonic medicine."

† That the active principle of the Nux Vomica expends its virulence upon the spinal marrow has been already noticed. (*See* page 136.)

‡ M. Henry has given us the most simple formula for the preparation of this substance. It consists in boiling Nux Vomica in water, and evaporating the decoction