of the Pharmacopœia, its credited virtues entitle it to some notice in the present work. It was first brought into repute in this country by Dr. Somerville (*Med: Chirug: Trans: Vol. 5*). It is bitter, and consists of Resin, gum-resin, tannin, and bitter extractive. [Its virtues are extracted both by alcohol and water. In its effects upon the system, the pyrola is both tonic and diuretic. It is more especially, however, as a diuretic that it is celebrated. Both in Europe and in the United States, it has been administered with much success in dropsy. In nephritis and hematuria it has also been used with decided advantage, producing effects very similar to those of the Uva Ursi. Dr. Chapman represents it as being of service in cases of scrofula; and by the elder Dr. Barton it was much thought of as an antilithic. It may be given in tincture in doses of from ʒj to ʒij; or in infusion made by pouring one pint of boiling water upon ʒj of the plant, in doses of from ʒj to ʒiv.]

QUASSIA. L.E.D. (Quassia Excelsa. *Lignum.*)

Quassia.

This wood owes all its properties to a peculiar bitter principle, which has been examined by Dr. Thomson and named *Quassin;* it is solid, slightly transparent, and of a yellowish brown colour. (See *Infusum Quassiæ.*) It is said to owe its name to a West Indian negro, called Quassi, who first used it in fevers.

QUERCUS CORTEX. L.E.D.

(Quercus Pedunculata. *Cortex.*)

Oak Bark.

Qualities. *Odour*, none; *taste*, rough and astringent. Chemical Composition. We are indebted to Sir H. Davy for a knowledge of this subject; he found that an ounce of the inner cortical part of young oak bark afforded by lixivation 111 grains of solid matter, of which 77 were *tannin;* and the cellular integument, or middle-coloured part, only yielded 43 grains of solid matter, of which 19 were *tannin;* and the epidermis furnished scarcely any quantity of *tannin* or extractive; hence the bark should be selected from the smaller branches of the oak where the epidermis is still thin. Experience has, moreover, shewn that the quantity of *tannin* varies considerably, not only according to the age and size of the trees, but according to the season at which they are *barked;* thus, the bark cut in spring contains, according to *Beguin*,* four times more of the astringent principle, than that which is obtained in winter. Med. Uses. All its properties depend upon the presence of *tannin*, it is therefore only valuable as a powerful astringent; it is accordingly employed

ways carried about with them. The members of the profession have doubtless heard of an irregular practitioner, who has persuaded a certain number of persons in this metropolis, that he possesses remedies, obtained from the American Indians, by which he is enabled to *cure* Scrofula in its worst forms; it is to this Empiric that I alluded in the note at page 33; and it may be worthy of notice that the plant upon which he relies for success, is the Pyrola Umbellata.

* Philosophical Transactions, 1799.

to check inordinate discharges, see *Decoctum Quercus*. Oak bark is sometimes administered in the form of powder, combined with ginger and other aromatics, and bitters, for the cure of intermittents, and it has frequently succeeded, but *see* page 171. Dose, ℈j to ʒss. In the form of poultice this powder is said to have proved highly useful to gangrenous sores. Its inhalation has also been supposed to prove beneficial in consumption; a striking case is related by Dr Eberle of a man who had laboured under the usual symptoms of confirmed Phthisis, and who, at the time he went to grind in a bark-mill, was extremely weak and emaciated; in a short time, however, the cough, night sweats, and other hectic symptoms, began to abate sensibly, and in less than three months he was perfectly restored to health.

RHEI RADIX. L.E.D. *Rhubarb.**

Two varieties of this root are known in the shops, viz. *Turkey* or *Russian*, and *East Indian* or *Chinese*.

1. Turkey or Russian. (*Rheum Palmatum.*)

Qualities. *Form*, small round pieces, rather compact and heavy, perforated in the middle; *Colour*, lively yellow with streaks of white; it is easily pulverized, affording a powder of a bright buff yellow colour. Chemical Composition. Gum, resin, extractive, tannin, gallic acid, and a peculiar colouring matter, with traces of alumina and silex; the white or flesh-coloured streaks pervading its substance, consist of sulphate and oxalate of lime: according to the experiments of Mr. John Henderson, there is besides a peculiar vegetable acid, to which he has given the name of *Rheumic* acid, but M. de Lassaignes has satisfactorily proved that this is no other than the oxalic acid: the purgative powers of the root appear to be intimately connected with its extractive and resinous elements, but the subject is still involved in considerable obscurity. Solubility. Water 212° takes up 24 parts in 60, see *Infusum Rhei*: by decoction, its purgative qualities are lost, and it becomes more bitter and astringent; alcohol extracts 2·7 from 10 parts, (see *Tinct. Rhei*) Med. Uses. In this substance, Nature presents us with a singular and most important combination of medicinal powers, that of an astringent, with a cathartic property; the former of which never opposes or interferes with the energy of the latter, since it only takes effect when the substance is administered in small doses; or if given in larger ones, not until it has ceased to operate as a cathartic; this latter circumstance renders it particularly eligible in cases of diarrhœa, as it evacuates the offending matter before it operates as an astringent upon the bowels. It seems to act more immediately upon the stomach and small intestines, and therefore in relaxed and debilitated states of these organs, it will prove an easy and valuable resource; it may, for such an object, be exhibited in conjunction with alkalies, bitters, and other tonics. Its cathartic property is most efficient when given in substance. It was formerly supposed that by toasting rhubarb we increased its astringency, but this

* Warner's Cordial. Rhubarb bruised ʒj; Sennæ ʒss; Saffron ʒj; Powdered Liquorice ʒiv; Raisins pounded lbj; Brandy oiij; digest for a week and strain.

Moseley's Pills. The stomachic Pills which are sold under this name, consist merely of Rhubarb and Ginger.

Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:2-147636-p0476-9