

degree of nausea, which becomes insupportable if a large quantity is swallowed.

All the bitterness, and with it, the medical properties, are very quickly taken up by water; and the formula, for the infusion of quassia is thus to be made:—Take of sliced quassia two scruples, boiling distilled water a pint, macerate for two hours in a vessel lightly covered, and strain. As very few substances produce much alteration upon this infusion, it may be combined with the greater number of salts; the preparations of iron do not affect it; the nitrate of silver, however, causes a soft flaky yellow precipitate, and the acetate of lead a copious white precipitate. It is generally necessary to prescribe something in union with it, such as the compound infusion of orange peel, the infusion of camomile, and a few drops of sulphuric acid, which generally render it much more agreeable to the stomach, and likewise seem very much to influence its good effects. Alcohol, likewise, takes up its bitterness; and of this both the Edinburgh and Dublin Colleges availed themselves for the preparation of a tincture; but I am not aware of any advantages which it possesses, the infusion answering all the purposes. In powder it can scarcely be given, as it cannot easily be reduced to that form, and the raspings are somewhat tough and indigestible; I have, however, known it chewed for an hour or two before dinner in a very wretched dyspeptic case, with something like advantage; it alone could give an appetite for food.

There is little doubt, in the bilious fevers of hot climates, it has proved eminently successful. Gibson and Lettsom have pronounced it serviceable in these diseases. It has obtained a reputation abroad in hysteria, in gout, and in periodic headaches. Its most striking characteristic is its power of retarding the progress of putrefaction; a small quantity of infusion will, if added to meat, prevent its speedily losing its odour and natural appearance, and hence it has been classed among the antiseptics; this does not seem to depend upon its bitterness, for other bitters have but little of this power. In diarrhoea, dependent upon a laxity of the muscular fibre of the intestines, it has also been very highly lauded, and its bitterness has led to its use as an anthelmintic. This drug has been often added to beer to give the bitterness which belongs to the hop, but it is very prejudicial, and beer thus formed is very apt to affect the bowels; and it wants altogether the fine flavour and agreeable aromatic odour which is obtained from the hop.—*Ibid.*

23. *On the Therapeutic properties of the Cocculus Palmatus or Calumba Plant.* By G. G. SIGMOND, M.D.—The knowledge we have of the value of the calumba root is principally to be ascribed to Dr. Percival; his essays, medical and experimental, contain some very valuable dissertations on many subjects, and amongst them is one entitled, “Observations and Experiments on the Calumba Root.” It has been found that modern practice has verified the inductions of Dr. Percival, and the diseases in which he recommended it are frequently controlled by its use. In diarrhoea, and more especially that which proceeds from an inordinate secretion and discharge of bile, where astringents would be hurtful, it seems to correct the irregular action, and to diminish gradually the increased action of the liver. In bilious colic, where there is severe sickness and vomiting, it has been also much prized. It was prescribed with very considerable advantage by Mr. Johnson, in the East Indies, who had the care of a hospital ship, during the prevalence of the cholera, and it sooner checked the vomiting than any other remedy which was used. It has been employed with success in bilious fever; and Dr. Haygarth, in a fever of that kind, which had been epidemic at Nantwich, and other parts of Cheshire, found it to supply the place of cinchona bark, correcting the bile, restoring the proper tone of the stomach, and of the whole habit; it also prevented relapses, to which, in that fever, the patients were very liable.

During dentition children are very apt to be subject to severe vomitings and diarrhoea, and very often instant relief is procured by the calumba root, when other efficacious remedies have been tried in vain. In enfeebled states of the

stomach, brought on by dissipation, by hard drinking, where the appetite fails, where nausea and flatulence distress the individual, this may be administered, combined with the common gentian, or with chirayita, infused in a little Madeira wine; and, during its use, the tincture of rhubarb may occasionally be prescribed as a warm and strengthening purgative. Vomiting, arising from disordered function, from depraved secretions of the gastric and pancreatic juices, when it is totally independent of any diseased action of the kidneys, which is more generally the cause of habitual vomiting than anything else, is essentially relieved by the occasional use of the calumba root, and then it is very necessary to combine it with warm cordials, with the diffusible stimuli, or any of the aromatic bitters. In that highly distressing state of stomach which occurs in the earlier stages of pregnancy, where nausea and sickness are the constant attendants of the early morning, where the sight of almost any food is very apt to produce vomiting, and where the want of appetite, or a depraved desire for food occurs, I have very constantly recommended the infusion of calumba, with very great relief to the patient, more particularly where the bowels are kept in a gently relaxed state by magnesia, which, by its absorbing power, and its neutralisation of the acid which is at this period generated, becomes a mild and gentle aperient, and at the same time alleviates the disordered sensations that are so usually complained of.

Calumba root has the power of retarding putrescency, and has been observed to moderate alimentary fermentation without suspending the process of digestion. As its taste very much resembles mustard, Dr. Percival was led to make some comparative experiments, with infusions of calumba, of mustard, and of chamomile, and they were in favour of the calumba root. He was, therefore, led to the conclusion, that it had the advantage over other bitters in disorders of the stomach attended with "violent fermentation of the food." Certainly, where there is an extrication of a gaseous flatus, and much acidity, it has very considerable powers, and may be safely taken by the dyspeptic a few minutes before a meal. It appears neither to increase the fulness nor to affect the regularity or velocity of the pulse. It is particularly serviceable where a milk diet has been found necessary for the nutrition of the body, for it prevents the acidity which is so generally the consequence, and likewise diminishes the tendency to flatulence.

Dr. Denman has found it preferable to bark in the low stage of puerperal fever. As for any benefit in phthisis pulmonalis and in hectic fever, I believe little to be derived from it further than that the organs of digestion are better capable of bearing it as a tonic than they would the Peruvian bark, which, in some instances, produces diarrhoea. The chewing the root has been recommended in dyspepsia, in pyrosis, and in gastrodynia; altogether it may rank as an agreeable tonic, free from the objections which are raised to the stronger bitters, and sufficiently powerful to strengthen the system where no very acute disease, nor any very materially altered state of organs has occurred.—*Ibid.* February 3, 1838.

24. *Kreosote in Gastro-enteric Irritation.*—Dr. JOHN BURNE has employed Kreosote in various forms of irritation of the bowels and stomach with great advantage. For the relief of the nausea and morning sickness of intemperate persons, he states it to be strikingly efficacious.

He gives it in the dose of from one to two minims with ℥j of mucilage, and ℥ix of water. The dose may be repeated in three, four, or five hours.—*London Med. Gaz.* Aug. 1838.

## SPECIAL PATHOLOGY AND SPECIAL THERAPEUTICS.

25. *On Extension, Shampooing, and Percussion (Percussion Cadencée) in the treatment of Muscular Contractions.*—The *Revue Médicale* for Jan. 1838, contains a very valuable paper on this subject by Dr. RECAMIER, the distinguished physician to the Hôtel Dieu of Paris.