
CHAP. IX.**OF EMMENAGOGUES.**

THE medicines distinguished by the appellation of emmenagogues, are those which are capable of promoting the menstrual discharge.

The suppression of this discharge is supposed to arise from debility of the uterine vessels, or deficiency of action in them. Hence, it might be inferred, that the medicines capable of exciting it must be such as can stimulate these vessels.

General stimulants, or tonics, may to a certain degree have this effect, since, in consequence of their action, the uterine vessels must be stimulated in common with other parts. There are accordingly several stimulants, both diffusible and permanent, employed as emmenagogues.

It is doubtful whether there is farther any particular determination to these vessels. It is sufficiently certain, that there are many substances, which, when received into the stomach, have their stimulant operation more particularly determined to one part than to another; to the kidneys for example, the bladder or other organs. It seems possible, *à priori*, that there may be substances dis-

posed to act more peculiarly on the uterus; yet experience does not confirm this supposition; there being perhaps no proof of any of the substances styled Emmenagogue, producing their effect from any specific power.

A stimulant effect, however, produced in neighbouring parts, seems to be in some degree propagated to the uterine vessels; and hence several medicines exert an emmenagogue power, greater than can be ascribed to any general action they exert on the system. It is thus that some substances, belonging to the class of cathartics, have been supposed to act, their stimulus being communicated from the larger intestines to the uterus. They are probably of advantage too in amenorrhœa, simply as cathartics, removing that state of torpor in the intestinal canal connected with the disease.

There is also one stimulus, that of electricity, which can be brought to act directly on the uterine system, and it has been sometimes found to operate as a powerful emmenagogue.

The individuals belonging to this class may be arranged in some measure according to these distinctions; the most active of them being substances belonging to other classes; and there being a few only supposed to be possessed of any specific emmenagogue power. With regard to all of them, it may be added, that there are no medicines so uncertain in their operation, and none in which the conclusions respecting their efficacy are more liable to fallacy.

EMMENAGOGUES.*FROM THE CLASS OF ANTISPASMODICS.*

CASTOREUM.

FERULA ASSAFOETIDA.

BUBON GALBANUM.

FROM THE CLASS OF TONICS.

FERRUM.

HYDRARGYRUM.

FROM THE CLASS OF CATHARTICS.

ALOE.

HELLEBORUS NIGER.

SINAPIS ALBA.

RUBIA TINCTORUM.

RUTA GRAVEOLENS.

JUNIPERUS SABINA.

CASTOREUM. Castor. (Page 196.)

UNDER the history of Castor already given, it was remarked, that it appears to be a substance wholly inert. As an emmenagogue, it has been given in the dose of 10 grains in substance, or more frequently under the form of tincture in the dose of one drachm. No reliance is now placed on its powers.

ASSAFOETIDA. Assafoetida. (Page 199.)

ALL the foetid gums have been supposed to possess, along with their antispasmodic property, the power of acting more peculiarly on the uterine system, and have been therefore employed as emmenagogues. Assafoetida, the strongest of them, has been given in amenorrhœa in a dose of 10 or 15 grains, or in the form of tincture; but probably with little advantage. GALBANUM, another of these foetid gums, next in strength to assafoetida, has been given in a similar dose.

FERRUM. Iron. (Page 223.)

THE powers of iron as a tonic may be supposed capable of being exerted on the uterine system, and of removing suppression of the discharge arising from deficient action of the uterine vessels, more especially when this is connected with a state of general languor and debility. In such cases, accordingly, it is frequently employed as

an emmenagogue. The carbonate of iron is given in a dose of 5 or 10 grains daily, continued for some time; the more active preparations of the sulphate and muriate are likewise prescribed, but in general there is some difficulty in continuing their administration, unless in small doses, from the irritation they are liable to occasion. The chalybeate mineral waters afford perhaps the best form of administering iron in amenorrhœa.

HYDRARGYRUM. Quicksilver. (Page 212.)

THE general stimulant operation of this metal may, like that of iron, be supposed to be so far exerted on the uterine system, as to obviate any state of diminished action; some of its preparations are accordingly occasionally employed in amenorrhœa. The mild muriate or calomel is the preparation generally used. It is given in the dose of a grain; more frequently, however, in combination with other emmenagogues, to promote their action, than alone.

ALOE. Aloes. (Page 357.)

THIS cathartic, it has already been remarked, is supposed to operate more peculiarly on the larger intestines; and its stimulant operation, it has been imagined, is thence propagated to the uterus. Hence its celebrity as an emmenagogue, though what efficacy it has probably depends principally, if not entirely, on its mere cathartic power. It is given under the form of pill or tincture; and frequently in combination with other remedies,

particularly with myrrh, rhubarb, and the preparations of iron.

HELLEBORUS NIGER. Black Hellebore. (Page 354.)

BLACK Hellebore is a powerful cathartic; it was also highly recommended by Mead as an emmenagogue under the form of tincture, one drachm of this being given as a dose at bed-time, and continued for some time. Its emmenagogue might be supposed to depend on its cathartic power; in this dose, however, and under this form, it has little sensible effect; and any advantage derived from it is extremely doubtful. The extract has been employed as a more active preparation in combination with aloes, or with carbonate of iron.

SINAPIS ALBA. Mustard. (Page 332.) *Semen.*

THE seeds of this plant have a considerable degree of pungency, and when taken unbruised to the extent of half an ounce or an ounce have a purgative effect. This is a popular remedy, not unfrequently used in amenorrhœa and chlorosis.

RUBIA TINCTORUM. Madder. *Tetrand. Monogyn. Stellata. Radix. South of Europe.*

THE root of this plant is in slender twigs, of a red colour; it has a bitter taste, with little smell. It has been recommended as an emmenagogue, in a dose of half a drachm thrice a-day. It appears to be nearly inert, and its inefficacy is generally acknowledged.

RUTA GRAVEOLENS. Ruta. Rue. *Decand. Monogyn.*
Multisiliquæ. Herba. South of Europe.

THIS herb, when recent, has a strong unpleasant smell, and a bitter taste. By distillation it affords a pungent essential oil. It has been prescribed as an emmenagogue under the form of the watery infusion; and the oil is sometimes combined with aloes, and other medicines of the same class, probably with little advantage.

Offic. Prep.—Extr. Rutæ Gr. *Ed. Dub.*—Ol. Rutæ, *Dub.*—Confect. Rutæ, *Lond.*

JUNIPERUS SABINA. Savin. *Dioecia. Monadelph. Coni-*
fera. Folia. South of Europe.

THE leaves of this plant have a bitter penetrating taste, a strong unpleasant odour, and a considerable degree of acrimony. They afford a very large quantity of essential oil, possessing the general virtues of the plant.

Savin is a stimulant, the operation of which has been supposed to be powerfully directed to the uterine system; so much so, that, according to the common opinion, it is capable of procuring abortion. It has in conformity to this been considered as an emmenagogue, but it is scarcely ever administered internally. Externally, the powder of the dried leaves is used as an escharotic, and mixed with lard as a stimulant to excite suppuration from inflamed surfaces.

Offic. Prep.—Extr. Sabinæ, *Ph. Dub.*—Cerat. Sabin. *Dub. Lond.*—Ol. Sabinæ, *Ed. Dub.*