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FOURTH DIVISION.—OF MECHANICAL REMEDIES.

THE last subdivision of the classification includes those classes of remedies, the operation of which is merely mechanical. Under this I have placed Anthelmintics, Demulcents, Diluents, and Emollients. They are classes of comparatively little importance.

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CHAP. XX.

OF ANTHELMINTICS.

ANTHELMINTICS are remedies which expel worms from the intestinal canal. They have been supposed to produce this effect by various modes of operation, principally, however, mechanical.

Some, which are in coarse rough particles, as iron or tin-filings, or consist of sharp spiculæ, as the down of the *dolichos pruriens*, are supposed, by the mechanical action of these, to dislodge from the mucus of the intestines the worms which are evacuated.

Other substances ranked as anthelmintics seem to have no other property than bitterness. By this quality they

have been supposed to prove noxious to these animals : it has also been imagined, that these, so far as they prove useful, do so by restoring the tone of the digestive organs ; the production of worms being supposed to proceed from debility of these organs, in consequence of which, either the food is not properly assimilated, or the secreted fluids poured into the intestines are not properly prepared.

Lastly, other remedies of this class apparently operate by their cathartic power. Those cathartics which discharge the mucus of the intestines, as gamboge, scammony, or calomel, are supposed more peculiarly to have this effect : and perhaps it is this sub-division of anthelmintics that have most efficacy. Some anthelmintics, it is observed by Dr Hamilton, “ have been considered as specific poison to the insect, and others are conceived to destroy it by mechanical triture. Most of them have had their partisans for the day, and have passed in succession through the ordeal of experience into oblivion. The utility of such anthelmintics as have been found to be most beneficial, has, in my opinion, been in proportion to the purgative powers which they possessed.”

After a course of those anthelmintics, which are not directly cathartic, it is usual to give a full dose of a purgative, which is even repeated two or three times, and to this a considerable share of the effect, when worms are evacuated, is probably to be ascribed. Calomel, with jalap, gamboge, or scammony, is the cathartic usually employed.

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 ANTHELMINTICS.
 

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DOLICHOS PRURIENS.

FERRI LIMATURA.

STANNUM PULVERATUM.

OLEA EUROPEA.

ARTEMISIA SANTONICA.

SPIGELIA MARILANDICA.

POLYPODIUM FILIX MAS.

TANACETUM VULGARE.

GEOFFREA INERMIS.

CAMBOGIA GUTTA.

SUB-MURIAS HYDRARGYRI MITIS.

DOLICHOS PRURIENS. Cowhage. *Diadelph. Decand. Papilionacea.* *Pubes leguminis rigida.* East and West Indies.

THE down which covers the outer surface of the pods of this plant, consists of very sharp spiculæ, and is the part used as an anthelmintic. It is made into an electuary, with syrup or molasses, of which two tea-spoonfuls

are given to an adult, and repeated two or three times, a strong cathartic being afterwards exhibited. Its action is entirely mechanical. In the West India islands it is the common anthelmintic, and is described as being frequently successful. In this country it is more rarely used.

FERRUM. Iron.

THE filings of this metal have been given as an anthelmintic, in a dose of one or two drachms; and the sub-carbonate, or rust of iron, was highly recommended by Rush as a remedy against the tape worm, when taken to the extent of three or four drachms.

STANNUM. Tin.

TIN is reduced to a powder, consisting of small rounded particles, by heating it nearly to its melting point, and agitating it briskly. Either this powder, or what has been recommended in preference, the metal, in filings, is used as an anthelmintic, in a dose of one or two drachms, or even in a much larger quantity. It is taken repeatedly in the morning, and a cathartic is afterwards exhibited. Its effect, so far as it operates, has been supposed to be mechanical, dislodging the worm from the mucus of the intestines by the grittiness of its particles. It is not improbable, too, that it may act by generating hydrogen gas in the intestinal canal, which proves noxious to the animal; and its efficacy has been said to be increased by combination with sulphur, by which sulphuretted hydrogen gas will be evolved.

OLEA EUROPEA. Olive Oil. Oleum Olivarum. *Diand.*

*Monogyn. Sepiaria. Oleum expressum. South of Europe.*

OLIVE Oil, or any other expressed oil, taken in the morning to the extent of half-a-pound, or as much as the stomach can bear, has been said to prove anthelmintic, but in the state of diffusion and mixture in which it must act on worms in the intestines, it can scarcely be expected to have any certain power.

ARTEMISIA SANTONICA. Wormseed. *Syngen. Polygam. superfl. Composita. Semen. Persia.*

THE seeds of this plant have a faint disagreeable smell, and a very bitter taste. They are in common use as an anthelmintic, and probably operate merely as a bitter; the dose is half-a-drachm, or a drachm of the powder to an adult. This, after being continued for some time, is followed by a dose of a strong cathartic.

SPIGELIA MARILANDICA. Indian Pink. *Pentand. Monogyn. Stellata. Radix. North America.*

THE root and stalks of this plant are used in medicine, on the supposition of their anthelmintic power; they have a bitter taste; in a large dose prove purgative, and also sometimes narcotic. They are usually administered in the form of the watery infusion; in the quantity of half-a-drachm, or even to the extent of two or three drachms to an adult. Its operation as a narcotic has been said sometimes to be produced; and to prevent this, it has been recommended to be given rather in large than in small doses, as

its cathartic operation, by which its narcotic power is obviated, is thus obtained. In its dried state, however, in which it is employed in this country, no unpleasant symptom follows from its administration.

POLYPODIUM FILIX MAS. Male Fern. *Cryptogamia. Filices. Radix. Indigenus.*

THE root of this plant was once highly celebrated as a remedy against the tape worm; two or three drachms of the powder of it being taken in the morning, and a strong cathartic of jalap or gamboge given soon after it. The efficacy of the prescription probably depended entirely on the cathartic.

TANACETUM VULGARE. Tansy. *Syngen. Polyg. superf. Composita. Folia et flores. Indigenus.*

THE leaves and flowers of this plant have a strong bitter taste, with some aromatic quality, which resides in an essential oil. They have been recommended as anthelmintic, and especially as capable of expelling the lumbrici, and are sometimes used as a popular remedy. The dose, in powder, is from one scruple to one drachm.

GEOFFRÆA INERMIS. Cabbage-Bark tree. *Diadelph. Decand. Papilionac. Cortex. Jamaica.*

THE bark of this tree has an unpleasant smell, with a sweetish taste. It is used as an anthelmintic, and has been considered as one of considerable power, especially in expelling the lumbrici. It is usually given under the

form of decoction, an ounce being boiled in two pounds of water, to one pound, and from one to two ounces of this being given as a dose to an adult. It usually operates as a cathartic, and in an over-dose is liable to occasion sickness and vomiting. The same symptoms are said to be induced by the incautious drinking of cold water during its operation. When they occur from either cause, they are relieved by a dose of castor oil.

*Offic. Prep.*—Decoct. Geoffr. Inerm. *Ed.*

CAMBOGIA. Gamboge. (Page 360.)

GAMBOGE has been celebrated as a remedy against the tape-worm, and by its powerful cathartic operation is sometimes successful in expelling it. It is given in a dose from 5 to 20 grains by itself, or combined with two parts of acidulous tartrate of potash. It is frequently also given as a cathartic after other anthelmintics.

MURIAS HYDRARGYRI MITIS. Mild Muriate of Mercury. Calomel.

SEVERAL of the preparations of mercury have been employed as anthelmintics. Calomel is entitled to the preference, not only from its direct action as a mercurial, but also on account of its action on the intestinal canal. It is given by itself, in a dose of 10 or 12 grains to an adult, or in a smaller quantity, combined with jalap or rhubarb. It is also generally the basis of the cathartic usually administered after other anthelmintics have been continued for some time.