
CHAP. XXIII.**OF EMOLLIENTS.**

THE class of Emollients, according to the definition given by Cullen, includes those medicines which diminish the force of cohesion in the particles of the solid matter of the human body, and thereby render them more lax and flexible. Their operation is evidently mechanical; they are insinuated into the matter of the solid fibre, and either diminish its density, or lessen the friction between its particles. Hence they are useful where the fibres are rigid, or where they are preternaturally extended, and therefore afford relief when topically applied to inflamed parts, to tumors distending the skin, or where the skin is dry and rigid. There may be included under the same class, those substances which, applied to the surface, by their smoothness and bland quality afford relief from any irritation.

Heat, conjoined with moisture, is the principal emollient. Warm water is of itself useful; but when applied, by the medium of some vegetable substances, as in the different fomentations and cataplasms, it is more advantageous as the heat is longer retained, and as it can be more conveniently applied. The emollient power

is little increased by such additions, though some have supposed that the mucilaginous vegetables have some efficacy of this kind.

The other emollients are the oils or unctuous substances : they are merely introduced by friction ; and in distention of the animal fibre, as, for example, in dropsical swelling, they afford some relief. Any of the expressed oils or lard may be used for this purpose. *Axungia Porcina*, Hogs' Lard, is the only substance of this kind not hitherto noticed. It is the fat of the hog, freed from the membranous threads or cellular fibre with which it is intermingled. This is done by melting it with the addition of a little water to prevent the heat from rising too high : it collects on the surface of the water, and when cold, becomes concrete. It forms the common basis of ointments, which are applied as a dressing to inflamed parts. Such compositions too are formed from any of the expressed oils, melted with a due proportion of spermaceti or wax : they prove useful in a great measure by excluding the air, while, from their smoothness and softness, they excite no irritation. The thick and bland liquid formed by the combination of lime water with expressed oils, (*Linimentum Aquæ Calcis*), is another emollient composition, usually employed as a soothing application to burns, and proving useful by a similar operation.

is little increased by such additions, though some have supposed that the mucilaginous vegetables have some efficacy of this kind.

The other constituents are the oils of various substances; they are merely introduced by friction; and in digestion of the animal fibre, as for example, in dropping cal waxing, they afford some relief. Any of the expressions of oil or fat may be used for this purpose. Astringent plants, such as the oak bark, is the only substance of this kind not before noticed. It is the bark of the hog, freed from the membranous threads or cellular fibre with which it is intermingled. This is done by boiling it with the addition of a little water to prevent the heat from rising too high; it collects on the surface of the water, and when cold, because concrete. It forms the common basis of ointments, which are applied as a dressing to injured parts. These ointments too are formed from any of the essential oils, mixed with a due proportion of spermaceti or wax; they prove useful in a great measure by excluding the air, which flows from their smoothness and softness, they excite no irritation. The thick and bluish fluid formed by the combination of four water with six green oil, (Lithonitum Aque Calida) is another excellent composition, usually employed as a soothing application to burns, and proving useful by a similar operation.

It is also used in the treatment of the scalding of the face, and in the cure of the scalding of the face, and in the cure of the scalding of the face.