
 CHAP. VIII.

OF MUCILAGES.

THE term Mucilage, understood as denoting a particular preparation in Pharmacy, is applied to solutions of gummy matter in water, sufficiently concentrated to have a certain degree of viscosity; or to similar solutions obtained by the maceration of water on vegetables, in which this kind of matter abounds. They are principally employed as vehicles for other substances, either to suspend powders in liquids, to diffuse oils or resinous matter in water, or to give form and tenacity to pills.

MUCILAGO AMYLI. Starch Mucilage. (*Mucilago Amyli, Ph. Lond. Dub.*)

“Take of Starch, half an ounce; Water, one pound. Rub the starch, with the water gradually added to it, then boil them for a short time.”

Starch is the fecula of wheat, and though perfectly insoluble in cold water, is dissolved by boiling water, and forms a gelatinous solution. This starch-mucilage is principally used as a vehicle for giving opium under the form of enema.

MUCILAGO ASTRAGALI TRAGACANTHÆ. Mucilage of Gum Tragacanth. (Mucilag. Gum. Trag. *Ph. Dub.*)

“Take of Gum Tragacanth beat to powder, one ounce; Boiling Water, eight ounces. Macerate for twenty-four hours, and rub the gum carefully, that it may be dissolved; then strain through linen.” In the Dublin Pharmacopœia, the proportions are two drachms of tragacanth to eight ounces of water.

Tragacanth is not easily dissolved in water, and, even with the aid of heat, the viscid mucilaginous liquor that is formed remains turbid and flocculent. The proportion of the gum to the water is rather large in the Edinburgh Pharmacopœia, but it is designed to form a stiff mucilage, to be used principally in making troches.

MUCILAGO MIMOSÆ NILOTICÆ. Mucilage of Gum Arabic. (Mucilago Acaciæ, *Ph. Lond.*—Mucilago Gum. Arab. *Ph. Dub.*)

“Take of Gum Arabic in powder, one part; Boiling Water, two parts. Digest with frequent agitation until the gum be dissolved; then strain through linen.”

Mucilage of gum Arabic is sometimes employed as a demulcent, being the basis of the common pectoral mixtures used in catarrh. It is more generally used as an agent in Pharmacy, to suspend in water substances insoluble in that liquid, diffuse oils in water, and for similar purposes.