
CHAP. XII.**ACETA.—VINEGARS.**

VINEGAR is generally capable of dissolving all those proximate principles of vegetables which are soluble in water, and with regard to some substances its acid appears farther to increase its solvent power. But, at the same time, it very often modifies their medicinal qualities, either by the chemical changes it occasions, or more generally, perhaps, by the action it exerts on the stomach. Hence there is only one medicated vinegar of any importance,—the Vinegar of Squill; the active matter of this root being dissolved by it, and suffering appears to no alteration. The activity of colchicum appears to reside in a similar acrid matter, and it also affords a medicated vinegar; of less importance, however, as the colchicum itself is little employed. As a solvent of camphor, the concentrated acetic acid is also used in one preparation.

ACETUM AROMATICUM. Aromatic Vinegar.

“Take of the dried tops of Rosemary; the dried leaves of Sage, of each four ounces; dried Lavender Flowers, two ounces; Cloves, two drachms; distilled Acetous Acid, eight pounds. Macerate for seven days, and strain the expressed liquor through paper.”

This is an improved formula for a preparation which has long had a place in the different Pharmacopœias, under the name of *Acetum Prophylacticum*, as an antiseptic and preservative against the operation of contagion. From the impregnation of the vinegar with the flavour of the aromatic vegetables, it is a grateful perfume, but it is weak, and its odour is very soon impaired.

ACIDUM ACETOSUM CAMPHORATUM. Camphorated Acetous Acid. (*Acid. Aceticum Camph. Ph. Dub.*)

“ Take of the stronger Acetous Acid, six ounces; Camphor, half an ounce. Rub the camphor with a little alcohol into powder, which put into the acid, that it may be dissolved.

Camphor is soluble in the concentrated acetic acid, and the solution has an odour highly fragrant and pungent. It has been used as a stimulating perfume, more grateful than the common odoriferous essences. It forms what is named Aromatic Spirit of Vinegar. The preparation of the Pharmacopœia, however, especially that of the Edinburgh College, is inferior in pungency, owing to a weaker acetic acid being employed.

ACETUM SCILLÆ MARITIMÆ. Vinegar of Squill. (*Acetum Scillæ, Ph. Lond. Dub.*)

“ Take of Squill Root dried, two ounces; distilled Acetous Acid, two pounds and a half; Alcohol, three ounces. Macerate the squill with the acetous acid for seven days: express the acid; to which add the alcohol;

and when the impurities have subsided, pour off the liquor." The London College order a pound of squill root, recently dried, to six pints of vinegar, and half a pint of proof spirit,—a proportion of it, either unnecessarily large, or which must afford a preparation much stronger than what has been in common use.

Vinegar appears to dissolve completely the active matter of squill, without much impairing its powers: the addition of the alcohol is designed to counteract any spontaneous decomposition to which the vinegar might be liable. Under this form, squill is generally employed as an expectorant, the dose being one drachm; or more usually indeed in the form of the syrup, prepared from this medicated vinegar.

ACETUM COLCHICI. Vinegar of Meadow Saffron. Ph. Lond.

"Take of the fresh Root of Meadow Saffron cut, one ounce; Distilled Vinegar, a pint; Proof-Spirit, a fluid-ounce. Macerate the root with the vinegar, in a close glass vessel, for twenty-four hours; then press it out, and put it aside, that the impurities may subside; lastly, add the spirit to the clear liquor."

Colchicum bears a considerable resemblance to squill, and its active matter is so far similar, that it appears to be dissolved by vinegar, without its powers being altered. It has been given as a diuretic, either under this form, or made into an oxymel, by the addition of honey; but in modern practice it is little employed.