
CHAP. XXI.**PULVERES.—POWDERS.**

THIS is the simplest form of composition of medicines, the different articles being merely reduced to powder, and mixed together. It is adapted to the exhibition of such remedies as are not ungrateful, and such as are not liable to lose their virtues by keeping; and is usually an improper form for those which are bitter, acrid or fœtid, which require to be given in a large dose, or which are not easily diffused in water, the vehicle in which powders are usually taken. The dose of a powder seldom exceeds a drachm; and if it require to be given only in a few grains, it is better that it should be under the form of bolus. When it is to be taken, it is merely diffused in water, wine, or any other convenient vehicle.

PULVIS AROMATICUS. Aromatic Powder. (*Pulvis Cinnamomi Compositus, Ph. Lond.*—*Pulvis Aromaticus, Ph. Dub.*)

“Take of Bark of Cinnamon, Cardamom Seeds, Ginger Root, of each equal parts. Rub them into a very fine powder, which is to be kept in a glass phial well stopt.” In the London and Dublin Pharmacopœias the

proportion of cinnamon is larger, and a small quantity of long pepper is likewise added.

This combination of aromatics is designed merely to communicate to other compositions fragrance and pungency, and to obviate the nausea which ungrateful medicines are liable to excite. The quantity added to a dose is generally about five grains.

PULVIS ASARI COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Asarabacca. (*Pulvis Asari Compositus, Ph. Dub.*)

“ Take of the Leaves of Asarabacca, three parts; the Leaves of Marjoram, Flowers of Lavender, of each one part. Rub them together to a powder.” In the composition which has a place in the Dublin Pharmacopœia, the leaves of marjoram are omitted.

This is used as a mild errhine, forming the composition known by the name of Herb Snuff. When snuffed in the quantity of a few grains, it occasions sneezing and a discharge of mucus, and is sometimes used in headach and ophthalmia.

PULVIS CARBONATIS CALCIS COMPOSITUS, *olim Pulvis Cœtaceus.*

“ Take of Prepared Carbonate of Lime, four ounces; Bark of Cinnamon, one drachm and a half; Nutmeg, half a drachm. Rub them together to powder.”

This is designed to be used as a grateful antacid. It is given in the dose of one drachm.

PULVIS CRETÆ COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Chalk. Ph. Lond.

“Take of Prepared Chalk, half a pound; Bark of Cinnamon, four ounces; Tormentil Root, Gum-Arabic, of each three ounces; Long Pepper, half an ounce. Reduce them separately to powder, and mix them.”

This composition, though analogous to the preceding one, is so far different as to require to be noticed apart, the proportion of the aromatics being larger, and the addition of the tormentil root rendering it more astringent. It is used to relieve diarrhœa arising from acidity, being given in the dose of half a drachm or a drachm.

PULVIS CRETÆ COMPOSITUS CUM OPIO. Compound Powder of Chalk with Opium. Ph. Lond.

“Take of Compound Powder of Chalk, six ounces and a half; Hard Opium, rubbed to powder, four scruples. Mix them.”

The addition of opium to astringents and antacids, when given in diarrhœa, is a common practice, and this formula affords a convenient composition of this kind. Its dose is one scruple, or half a drachm. Two scruples contain one grain of opium, the proportion having been diminished a little from what it was in former editions of the Pharmacopœia.

PULVIS JALAPÆ COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Jalap.

“ Take of the Powder of the Root of Jalap, one part ; Super-Tartrate of Potash, two parts. Rub them together into a very fine powder.”

This combination affords an excellent purgative, less stimulating, and less liable to excite griping than the jalap alone. It is given in the dose of a drachm or a drachm and a half ; and in dropsy, as a hydragogue cathartic, to the extent of two drachms.

PULVIS IPECACUANHÆ ET OPII, *olim Pulvis Doveri.*

Powder of Ipecacuanha and Opium. (Pulv. Ipecacuanhæ Compositus, *Ph. Lond. Dub.*)

“ Take of the Powder of the Root of Ipecacuanha, Opium, of each one part ; Sulphate of Potash, eight parts. Rub them together into a fine powder.”

This composition, Dover's Powder, has long been established in practice, and is one of those useful combinations, which experience, or rather accident discovers, the powers of which could not have been inferred *à priori* from the known operation of its ingredients. It affords one of the best examples of the power which one medicine has of modifying the action of another, the ipecacuan rendering the operation of the opium, as a sudorific, much more certain than it otherwise would be, and appearing also to diminish its narcotic effect, so that the composition can be given with safety in pure inflamma-

tory affections, in which opium alone would be hazardous. The sulphate of potash serves to divide the particles of the opium and ipecacuan, and mix them more intimately; and such is the advantage derived from it, that, as Dr Blane has remarked, the opium and ipecacuan alone, mixed in the above proportions, have not the same effect. Hence, too, the operation of the powder is always more certain when it has been triturated to a great degree of fineness. This powder is the most powerful and certain sudorific we possess. Its medium dose is fifteen grains, the operation of which is to be assisted by the sweating regimen; and frequently it is necessary to give additional smaller doses at intervals, to produce sweat. Its principal use is in acute rheumatism; but it is prescribed in all cases with propriety where full sweating is to be induced.

PULVIS OPIATUS. Opiate Powder.

Take of Opium, one part; Prepared Carbonate of Lime, nine parts. Rub them together to a fine powder."

This is designed as a convenient form for administering opium. Ten grains contain a grain of opium, and form a medium dose. It is however little used.

PULVIS CORNU USTI CUM OPIO. Powder of Burnt Hartshorn with Opium. Pharm. Lond.

"Take of Hard Opium rubbed to powder, one drachm; Burnt and Prepared Hartshorn, an ounce; Cochineal in powder, a drachm. Mix them."

This, in the former edition of the Pharmacopœia,

had the name of Pulvis Opiatus, which has been changed to its present appellation, as less liable to being confounded with Powder of Opium. A little cochineal is also added to give it colour. The burnt hartshorn serves to divide the opium, and from its hardness and grittiness is better adapted to this than the chalk of the preceding preparation. One grain of opium is contained in ten of the powder.

PULVIS SCAMMONII COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Scammony.

“Take of Scammony, Super-Tartrate of Potash, of each equal parts. Rub them together into a very fine powder.”

Scammony given alone, is liable to act as a purgative rather with violence, while its operation is at the same time somewhat uncertain. By the addition of the super-tartrate of potash, its cathartic operation is rendered more certain and less irritating. It is also preferred to the scammony alone, as a hydragogue cathartic. Its dose is from ten to twenty grains.

PULVIS SCAMMONII COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Scammony. Pharm. Lond.

“Take of Scammony, Hard Extract of Jalap, of each two ounces; Ginger, half an ounce. Rub them separately into a very fine powder, then mix them.”

This composition, though under the same name as the preceding one, is of a very different nature; the stimula-

ting operation of the scammony not being corrected, but rather increased by the addition of the extract of jalap. The ginger will communicate an aromatic pungency, and obviate griping. The compound is a strong cathartic. Its medium dose is ten or fifteen grains.

PULVIS SULPHATIS ALUMINÆ COMPOSITUS, *olim Pulvis Stypticus.* Compound Powder of Sulphate of Argil.

“Take of Sulphate of Alumine, four parts; Kino, one part. Rub them together into a fine powder.”

This being a combination of two powerful astringents, has been sometimes used internally in menorrhagia, in repeated doses of ten or fifteen grains, and externally as a styptic application to bleeding wounds.

THE following Powders have a place in the London or Dublin Pharmacopœia, without any preparations corresponding to them in the Pharmacopœia of the Edinburgh College.

PULVIS ALOES COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Aloes.

Ph. Lond.—(Pulvis Aloes cum Guaiaco, *Ph. Dub.*)

“Take of Socotorine Aloes, one ounce and a half; Guaiac Gum-Resin, one ounce; Compound Powder of Cinnamon, half an ounce. Rub the aloes and guaiac separately into powder; then mix them with the compound powder of cinnamon.”

This combination of aloes with guaiac is designed as a stimulating aperient, and may be given in a dose of fifteen or twenty grains. The form of powder is however very ill adapted to the exhibition of a substance so bitter and nauseous as aloes, or of resinous substances, such as guaiac; and the composition is therefore little used.

PULVIS ALOES CUM CANELLA. Powder of Aloes with Canella. Ph. Dub.

“Take of Hepatic Aloes, one pound; White Canella, three ounces. Rub them separately to powder; then mix them.”

This had a place in the former edition of the London Pharmacopœia, but is now thrown out. The canella covers the unpleasant flavour of the aloes; and this combination is sometimes used as a warm stimulating cathartic, not under the form of powder, but made into a tincture, by infusing it in spirit. A composition of this kind, designed for this purpose, has long been kept in the shops, under the name of *Hiera Picra*.

PULVIS CONTRAYERVÆ COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Contrayerva. Pharm. Lond.

“Take of Contrayerva Root, rubbed to powder, five ounces; Prepared Shells, one pound and a half. Mix them.”

This is a composition which has long kept its place in the Pharmacopœias, and has been frequently reformed. It is one scarcely adapted to any important purpose, or

possessed of any advantage. It has been given as a tonic and stimulating diaphoretic, in a dose of half a drachm, or two scruples.

PULVIS KINO COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Kino. Pharm. Lond.

“Take of Kino, fifteen drachms; Cinnamon Bark, half an ounce; Hard Opium, a drachm. Triturate them separately into a very fine powder, then mix them.”

Kino is one of the most powerful vegetable astringents. The cinnamon will communicate to it a grateful aromatic flavour and pungency, and the addition of the opium will render it a more powerful remedy in diarrhoea. Yet the form of powder does not appear to be well adapted to its administration; nor does there appear any particular reason for introducing this as an officinal preparation. One part of opium is contained in twenty, and it may be given in a dose from ten to twenty grains.

PULVIS SENNÆ COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Senna. Pharm. Lond.

“Take of Leaves of Senna, Super-Tartrate of Potash, of each two ounces; Scammony, half an ounce; Ginger, two drachms. Rub the scammony separately, the others together, into a fine powder, and mix them.”

This may be employed as a purgative, in a dose of from half a drachm to a drachm. The senna is, however, a substance so inferior in power to the scammony, that

there appears to be little advantage in their combination, nor is the form of powder well adapted to their exhibition.

PULVIS TRAGACANTHÆ COMPOSITUS. Compound Powder of Tragacanth. Pharm. Lond.

“Take of Tragacanth, rubbed to Powder, Gum Arabic in powder, Starch, of each one ounce and a half; Refined Sugar, three ounces. Triturate the starch and sugar together into powder, then having added the tragacanth and the gum Arabic, mix them all together.”

This combination of mucilaginous substances may be employed for the general purposes of demulcents, in the dose of a drachm, or two drachms frequently repeated. But it appears to be a very superfluous composition.