
CHAP. XXIII.**PILULÆ.—PILLS.**

PILLS are formed from a mass sufficiently stiff and adhesive to preserve the round form which is given to them. Under this form, such medicines are generally exhibited as are nauseous, either in taste or flavour, and such as operate in a small dose. Few general rules require to be given with regard to their formation. Such of the ingredients as are capable of being reduced to powder, are first triturated to the requisite fineness; those which are of a softer consistence are then added, and if this is not sufficient to bring the whole to a proper consistence, a small quantity of syrup or mucilage is to be added; the former is preferable, as the latter, in drying, is liable to render the mass too hard. Some substances, as several of the gum-resins, become soft on beating, so as to form into pills. Light vegetable powders, when beat up with syrup, form a mass which is not sufficiently coherent to roll out. In this case it is necessary to add a small quantity of pure soap, which gives the necessary tenacity. Metallic preparations, which are heavy, and given in a small dose, are made into pills by the addition of some extract or conserve. If the pill mass is too soft, so that the pills,

after being formed, do not keep their form, it may be made harder by the addition of a small quantity of any inactive vegetable matter, as powder of liquorice. After they are rolled out, they must, to prevent them from adhering, be covered with the same powder, or, what is preferable, as less liable to become mouldy, starch or carbonate of magnesia. A pill ought not to exceed five grains in weight, or twelve may be formed from a drachm of the mass. They ought not to be prepared in too large a quantity at a time, as if long kept they become so hard as to be scarcely acted on in the stomach.

PILULÆ ALOETICÆ. Aloëtic Pills.

“Take of Socotorine Aloes reduced to powder, Soap, of each equal weights. Beat them with Simple Syrup, so as to make a mass fit for pills.”

In this formula the proportion of extract of gentian is too large, the mass being too soft to form properly into pills. It affords a convenient form for the exhibition of aloes, and is in common use as a purgative. Its medium dose is 10 or 15 grains.

PILULÆ ALOES COMPOSITÆ. Compound Aloes Pills.
Pharm, Lond.

Take of Socotorine Aloes, in powder, one ounce; Extract of Gentian, half an ounce; Oil of Carraway, forty minims; Syrup, as much as necessary. Beat them together until they form a mass.”

Under either of these simple forms aloes is very com-

monly exhibited as a cathartic. Two pills are a medium dose.

PILULÆ ALOES CUM ZINGIBERE. Pills of Aloes with Ginger. Ph. Dub.

“Take of Hepatic Aloes, one ounce; Ginger-Root in powder, one drachm; Spanish Soap, half an ounce; Essential Oil of Peppermint, half a drachm. Triturate the aloes with the ginger to powder; add the soap and essential oil, and form the whole into one mass.”

This composition is adapted to the same purposes as the preceding pill, the essential oil communicating some aromatic flavour and pungency. Their dose is the same.

PILULÆ ALOES ET ASSAFŒTIDÆ. Pills of Aloes and Assafœtida.

“Take of Socotorine Aloes in powder, Assafœtida, Soap, of each equal parts. Beat them into a mass with mucilage of gum Arabic.”

These pills are occasionally employed in amenorrhœa, hysteria, in dyspepsia attended with flatulence, and in tympanitis, two or three being taken at bedtime. They will at least prove useful by obviating costiveness.

PILULÆ ALOES CUM COLOCYNTHIDÆ. Pills of Aloes with Colocynth.

“Take of Socotorine Aloes, Scammony, of each eight parts; Colocynth, four parts; Sulphate of Potash with

Sulphur, Oil of Cloves, of each one part. Let the aloes and scammony be reduced, with the salt, to powder; then let the colocynth, rubbed into a fine powder, and the oil, be added. Lastly, beat them with mucilage of gum Arabic into a mass."

PILULÆ COLOCYNTHIDIS COMPOSITÆ. Compound Colocynth Pills. Ph. Dub.

"Take of Colocynth, half an ounce; Hepatic Aloes, Scammony, of each an ounce; Spanish Soap, two drachms; Oil of Cloves, one drachm. Reduce the aloes, scammony, and colocynth, separately to powder; then beat them together with the oil and soap, with the addition of the syrup, into a mass."

These compositions are of similar powers. They afford a stronger cathartic than the simple aloëtic pill, and accordingly this compound pill is used in constipation, or to obviate habitual costiveness. Two pills are a common dose.

PILULÆ ALOES ET MYRRHÆ. Pills of Aloes and Myrrh. (Pilulæ Aloes cum Myrrh. Ph. Lond. Dub.)

"Take of Socotorine Aloes, four parts; Myrrh, two parts; Saffron, one part. Beat them into a mass with Simple Syrup." In the formula of the London College, the proportion of saffron is equal to two parts. In that of the Dublin Pharmacopœia, a little Oil of Carraway is added.

These pills, under the name of Rufus's Pills, have long been in use, as affording a moderately stimulating cathar-

tic, useful in dyspepsia connected with costiveness; sometimes used also in hypochondriasis, hysteria, and in jaundice. Their dose is ten or fifteen grains.

PILULÆ AMMONIARETI CUPRI. Pills of Ammoniuret of Copper.

“Take of Ammoniuret of Copper, rubbed into fine powder, sixteen grains; Crumb of Bread, four scruples; Water of Carbonate of Ammonia, as much as may be sufficient. Beat them into a mass, which divide into thirty-two equal pills.”

It is under this form that ammoniuret of copper is given in epilepsy and the other spasmodic diseases in which it has been employed. Half a grain of it is contained in each pill. One pill is given at first, night and morning, and the dose is gradually increased, as far as the stomach and general system will bear it, until a cure is obtained, or the remedy has received a fair trial.

PILULÆ ASSE FŒTIDÆ COMPOSITE. Compound Assafoetida Pills.

“Take of Assfoetida, Galbanum, Myrrh, of each eight parts; Rectified Oil of Amber, one part. Beat them into a mass with Simple Syrup.”

These pills afford a stimulating aperient, and foetid antispasmodic, used in hysteria and amenorrhoea, two or three of them being taken at bedtime.

PILULÆ GALBANI COMPOSITÆ. Compound Pills of Galbanum. Pharm. Lond.

“Take of Galbanum, an ounce; Myrrh, Sagapenum, of each one ounce and a half; Assafœtida, half an ounce; Syrup, as much as may be sufficient. Beat them together, and form a mass.”

PILULÆ MYRRHÆ COMPOSITÆ. Compound Pills of Myrrh. Ph. Dub.

“Take of Assafœtida, Galbanum, Myrrh, in powder, of each one ounce; Oil of Amber, half a drachm. Triturate them together, and form them into a mass with Simple Syrup.”

These compositions, though under different names, are similar to the preceding one. They all form a substitute for the Gum Pills of the older Pharmacopœias. They are used in the same cases, and in the same dose.

PILULÆ HYDRARGYRI. Mercurial Pill. (Pilulæ Hydrargyri, *Ph. Lond. Dub.*)

“Take of Purified Quicksilver, Conserve of Red Rose, of each one ounce; Starch, two ounces. Rub the quicksilver with the conserve, in a glass mortar, until the globules entirely disappear, adding, as there may be occasion, a little mucilage of gum Arabic; then add the starch, and beat, with a little water, into a mass, which is to be immediately divided into four hundred and eighty pills.” The formula in the London and Dublin Pharma-

copœias is a little different from this. It prescribes "of Purified Quicksilver, two drachms; Conserve of Red Rose, three drachms; Liquorice Root in powder, one drachm. Rub the quicksilver with the conserve until the globules no longer appear, then adding the liquorice powder, beat the whole together so as to form a mass." A grain of mercury is contained in four grains of the mass, prepared according to the formula of the Edinburgh College, and in three grains according to the other.

The trituration of the quicksilver in this preparation was formerly believed to reduce it merely to a state of extreme mechanical division. But there is every reason to believe that an oxidation of the metal is effected, and that the medicinal efficacy of the preparation depends on this oxide. Quicksilver, in its metallic state, being entirely inert with regard to the living system, the activity of the preparation itself is a presumption of this; but it is farther known, that by agitation with atmospheric air, quicksilver affords a portion of a grey powder, soluble in muriatic acid, and which must therefore be regarded as an oxide, metallic quicksilver being insoluble in that acid. This oxidation must be effected more readily when the surface of the metal is extended, and its continuity is divided by the interposition of any viscous matter, and hence the advantage derived from the trituration of it with substances of this kind, in the preparation of the mercurial pill. Different substances have been employed, syrup, mucilage, honey and others. The Colleges have now agreed in preferring the Conserve of Rose, it

having been supposed that this is superior to the others in facilitating the operation. Much attention is requisite that the trituration be continued until the extinction is completed, as on this the efficacy of the pill depends. This is known by rendering the matter a little thinner by the addition of a little water, and extending it by rubbing on a glass plate or on paper, when the globules, if any remain, will be apparent. Starch has been selected by the Edinburgh College to form it into a mass, and is preferable to liquorice powder, as not being liable to become mouldy.

This pill is the preparation of mercury that is upon the whole most generally used for obtaining the general action of this metal on the system; and while it is milder in its operation than some others, and has less determination to the intestinal canal, it is sufficiently active and certain. The common dose, given with the view of inducing the usual mercurial action, is two pills at bedtime and one in the morning, which, in particular cases and habits, requires to be increased. Four or six pills given at once generally excite purging.

PILULÆ OPIATÆ, olim Pilula Thebaica. Opiate Pills.

“ Take of Opium, one part; Extract of Liquorice, seven parts; Jamaica Pepper, two parts. Mix the opium and the extract separately, softened with diluted alcohol, and beat them into a pulp; then add the Jamaica pepper rubbed to powder, and, beating them well, reduce them to a mass.”

PILULÆ SAPONIS CUM OPIO. Pills of Soap with Opium.
Ph. Lond.

“ Take of Hard Opium, rubbed to powder, half an ounce; Hard Soap, two ounces. Beat them together, until they form one mass.”

PILULÆ E STYRACE. Pills of Storax. Pharm. Dub.

“ Take of Purified Storax, three drachms; Soft Purified Opium, one drachm; Saffron, the same weight. Beat them together, mixing them thoroughly.”

The articles which in these compositions are added to the opium, cannot be supposed to have any important effect on its operation; they serve merely to disguise it; and where it is necessary, which it occasionally is, to conceal the administration of opium from the patient, they afford convenient forms. Even the name sometimes requires to be concealed in a prescription; and hence the reason of the names given by the London and Dublin Colleges being derived from the trivial ingredients. It is only to be regretted, that the proportion of opium is not the same in all of them. Two pills, or ten grains of the pill of the Edinburgh Pharmacopœia, contain one grain of opium; while in the formula of the London and Dublin Colleges, the proportion of opium is larger, five grains or one pill containing one grain.

PILULÆ RHEI COMPOSITÆ. Compound Pills of Rhubarb.

“ Take of the Root of Rhubarb, in powder, one

ounce; Socotorine Aloes, six drachms; Myrrh, half an ounce; Oil of Peppermint, half a drachm. Beat them into a mass with syrup of orange-peel."

This is a moderate laxative much employed, especially in dyspeptic affections, to obviate costiveness, and stimulate gently the stomach and intestines. Two pills are taken at bed-time, and operate in general without occasioning any irritation, evacuating the contents of the intestines, without producing purging.

PILULÆ SCILLITICÆ. Squill Pills.

"Take of the dried Root of Squill, rubbed to a fine powder, one scruple; Gum-Ammoniac, Cardamom Seeds, in powder, Extract of Liquorice, of each one drachm. Beat them with simple syrup into a mass."

PILULÆ SCILLÆ COMPOSITÆ. Compound Squill Pills.
Ph. Lond.

"Take of the Root of Squill, recently dried, and beat to powder, a drachm; Ginger Root, in powder, Hard Soap, of each three drachms; Gum-Ammoniac in powder, two drachms. Mix the powders together; then beat them with the soap, adding as much syrup as may be sufficient to give the due consistence."

PILULÆ SCILLÆ CUM ZINGIBERE. Pills of Squill with
Ginger.

"Take of Squill Root in powder, one drachm; Ginger Root in powder, two drachms; Essential Oil of

Anise, ten drops. Triturate them together, and form them into a mass by the addition of soap jelly."

Under the form of these compositions, which have long been officinal, and which do not differ materially from each other, squill is often given as an expectorant in dyspnoea and chronic catarrh, two pills being taken morning and evening. Any efficacy they have depends on the squill. But there appears to be no advantage in reducing so much its activity by the addition of so large a proportion of other matter; and as squill, when long kept, is liable to have its strength impaired, it is perhaps preferable that it should be given under some form of extemporaneous preparation.

THERE are a few officinal Pills peculiar to the London Pharmacopœia.

PILULÆ CAMBOGIÆ COMPOSITÆ. Compound Gamboge Pills.

"Take of Gamboge in powder, Socotorine Aloes in powder, Compound Powder of Cinnamon, of each one drachm; Soap, two drachms. Mix the powders together, then, adding the soap, beat the whole into one mass."

By the addition of the gamboge to the aloes, its cathartic power is increased, and a composition afforded, more active than the aloëtic pill. Two or three pills are a dose.

PILULÆ FERRI CUM MYRRHÆ. Pills of Iron with Myrrh.

"Take of Myrrh, beat to powder, two drachms; Sub-

carbonate of Soda, Sulphate of Iron, Sugar, of each a drachm. Triturate the myrrh with the sub-carbonate of soda; then having added the sulphate of iron, triturate them again; lastly, beat the whole together, until they form an uniform mass."

This is the same composition, with regard to the active ingredients, as forms the basis of the compound mixture of iron, the substitute for Griffith's mixture, and it may be occasionally convenient to prescribe it under the form of pill, or to form the mixture from it extemporaneously by diffusion in water. The ingredients, however, are not very well adapted to preserve this form.

PILULÆ HYDRARGYRI SUB-MURIATIS. Pills of Sub-muriate of Quicksilver.

"Take of Sub-muriate of Quicksilver, Precipitated Sulphuret of Antimony, of each a drachm, Gum-resin of Guaiac, beat to powder, two drachms. Triturate the sub-muriate of quicksilver with the precipitated sulphuret of antimony, then with the gum-resin of guaiac, and add of copaiba as much as may be sufficient to give the proper consistence.

This composition of Calomel, and what is named Precipitated Sulphuret of Antimony, was introduced by Dr Plummer as an alterative, employed more particularly in cutaneous affections. The pills, under his name, had a place in the Pharmacopœias, and though expunged, they have been restored by the London College, as occasionally used in practice.