

CHAP. XXVI.

EMPLASTRA.—PLASTERS.

PLASTERS are of similar composition to ointments, but differ from them in their much firmer consistence, which is such, that they do not adhere to the hand. They owe this consistence, in general, to a larger proportion of wax, or sometimes to the addition of certain metallic oxides, particularly those of lead, which unite chemically with the unctuous matter. They require, in general, to be heated, in order to be spread: hence they adhere more firmly, and several of them even afford a mechanical support. They are employed generally to answer the same indications as ointments. The same rules are to be observed in their preparation, as in that of Ointments.

EMPLASTRUM SIMPLEX, *olim Emplastrum Cereum*. Simple Plaster. Ed.

Take of Yellow Wax, three parts; Mutton Suet, Resin, of each two parts.

EMPLASTRUM CERÆ. Wax Plaster. Lond.

Take of Yellow Wax, Prepared Tallow, each three pounds; Yellow Resin, a pound. Melt them together, and strain.

The principal use of this plaster is as a dressing to the surface to which a blister has been applied, after the vesicle has been cut. It is spread thin on linen with a hot iron.

EMPLASTRUM OXIDI PLUMBI SEMI-VITREI, *olim Emplastrum Commune.* Plaster of Oxide of Lead. Ed.

Take of the Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, one part; Olive Oil, two parts. Having added Water, boil them, stirring constantly, until the oil and the oxide unite into a plaster.

EMPLASTRUM PLUMBI. Plaster of Lead. Lond.

Take of Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, rubbed into a fine powder, five pounds; Olive Oil, a gallon; Water, two pints. Boil them with a slow fire, stirring constantly, until the oil and the oxide of lead pass into the consistence of a plaster. It is necessary to add a little boiling water, if the water added in the beginning be evaporated before the end of the boiling.

EMPLASTRUM LITHARGYRI. Litharge Plaster. Dub.

Take of Litharge in fine powder, five pounds; Olive Oil, nine pounds; Boiling Water, two pints. Mix them together, by stirring at a heat between 200° and 212° , until the oil and the litharge unite into a plaster, supplying occasionally water in fresh quantities as it evaporates.

This, which has been long known by the name of Diachylon, is a chemical combination of the expressed oil with the oxide of lead, and is of a consistence sufficiently hard to form a plaster. There is considerable attention requisite in preparing it, particularly in stirring it constantly to promote the combination, and allow of the escape of the watery vapour. The use of the water is to prevent the heat from rising too high; and if the quantity is dissipated before the combination is complete, an additional portion must be added, taking care to add it hot. The plaster is used, spread on leather or linen, as an application to excoriations, or slight wounds.

EMPLASTRUM RESINOSUM, *olim Emplastrum Adhæsivum.* Resinous Plaster. Ed.

Take of Plaster of Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, five parts; Resin, one part.

EMPLASTRUM RESINÆ. Resin Plaster. Lond.

Take of Yellow Resin, half a pound; Plaster of Lead, three pounds. To the plaster of lead melted with a slow fire, add the resin bruised, and mix them.

EMPLASTRUM LITHARGYRI CUM RESINA. Litharge Plaster with Resin. Dub.

Take of Litharge Plaster, three pounds and a half; Yellow Resin, half a pound. To the litharge plaster melted with a moderate heat, add the resin beat to a fine powder that it may melt speedily, and form a plaster.

The plaster of litharge is rendered more adhesive, and somewhat more stimulating, by this intermixture of resin. It is applied to similar uses.

EMPLASTRUM OXIDI FERRI RUBRI, *olim Emplastrum Roborans.* Plaster of Red Oxide of Iron. Ed.

Take of Plaster of Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, twenty-four parts; Resin, six parts; Yellow Wax, Olive Oil, of each three parts; Red Oxide of Iron, eight parts. Rub the red oxide of iron with the oil, and add it to the other ingredients melted.

EMPLASTRUM THURIS. Plaster of Frankincense. Dub.

Take of Litharge, two pounds; Frankincense, half a pound; Red Oxide of Iron, three ounces. Sprinkle the oxide into the plaster and the frankincense melted together, stirring them together, and form a plaster.

These plasters, spread on leather, are sometimes used as an application in slight cases of lumbago, and give some relief, merely by affording a mechanical support.

EMPLASTRUM ASSÆ PÆTIDÆ. Assafœtida Plaster. Ed.

Take of Plaster of Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, Assafœtida, of each two parts; Galbanum, Yellow Wax, of each one part.

This plaster is sometimes applied to the breast or side, as a remedy in hysteric affections, but probably with little advantage.

EMPLASARUM GUMMOSUM. Gum Plaster. Ed.

Take of Plaster of Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, eight parts; Gum-Resin of Ammoniac, Galbanum, Yellow Wax, of each one part.

EMPLASTRUM GALBANI. Galbanum Plaster. Dub.

Take of Plaster of Litharge, two pounds; Galbanum, half a pound; Yellow Wax, four ounces. To the Galbanum melted with a gentle heat, add the litharge plaster and wax, and melt them with a moderate heat.

EMPLASTRUM GALBANI COMPOSITUM. Compound Galbanum Plaster. Lond.

Take of Galbanum Purified, eight ounces; Plaster of Lead, three pounds; Common Turpentine, ten drachms, Frankincense bruised, three ounces. To the galbanum and turpentine previously melted together, add first the frankincense, then the plaster of lead, melted with a slow fire, and mix them.

These three plasters are essentially the same. They are employed as discutient applications to indolent tumours, and sometimes to promote suppuration.

EMPLASTRUM HYDRARGYRI. Quicksilver Plaster. Ed.

Take of Olive Oil, Resin, of each one part; Quicksilver, three parts; Plaster of Semi-vitreous Oxide of Lead, six parts. Rub the quicksilver with the oil and resin melted together, and then cooled, until the globules disappear; then add gradually, the plaster of semi-vitreous oxide of lead, melted, and mix the whole carefully.

EMPLASTRUM HYDRARGYRI. Quicksilver Plaster. Lond.

Take of Purified Quicksilver, three ounces; Sulphurated Oil, half a drachm; Plaster of Lead, a pound. Rub the quicksilver with the sulphurated oil until the globules disappear, then add gradually the plaster of lead, melted, and mix them.

The sulphurated oil in the latter formula, causes the mercury to lose the form of globules more quickly, and therefore abridges the labour of the preparation; but it may be doubted if the quicksilver thus extinguished is in the same state of activity as when this has been done by trituration with unctuous matter alone. The mercurial plaster is applied as a discutient to indolent tumours; and it has been supposed, that from its continued application, the mercury will be absorbed, and act locally, particularly in glandular affections.

EMPLASTRUM SAPONACEUM. Soap Plaster. Ed.

Take of Plaster of Semi-vitreous oxide of Lead, four parts; Gum Plaster, two parts; Soap sliced, one part. Mix the soap with the plasters melted together; then boil a little, so as to form a plaster.

EMPLASTRUM SAPONIS. Soap Plaster. Lond.

Take of Hard Soap, cut down, half a pound; Plaster of Lead, three pounds. Mix the soap with the plaster melted, then boil down to a proper consistence.

EMPLASTRUM SAPONIS. Soap Plaster. Dub.

Take of Plaster of Litharge, three pounds; Shavings of Spanish Soap, half a pound. Mix the soap with the plaster melted with a gentle heat, then boil so as to form a plaster.

This has been supposed to possess a discutient quality; but it is much inferior to the mercurial plaster, and is scarcely ever used.

EMPLASTRUM MELOES VESICATORII, olim *Emplastrum Vesicatorium*. Plaster of Cantharides. Ed.

Take of Mutton Suet, Yellow Wax, Resin, Cantharides, of each equal weights. Mix the cantharides, rubbed into a fine powder, with the other ingredients, melted together and removed from the fire.

EMPLASTRUM LYTTÆ. Plaster of Cantharides. Lond.

Take of Cantharides, rubbed to a very fine powder, a pound; Wax Plaster, a pound and a half; Prepared Lard, a pound. Sprinkle in the cantharides to the plaster and lard melted together, and removed from the fire a little before they become solid, and mix the whole together.

EMPLASTRUM CANTHARIDIS. Cantharides Plaster. Dub.

Take of Yellow Wax, Tallow, each a pound; Yellow Resin, four ounces; Cantharides, in fine powder, a pound. Sprinkle the cantharides into the wax, tallow and resin melted together, a little before they become solid from cooling, and mix them so as to form a plaster.

This is the plaster usually employed to raise a blister, an effect produced from the action of the acrid matter of the cantharides. It is of a softer consistence than the other plasters, that it may admit of being spread without the assistance of heat, which would impair the acrid quality. It is spread on leather, and requires to be applied twelve hours to produce a perfect blister: it is then removed; the vesicle is cut, and the inflamed surface is dressed with simple cerate or plaster. In cases where it is of importance that a blister should be raised with certainty, and speedily, it is of advantage to sprinkle a little of the powder of cantharides on the surface of the plaster when spread. Washing the part previously with vinegar, is also useful to insure the effect. Camphor is sometimes mixed with the blistering composition, on the supposition that it prevents the strangury, which is sometimes produced by a large blister; but it appears to have no such virtue, and this painful symptom is more effectually obviated by the free use of diluents while the blister is applied,—a practice always proper where the system is irritable, or even in common cases where the blister is large.

EMPLASTRUM MELOES VESICATORII COMPOSITUM. Compound
Plaster of Cantharides. Ed.

Take of Venice Turpentine, eighteen parts; Burgundy Pitch, Cantharides, of each twelve parts; Yellow Wax, four parts; Sub-acetite of Copper, two parts; Mustard Seed, Black Pepper, of each one part. To the Burgundy pitch and wax melted, add the turpentine. While these are melted and still warm, add the other ingredients mixed and rubbed to a fine powder, stirring constantly, so as to form a plaster.

It occasionally happens, that the common plaster of cantharides is insufficient to excite a blister, even when its surface has been sprinkled over with powdered cantharides. In such cases, or even in others where it is necessary that a blister should be quickly raised, and where the system is not easily affected, as in comatose diseases, this more powerful composition may be employed. Its operation is accompanied with a very pungent sensation of heat. The application of it ought not to be continued too long, as it might induce ulceration; and from the greater acrimony of this than of the common epispastic, still more precaution ought to be taken against the occurrence of strangury.

EMPLASTRUM AMMONIACI. Ammoniac Plaster. Lond.

Take of Gum-Resin of Ammoniac, purified, five ounces; Acetic Acid, half a pint. Dissolve the ammoniac in the vinegar; then evaporate the liquor in an iron vessel by the heat of a water-bath, stirring it until it attain a proper consistence.

Under this form, gum-ammoniac is applied as a discutient, and sometimes also as a remedy in tinea capitis; and as it is occasionally used, the London College have received it as an officinal preparation.

EMPLASTRUM AMMONIACI CUM HYDRARGYRO. Plaster of Ammoniac with Quicksilver. Lond.

Take of Purified Ammoniac, one pound; Purified Quicksilver, three ounces; Sulphurated Oil, one fluidrachm. Rub the quicksilver with the sulphurated oil until the globules disappear; then add gradually the ammoniac melted, and mix them.

EMPLASTRUM AMMONIACI CUM HYDRARGYRO. Plaster of Ammoniac with Quicksilver. Dub.

Take of Pure Gum Ammoniac, a pound; Purified Quicksilver, three ounces; Turpentine, two drachms. Rub the quicksilver with the turpentine, until the globules disappear, then add gradually the ammoniac melted, and melt them together.

This is similar to the simple mercurial plaster, its discutient and stimulant powers being perhaps somewhat promoted by the ammoniac. It is applied to the same purposes.

EMPLASTRUM CUMINI. Cumin Plaster. Lond.

Take of Cumin Seeds, Caraway Seeds, Bay Berries, of each three ounces; Burgundy Pitch, three pounds; Yellow Wax, three ounces. To the pitch and wax melted, add the other ingredients rubbed to powder, and mix them.

This has been applied to the region of the stomach as a moderate stimulant in hysteric affections and flatulent choleric, but it cannot be supposed to be of any advantage.

EMPLASTRUM OPII. Opium Plaster. Lond.

Take of Hard Opium in powder, half an ounce; Frankincense bruised, three ounces; Plaster of Lead, a pound. To the plaster melted, add the frankincense and opium, and mix them.

Opium has sometimes been used as an anodyne, by external application, with advantage, as, for example, in re-

lieving the pain of toothach. This plaster, newly introduced into the London Pharmacopœia, is designed to afford a form of applying it, though the more usual mode of extending a piece of opium softened between the fingers on leather or silk is probably to be preferred, as even more effectual.

EMPLASTRUM PICIS COMPOSITUM. Compound Pitch Plaster. Lond.

Take of Burgundy Pitch, two pounds; Frankincense, one pound; Yellow Resin, Yellow Wax, of each four ounces; Expressed Oil of Nutmeg, one ounce. To the pitch, resin and wax, melted together, add first the frankincense, then the oil of nutmeg, and mix them together.

Burgundy pitch is in common use as a rubefacient, under the form of plaster. The addition of the other ingredients of this compound plaster may render it rather more stimulating, and the wax adds to its tenacity, and gives to the plaster a due consistence.

EMPLASTRUM CALEFACIENS. Warm Plaster. Dub.

Take of Burgundy Pitch, seven parts; Plaster of Cantharides, one part. Mix them melted together with a moderate heat, and form a plaster.

By the addition of this small proportion of cantharides, the stimulating power of the Burgundy pitch is still more increased than by the articles added in the preceding composition. This accordingly affords a very excellent rubefacient, which is frequently employed.

EMPLASTRUM AROMATICUM. Aromatic Plaster. Dub.

Take of Frankincense, three ounces; Yellow Wax, half an

ounce; Cinnamon Bark in powder, six drachms; Essential Oil of Pimento, Essential Oil of Lemons, of each two drachms. Melt the frankincense and wax together, and strain. As they thicken on cooling, mix in the powder of cinnamon, rubbed with the oils, and form a plaster.

This is designed as a stomachic plaster, being applied to the region of the stomach in some forms of dyspepsia. It ought to be always extemporaneously prepared, as the essential oils are soon volatilized.

CATAPLASMATA.—CATAPLASMS.

CATAPLASMA FERMENTI. Yeast Cataplasm. Lond.

Take of Flour, a pound; Yeast of Beer, half a pint. Mix and apply a gentle heat until the mixture begins to rise.

The yeast, mixed with the flour, and aided by the heat, soon excites fermentation, and the cataplasm in this state has been applied with much advantage as an anodyne in painful and irritable sores, and as an antiseptic in ulceration, attended with foetor. Its efficacy depends on the carbonic acid gas evolved by the fermentative process.

CATAPLASMA SINAPIS. Mustard Cataplasm. Lond.

Take of Mustard Seeds, Lintseed, of each in powder, half a pound; Vinegar, warm, as much as is sufficient. Mix, so as to obtain the consistence of a cataplasm.

CATAPLASMA SINAPEOS. Mustard Cataplasm. Dub.

Take of Mustard Seed in powder, Crumb of Bread, of each half a pound; Wine Vinegar, as much as is necessary. Mix so as to form a cataplasm. The mustard cataplasm may be

