

INFUSUM SIMAROUBÆ. *Lond.**Infusion of Simarouba.*

Take of

Simarouba bark bruised, half a drachm ;

Boiling water, half a pint.

Macerate for two hours in a loosely covered vessel, and strain.

A bitter aromatic.

INFUSUM TABACI. *Lond.**Infusion of Tobacco.*

Take of

Tobacco leaves, a drachm ;

Boiling water, a pint.

Macerate for an hour in a loosely covered vessel, and strain.

THIS is a narcotic diuretic, which was used with much success in dropsies by Dr Fowler.

INFUSUM VALERIANÆ. *Dub.**Infusion of Valerian.*

Take of

Valerian root, in coarse powder, two drachms ;

Boiling water, seven ounces, by measure ;

Digest for half an hour, and strain when cold.

VALERIAN tea is a very excellent antispasmodic, and often proves serviceable in hysteric cases, where the stomach will not bear the powder in substance.

## CHAP. XXV.—DECOCTIONS.

DECOCTIONS differ from infusions only in the action of the menstruum being assisted by a boiling heat. At the same time, however, that the increase of temperature facilitates and expedites the solution of some fixed principles, it gives others a tendency to decomposition, and dissipates all volatile matters. Decoction, therefore, can only be used with advantage for the extraction of principles which are neither volatilized nor altered by a boiling heat.

To promote the action of the menstruum, infusion is sometimes premised to decoction.

In compound decoctions, it is sometimes convenient not to

put in all the ingredients from the first, but in succession, according to their hardness, and the difficulty with which their virtues are extracted; and if any aromatic, or other substances, containing volatile principles, enter into the composition, the boiling decoction is to be simply poured upon them, and covered up until it cool.

Decoctions should be made in vessels sufficiently large to prevent any risk of boiling over, and should be continued without interruption, and gently.

DECOCTUM ALOES COMPOSITUM. *Lond.*

*Compound Decoction of Aloes.*

Take of

Extract of liquorice, half an ounce;  
Subcarbonate of potass, two scruples;  
Extract of spiked aloes, in powder,  
Myrrh, in powder,  
Saffron, of each one drachm;  
Water, one pint.

Boil down to twelve fluidounces, and strain, then add of Compound tincture of cardamoms, four fluidounces.

THIS is intended as a simplification and improvement of the *Baume de Vie de la Lièvre*. It is in fact a saponaceous solution of aloes, the subcarbonate of potass rendering its resin soluble in water; and in many cases of stomach complaints, the combination of an alkali with a bitter purgative may be advantageous. In the dose of two or three tea-spoonfuls it is slightly purgative. The original *Baume de vie*, which, however, contained no alkali, was much employed externally as a detersive application to recent wounds, and to prevent supuration.

DECOCTUM ALTHÆÆ OFFICINALIS. *Ed.*

*Decoction of Marshmallows.*

Take of

Dried marshmallow roots, bruised, four ounces;  
Raisins of the sun, stoned, two ounces;  
Water, seven pounds.

Boil down to five pounds; strain the decoction, and after the fæces have subsided, pour off the liquor.

MARSHMALLOW roots contain nothing soluble in water, except mucilage, which is very abundant in them. This decoction is therefore to be considered merely as an emollient, rendered more pleasant by the acidulous sweetness of the raisins.

DECOCTUM ANTHEMIDIS NOBILIS; vulgo, DECOCTUM CHAMÆMELI sive COMMUNE. *Ed.*

*Common Decoction, or Decoction of Chamomile.*

Take of

Chamomile flowers, dried, one ounce;

Caraway seeds, bruised, half an ounce;

Water, five pounds.

Boil for a quarter of an hour, and strain.

DECOCTUM CHAMÆMELI COMPOSITUM. *Dub.*

*Compound Decoction of Chamomile.*

Take of

Chamomile flowers, dried, half an ounce;

Sweet fennel seeds, two drachms;

Water, one pint.

Boil a little, and strain.

DECOCTUM MALVÆ COMPOSITUM. *Lond.*

*Compound Decoction of Mallows.*

Take of

The leaves of mallow, dried, one ounce;

Chamomile flowers, dried, half an ounce;

Water, one pint.

Boil for fifteen minutes, and strain.

THESE decoctions are merely solutions of bitter extractive, combined, in the third with mucilage, and in the others with aromatics. In making them, the aromatic substances should not be added until the decoction is nearly completed; for, otherwise, their flavour would be entirely dissipated.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that these impregnations are for the most part unnecessary for the purpose of glysters; and, in general, the bulk and warmth of these produce a discharge before these medicines can have any effect.

As fomentations, their virtues also depend, in a great measure, on the warm water, of which they principally consist; and when the herbs themselves are applied, they act only as retaining heat and moisture for a longer time; and are a less convenient, and not more useful fomentation, than cloths wrung out of hot water.

DECOCTUM CINCHONÆ OFFICINALIS. *Ed.*

*Decoction of Cinchona Bark.*

Take of

Cinchona bark, in powder, one ounce;

Water, one pound and a half.  
Boil for ten minutes in a covered vessel, and strain the liquor while hot.

DECOCTUM CINCHONÆ. *Lond.**Decoction of Cinchona.*

Take of

Lance-leaved Cinchona bark, bruised, one ounce;  
Water, one pint.

Boil for ten minutes in a loosely covered vessel, and strain the liquor while hot.

DECOCTUM CORTICIS CINCHONÆ. *Dub.**Decoction of Cinchona Bark.*

Take of

Peruvian bark, in coarse powder, one ounce;  
Water, one pint.

Boil for ten minutes in a vessel almost covered, and strain the liquor while hot, through linen.

CINCHONA bark readily yields its active principles to the action of boiling water, and in greater quantity than cold water is capable of retaining dissolved; therefore, when a saturated decoction cools, it becomes turbid, and there is always a deposition of a yellowish or reddish powder, while the supernatant liquor is reduced to the strength of a saturated cold infusion. Decoction therefore presents us with an easy means of obtaining immediately an active preparation of cinchona bark, and with one of greater strength, than a cold, or even a warm infusion, provided it be drunk while tepid, and before it forms any deposition, or if the precipitate be diffused by agitation, after it is formed. As the precipitate contains no woody fibre, or other inert matter, it is extremely probable that, in very small doses, it would prove, if dried, a very powerful preparation of cinchona bark.

Formerly it was supposed that the strength of a decoction of cinchona bark, and similar substances, was increased by continuing the boiling for a great length of time; but this is now known to be a mistake, because water, at different temperatures, is capable of dissolving only a determinate proportion of its active principles; and therefore, as soon as it is saturated, any farther decoction is unnecessary. But, moreover, these principles, when dissolved in water, are liable to be decomposed, and become inert, by the absorption of atmospheric oxygen; and this decomposition is increased

by increase of temperature; and as boiling constantly presents new surfaces to the action of the air, it is evidently hurtful when protracted longer than what is just necessary to saturate the water. Ten minutes is now supposed by the colleges to be sufficient for that purpose.

DECOCTUM DAPHNES MEZEREI. *Ed.*

*Decoction of Mezereon.*

Take of

The bark of mezereon root, two drachms;

Liquorice root, bruised, half an ounce;

Water, three pounds.

Boil, with a gentle heat, down to two pounds, and strain the decoction.

From four to eight ounces of this decoction may be given four times a-day, in some obstinate syphiloid and rheumatic affections. It operates chiefly by perspiration.

DECOCTUM DIGITALIS. *Dub.*

*Decoction of Foxglove.*

Take of

Foxglove leaves, dried, one drachm;

Water, as much as will furnish a strained decoction of eight ounces, by measure.

Place the vessel upon a slow fire, and, as soon as the liquor boils, remove it; then digest for a quarter of an hour, and strain.

THIS decoction, according to the proportions employed, is twenty times weaker than that so much praised by Dr Darwin; but with a medicine of so great activity, it is an advantage to be able to regulate the doses easily; and it is probable that the strength of decoctions is not increased in proportion as the quantity of the menstruum is diminished.

DECOCTUM GEOFRÆE INERMIS. *Ed.*

*Decoction of Cabbage-tree Bark.*

Take of

Bark of the cabbage-tree, powdered, one ounce;

Water, two pounds.

Boil, with a gentle fire, down to one pound, and strain the decoction.

THIS is a powerful anthelmintic. It may be given in doses of one table-spoonful to children, and four to adults. If dis-

agreeable symptoms should arise from an over-dose, or from drinking cold water during its action, we must immediately purge with castor oil, and dilute with acidulated fluids.

DECOCTUM GUAIACI COMPOSITUM; vulgo DECOCTUM LIGNORUM. *Ed.*

*Compound Decoction of Guaiacum, commonly called Decoction of the Woods.*

Take of

Guaiacum raspings, three ounces;  
Raisins, two ounces;  
Sassafras root, sliced,  
Liquorice root, bruised, each one ounce;  
Water, ten pounds.

Boil the guaiacum and raisins with the water, over a gentle fire, down to five pounds, adding, towards the end, the sassafras and liquorice, and strain the decoction, without expression.

THIS decoction is of use in some rheumatic and cutaneous affections. It may be taken by itself, to the quantity of a quarter of a pint, twice or thrice a-day, or used as an assistant in a course of mercurial or antimonial alteratives; the patient, in either case, keeping warm, in order to promote the operation of the medicine.

DECOCTUM DULCAMARÆ. *Lond.*

*Decoction of Bittersweet.*

Take of

Twigs of bittersweet, sliced, one ounce;  
Water, one pint and a half.

Boil to a pint, and strain.

For the virtues of this decoction, I must refer to what is said in the *Materia Medica*.

DECOCTUM HORDEI DISTICHI. *Ed.* DECOCTUM HORDEI.

*Dub.*

*Decoction of Barley. Barley Water.*

Take of

Pearl barley, two ounces;  
Water, five pounds.

First wash off the mealy matter which adheres to the barley with some cold water; then extract the colouring matter, by boiling it a little with about half a pint of water. Throw this decoction away, and put the barley thus purified into

five pints of boiling water, which is to be boiled down to one half, and strain the decoction.

DECOCTUM HORDEI. *Lond.**Decoction of Barley.*

Take of

Pearl barley, two ounces ;

Water, four pints and a half.

First wash off all foreign matters from the barley with cold water ; then add half a pint of the water, and boil a little. Throw this water away, and pour on, the remaining water boiling hot ; boil down to two pints, and strain.

DECOCTUM HORDEI COMPOSITUM. *Dub.**Compound Decoction of Barley.*

Take of

The decoction of barley, four pints ;

Raisins, stoned, two ounces ;

Figs, sliced, two ounces ;

Liquorice root, sliced and bruised, half an ounce ;

During the boiling, add first the raisins, and then the figs, and, lastly, the liquorice, a short time before it is finished, when the strained decoction ought to measure two pints.

*Lond.*

Take of

Decoction of barley, two pints ;

Figs, sliced, two ounces ;

Liquorice root, sliced and bruised, half an ounce ;

Raisins, stoned, two ounces ;

Water, one pint.

Boil down to two pints and strain.

THESE liquors are to be used freely, as diluting drinks, in fevers and other acute disorders ; hence it is of consequence that they should be prepared so as to be as elegant and agreeable as possible : for this reason they are inserted in the Pharmacopœia, and the several circumstances which contribute to their elegance set down ; for if any one of them be omitted, the beverage will be less grateful. As, however, they are much oftener prepared by nurses and servants than by the apothecary, these receipts might, with great advantage, be substituted for the ridiculous, and often dangerous, specifics with which domestic cookery books abound. However trivial medicines of this class may appear to be, they are of greater importance in the cure of acute diseases than many more elaborate preparations.

DECOCTUM LICHENIS ISLANDICI. *Dub.**Decoction of Iceland Moss.*

Take of

Iceland moss, half an ounce ;

Boiling water, a pint.

Digest for two hours in a close vessel ; then boil for a quarter of an hour, and strain the liquor while hot.

DECOCTUM LICHENIS. *Lond.**Decoction of Iceland Moss.*

Take of

Iceland moss, one ounce ;

Water, an ounce and a half.

Boil to a pint, and strain.

I HAVE already given my opinion of the nature and effects of this mucilage. As in the present preparation the bitter principle is not removed, it may have some action as a tonic ; but it renders it at the same time too nauseous to be used in sufficient quantity to have much effect as an article of diet.

DECOCTUM PAPAVERIS. *Lond.**Decoction of Poppies.*

Take of

White poppy heads, sliced, four ounces ;

Water, four pints.

Boil for a quarter of an hour and strain.

THIS is in very common use, as an anodyne fomentation.

DECOCTUM POLYGALÆ SENEGÆ. *Ed.**Decoction of Seneka.*

Take of

Seneka root, one ounce ;

Water, two pounds.

Boil down to sixteen ounces, and strain the decoction.

DECOCTUM SENEGÆ. *Lond.**Decoction of Snake Root.*

Take of

Snake root, one ounce ;

Water, two pints.

Boil to one pint, and strain.

THE virtues of this decoction will be easily understood from those of the root from which it is prepared. The dose in hydropic cases, and rheumatic or arthritic complaints, is two ounces, three or four times a-day, according to its effect. It



is also recommended, in affections of the lungs, attended with debility, and inordinate secretion.

DECOCTUM QUERCUS. *Lond.*

*Decoction of Oak Bark.*

Take of

Oak bark, one ounce;

Water, two pints.

Boil to one pint, and strain.

This is a very powerful astringent, and may be used on all occasions where astringents are indicated. It is particularly serviceable as a gargle in sore throats and hoarseness, attended with relaxation of the parts.

DECOCTUM SMILACIS SARSAPARILLÆ. *Ed.*

*Decoction of Sarsaparilla.*

Take of

The root of sarsaparilla, sliced, six ounces;

Water, eight pounds.

Digest for two hours, with a heat of about 195°; then take out the root, and bruise it; when bruised, put it back into the same liquor, boil down to four pints, then press out, and strain the decoction.

DECOCTUM SARSAPARILLÆ. *Dub.*

*Decoction of Sarsaparilla.*

Take of

Sarsaparilla root, sliced, an ounce and a half;

Boiling water, two pints.

Digest in a moderate heat, for two hours, then take out the sarsaparilla and bruise it; when bruised, put it back into the liquor, and repeat the digestion for two hours; then express the liquor, after it has been reduced to one half, through linen, and strain it.

*Lond.*

Take of

Sarsaparilla sliced, four ounces;

Boiling water, four pints.

Macerate for four hours in a loosely covered vessel, at the side of the fire; then take out the sarsaparilla root, and bruise it. When bruised put it again into the liquor; macerate for two hours more, then boil down to two pints, and strain.

Its diaphoretic effects are probably owing to its being

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drunk warm. It is totally incapable of curing genuine syphilis; but by some it is thought useful in the sequelæ of that disease, and in syphiloid affections its good effects are generally allowed.

DECOCTUM SARSAPARILLÆ COMPOSITUM. *Dub.*  
*Compound Decoction of Sarsaparilla.*

Take of

Sarsaparilla, sliced and bruised, an ounce and a half;  
Shavings of guaiacum wood,  
Bark of the root of sassafras,  
Liquorice root, bruised, of each two drachms;  
Bark of mezereon root, one drachm;  
Boiling water, three pints.

Macerate in the water, with a gentle heat, for six hours, the sarsaparilla, guaiac, and sassafras; then boil it down to one half, adding, towards the end of the boiling, the liquorice and mezereon, and strain the liquor.

*Lond.*

Take of

Decoction of sarsaparilla, boiling hot, four pints;  
Sassafras root, sliced,  
Guaiac raspings,  
Liquorice root, bruised, of each an ounce;  
The bark of mezereon root, three drachms.

Boil for a quarter of an hour, and strain.

THIS compound decoction is said to be an improved mode of preparing the once highly celebrated Lisbon diet-drink, which, after its first introduction into Britain, was so long kept a secret.

It operates as a diaphoretic, and may be given with advantage in rheumatic cases, and in some of the sequelæ of syphilis. Three or four ounces may be taken four times a-day.

DECOCTUM ULMI. *Lond., Dub.*  
*Decoction of Elm.*

Take of

The fresh inner bark of elm, bruised, four ounces;  
Water, four pints.

Boil to two pints, and strain.

UNDER this form the elm bark has been highly celebrated for the cure of certain cutaneous eruptions; but undeservedly, according to the experience of the most judicious practitioners.

DECOCTUM VERATRI. *Lond.*  
*Decoction of White Hellebore.*

Take of

The root of white hellebore, in powder, one ounce ;  
Water, two pints ;  
Rectified spirit of wine, two fluidounces.

Boil the water with the root to one pint, and strain ; after the liquor is cold, add to it the spirit.

THIS decoction is only used externally as a wash in tinea capitis, lepra, psora, &c. When the skin is very tender and irritable, it should be diluted with an equal quantity of water.

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CHAP. XXVI.—MUCILAGES.

MUCILAGO AMYLI. *Ed. Dub.*  
*Mucilage of Starch.*

Take of

Starch, half an ounce ;  
Water, one pint.

Triturate the starch, gradually adding the water ; then boil them a little.

*Lond.*

Take of

Starch, three drachms ;  
Water, one pint.

Triturate the starch with the water, gradually added, and boil, till it become a mucilage.

THE mucilage thus formed is very useful in those cases where a glutinous substance is required ; it is often successfully employed as a glyster, in diarrhœas depending on acrimony in the intestines.

MUCILAGO ASTRAGALI TRAGACANTHÆ. *Ed.*  
*Mucilage of Gum Tragacanth.*

Take of

Gum tragacanth, in powder, one ounce ;  
Boiling water, eight ounces.

Macerate for twenty-four hours, then triturate carefully, that