

which period there will be found in the receiver two liquids, one floating on the surface of the other. The lighter of these will be perfectly fluid, and but slightly coloured, while that forming the denser stratum will be thick and syrupy, and of a light amber colour. More æther is to be passed through the galls as long as this separation of the percolated liquor takes place. The two fluids are now to be separated by means of a funnel. The heavier fluid, which contains the tannin, is to be repeatedly washed with sulphuric æther, and being put into a porcelain capsule, is to be submitted to heat in a stove or other suitable apparatus. The vapours of æther and of water will be disengaged; the substance contained in the capsule will be considerably augmented in volume, and a spongy residue will be left, having a brilliant, somewhat crystalline appearance. This is sometimes colourless, but more frequently of a light yellow colour.

The light fluid, which has been separated from the other, may be distilled for the recovery of the æther, of which it principally consists.

When, in the above process, the nutgalls are perfectly dry, and pure anhydrous æther is substituted for the æther of commerce, which contains about one-tenth its weight of water, no tannin is obtained; and when, on the other hand, dry tannin is put into æther which has been distilled from chloride of calcium, only a very small quantity is dissolved, the remainder falling down in the form of powder; although if the æther of commerce be used, a dense solution will be formed in a few minutes, which will separate to the bottom of the vessel in the same manner as the solution obtained from the galls by displacement.—*Pharmaceutical Journal*, No. 8.

LEGAL MEDICINE.—POISONING.

M. Orfila has published in the last number of the "*Journal de Chimie*" (Feb. 1842), some judicious observations on several points connected with poisoning. He first shows that, in certain cases of poisoning by substances capable of being detected by chemical tests, it is sometimes impossible to discover the slightest atom of the poisonous substance. In some cases, for example, the poison is absorbed, and we seek for it in the alimentary canal, in the matter rejected by the stomach, or in distant organs. But the evacuations may have been thrown away, and after a certain time the whole of the poison which has been absorbed may have been eliminated from the system by the secretions. This latter fact has been demonstrated by the experiments of M. Orfila on dogs poisoned with arsenic and antimony.

The second proposition of M. Orfila is, that in many cases of poisoning the medical jurist cannot succeed in extracting from the suspected matter more than an excessively minute quantity of the poison.

If the individual poisoned survives for four or five days, it may happen that almost all the poisonous substance has been eliminated from the body; again, a portion may be destroyed during the process of testing, and although toxicology has made such progress during the last few years, it must be confessed that many are still unable to apply the delicate processes which are required for the discovery of small portions of several poisonous substances. Hence it is absurd to require the actual production of any considerable quantity of poison as a proof, in all cases, that poisoning has taken place.

The third proposition of M. Orfila is expressed in the following terms:—"We are never entitled to affirm that poisoning has taken place, because a poisonous substance has been discovered in the suspected matter; this important element of proof must be corroborated by the symptoms exhibited during life, and frequently by the appearances after death."

The different propositions which we have above enumerated are developed by M. Orfila in a manner worthy of the attention of medical jurists.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANTIMONIAL AND ARSENICAL SPOTS.

In the late discussion at the Royal Academy of Medicine, on the subject of poisoning with arsenic, the characteristic distinctions between arsenical and antimonial spots were pointed out.

M. Bischoff has indicated an additional means of distinction based on the fact that a solution of chlorine (Labarraque's) dissolves the arsenical spots, but does not act on those of antimony. M. Chevallier has investigated this subject further in a series of experiments. He finds,

1st. That the arsenical spots procured by Marsh's apparatus disappear instantaneously when placed in contact with a solution of the chlorate of soda.

2nd. That the antimonial spots, derived from the same source, do not change colour when acted on by the same substance.

3rd. The mixed spots of arsenic and antimony obtained from Marsh's apparatus, when placed in contact with the chlorate of soda, lose a portion of their colour. This probably depends on the solution of the arsenic by the latter substance.—*Journal de Chimie*, Feb. 1842.

TREATMENT OF RABIES.

A man who had been bitten by a mad dog was seized with rabies twelve months afterwards. The symptoms were such as to leave no doubt whatever of the nature of the disease. The man was bled to thirty-two ounces, and took large doses of opium during twenty-four hours, without any other effect than being rendered stupid. The *veratrum cebadilla* was then administered in doses of twelve grains, at nine o'clock in the morning. The sense of heat and burning in the stomach was increased; sixteen ounces of blood were taken, by cupping, from behind the ears. At one, p.m., the patient complained of weakness, constriction, and burning heat about the throat, and difficulty of breathing; at three, p.m., he had another access of suffocation; at ten o'clock he was tranquil, and enjoyed some sleep for three hours, and was able to drink some fluid; he complained less of the epigastrium and throat. On the 28th (third day) he had not experienced any fresh access, and drank a pint of tisan. This favourable state continued for a few days longer, and the man completely recovered. The use of the *veratrum cebadilla*, in cases of rabies, was first pointed out by Capt. Hardy, in 1830, in the "*British Review*." The Mexicans employ it with great success against this terrible disease.—*Bul. Therap.*

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN LONDON.

List of Gentlemen admitted Members on Friday, February 18, 1842.

Charles Linton Alexander, Robert Newton Hayward, John Denny, Edmund Rice, Christopher Barker Smith, William Yeoman Sheppard, George Thompson Cooper, Lawrence White, George Robinson, Rowland Agar, Thomas Inman, Henry Bowers Bunnett.

CORRESPONDENTS.

In reply to numerous letters which we have received relative to back stamped numbers, we beg to state that our stamped edition of these numbers is out of print. Unstamped numbers may be obtained through any bookseller. The very great increase of the members of the Provincial Association, since the commencement of the present year, has completely exhausted our stock of stamped numbers.

Printed by SAMUEL TAYLOR, of 6, Chandos-street, in the Parish of St. Paul's, Covent-garden, at his Office, No. 6, Chandos-street, aforesaid; and published by JOHN CHURCHILL, at his residence, No. 16, Princes-street, in the Parish of St. Anne, Westminster.—Friday, February 25, 1842.