EXTRACTUM CIMICIFUGÆ FLUIDUM—(*Fluid Extract of Black Snakeroot.*)

Take of cimicifuga, in fine powder, sixteen troy ounces; stronger alcohol, a pint and a half; diluted alcohol, a sufficient quantity. Moisten the cimicifuga with four fluid ounces of the stronger alcohol; introduce it into a conical percolator; pour upon it the remainder of the stronger alcohol; and when the whole of this has entered the powder, gradually add diluted alcohol until a pint and a half of tincture has passed. Set this aside in a shallow vessel in a warm place until reduced by spontaneous evaporation to twelve fluid ounces. Continue the percolation with diluted alcohol until two pints more of tincture have been obtained; evaporate this by means of a water-bath, at a temperature not exceeding 150°, to four fluid ounces; then add the tincture first obtained, very gradually to avoid precipitation; allow the mixture to stand for twenty-four hours, and filter through paper.

* * The extreme minuteness of the directions given for the several preparations will be observed; the general principle being adopted throughout the work of offering no normal processes, but treating every substance according to its especial nature *per se*. The black snakeroot has come into very general use in this country, a common tincture being employed. It would appear that the American physicians have no confidence in such a preparation; moreover, they employ the term Cimicifuga for the plant, whereas here it is designated Actæa. There is no valid reason for this, and it is sure to cause mistakes and confusion.

EXTRACTUM VERATRI VIRIDIS FLUIDUM—(*Fluid Extract of American Hellebore.*)

Take of American hellebore, in fine powder, sixteen troy ounces; alcohol, a sufficient quantity. Moisten the hellebore with six fluid ounces of alcohol; introduce it into a cylindrical percolator, press it firmly, and gradually pour alcohol upon it until half a pint of tincture has passed. Set this aside, and continue the percolation until two pints and a half more of tincture have been obtained; evaporate this by means of a water-bath, at a temperature not exceeding 150°, to half a pint; mix it with the reserved tincture, and filter through paper.

Of this potent drug there is also a form for a simple tincture:

TINCTURA VERATRI VIRIDIS.

Take of American hellebore, in moderately fine powder, sixteen troy ounces; alcohol, a sufficient quantity. Moisten the powder with four fluid ounces of alcohol, press it firmly in a cylindrical percolator, and gradually pour alcohol upon it until two pints of tincture are obtained.

* * In the United States Pharmacopœia, alcohol means spirit of the sp. gr. 0.835; stronger alcohol, spirit of sp. gr. 0.817; diluted alcohol, alcohol mixed with an equal measure of water, sp. gr. 0.941.

TINCTURA SANGUINARIÆ.

Take of bloodroot, in moderately fine powder, four troy ounces; diluted alcohol, a sufficient quantity. Moisten the powder with a fluid ounce of diluted alcohol, pack it in a conical percolator, and gradually pour diluted alcohol upon it until two pints of tincture are obtained.

ACETUM SANGUINARIÆ.

Use the same proportions as above, substituting diluted acetic acid for the diluted alcohol.

Vinegar of bloodroot may also be prepared by macerating the powder (four troy ounces) with two pints of diluted acetic acid for seven days, expressing the liquid, and filtering through paper.

INFUSUM EUPATORII.

Take of thoroughwort (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), a troy ounce; boiling water, a pint. Macerate for two hours in a covered vessel, and strain.

SYRUPUS RUBI—(*Syrup of Blackberry root.*)

Take of blackberry-root, in moderately fine powder, eight troy ounces; syrup, a pint and a half; diluted alcohol, a sufficient quantity. Introduce the powder, previously moistened with four ounces of diluted alcohol, into a glass percolator, and pour diluted alcohol upon it until a pint and a half of tincture has passed. Evaporate this by means of a water-bath, at a temperature not exceeding 160°, to half a pint; then mix it while hot with the syrup, previously heated, and strain.

A very few notes will embrace everything besides the above in which the American Pharmacopœia differs from our own.

1. It retains the old formula *Sp. Ætheris Co.*, Hofmann's anodyne—a medicine which, in our experience, allays painful spasms of the heart beyond any other. 2. *Pulv. Aromaticus* consists of cinnamon and ginger, each two parts; cardamom seeds and nutmeg, each one part. This powder blended with an equal weight of clarified honey constitutes *Conf. Arom.* 3. *Tinct. Opii Camphorata* has two ounces of honey to two pints. So also has the *Tinct. Cardam. Co.* 4. The aid of carbonate of magnesia is employed in dissolving *tolu*, and the *oleoresin of ginger* in preparing the respective syrups. 5. There is a *Vinum Ergotæ*, made by treating eight ounces of ergot in powder, in a percolator, with sherry, to obtain two pints. 6. A watery extract of butternut (inner bark of the root); a favourite mild aperient, acting like rhubarb, but without its astringency.

Correspondence.

"Audi alteram partem."

CERTIFICATES OF LUNACY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—You will have seen that already the public is reaping the fruit of the late shameful trials against medical men. The profession shrinks, and naturally, from signing certificates of lunacy while the result of such signature is to be a trial at law, with all its delays, expenses, and annoyances. In the *Daily Telegraph* of the 5th inst. we read that Mr. Pearce, accompanied by his two sisters, applied to Mr. Selfe, the magistrate, for a warrant for Mr. Sidney Pearce's apprehension, to restrain the said Sidney Pearce from committing further violence on himself and others. Two medical men had seen him, and there was no doubt that he was deranged; but in consequence of actions recently brought against medical gentlemen for the expression of their opinions in such matters, they were unwilling to give certificates, and the friends entreated the assistance of the magistrate to restrain Mr. Sydney Pearce from committing further violence.

Surely, if our efficiency in many spheres of usefulness is not to be completely crippled, it is time that some association was formed to guard us from the attacks of the viciously disposed while in the execution of our duties; for assuredly, if such protection be not shortly forthcoming, the position of a medical man who dares to think and act according to his best judgment will be rendered precarious and unsatisfactory in the extreme.

I am, Sir, yours &c.,

Warwick-street, Jan. 1864.

EDWARD ELLIS, M.D.

A CASE OF POISONING BY PRUSSIC ACID.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Whilst there have been recently two or three cases of fatal poisoning by prussic acid, the following may be worth recording, as unfortunately adding to their number.

On the 4th of November last, at about eleven o'clock A.M., I was called by the assistant of J. H. S—, a chemist of the town, to see his master, as he thought he had poisoned himself. I at once started off, and meeting my partner, Dr. Morris, we went in together. On entering the bedroom, we found the person lying on his right side, in bed, quite dead, having been so apparently three or four hours. He had his dressing-gown, *robe de nuit*, and socks on; the bed-clothes were drawn up to a level with his breast; his arms were folded across his body, with the hands shut; his mouth was partially open; eyes fully so, with the pupils dilated. There was no smell perceptible from his mouth; he had voided his urine. On a chest of drawers, about four feet from the foot of the bed, was found a bottle, labeled "Hydrocyanic Acid (Scheele)," and a tumbler, both quite empty.

The account given by the servant at the inquest was to the effect, that she went to call her master as usual at the breakfast hour, but receiving no answer, she told the assistant, who, after waiting some short time, told her to go up again and ask if he would have his breakfast in bed. She received no reply on again knocking, and feeling alarmed, called the assistant, who on trying the door and finding it fastened, got into the room by a back staircase, and on entering, found his master dead. The servant remarked that she had heard her master go into the shop at an early hour in the morning.