

stopped bottle, and in a cool, dark place. An elevated temperature will volatilize it if there be any opening for it to escape, and if not, there is produced deep discoloration. The prolonged action of sun-light has a similar effect. In either case the strength of the oil is diminished.

"It is more easily and readily given than an infusion of the grain; it has a much less disagreeable taste, and operates with greater rapidity. It has also the very desirable advantage of rarely producing sickness. The nauseating effects of the common infusion are frequently complained of; and, not seldom, have they been a means of its popular condemnation. But the oil is in a great measure free from this objection. I have never known it to produce sickness or vomiting and similar has been the experience of my medical friends."—*Edin. Med. and Surg. Journ.*, July, 1840.

19. *External Application of the Oil of Ergot.*—Mr. Wright has found this oil a valuable external application in cases of local rheumatism. He has tried it in three instances, and in all of them it has proved curative. The affected part should be well rubbed with it for a quarter of an hour, night and morning, until relief be obtained. It is one of the best remedies with which he is acquainted for the cure of toothache. He has repeatedly known it subdue the pain when kreasote has failed. But perhaps its greatest value, as an external application, is in the arresting of hæmorrhage. He has often wounded small arteries in dogs and rabbits, and subdued the bleeding completely with a drop of this oil. Hæmorrhage from the jugular and femoral veins has been similarly arrested. The troublesome bleeding which sometimes follows the extraction of a tooth, and leech-bites, it is equally efficient in stopping.

In a severe case of epistaxis, he arrested the hæmorrhage, by injecting up the nostrils equal parts of very dilute spirit and oil of ergot; and he has little doubt that in the severe cases of flooding which succeed delivery, the injection of this oil diffused through water into the uterus, would be productive of the happiest results.—*Ibid.*

20. *Solution of Bi-chloride of Mercury in Itching.*—Dr. PRUS states, that he has often succeeded in the treatment of prurigo, an affection often obstinate, in the old men under his care in Bicêtre, by means of lotions night and morning, over all the parts where the pruriginous papules exist, with a solution of bi-chloride of mercury, one drachm in half a pint of water.

MR. DUPARQUE employs with benefit the same solution in the pruritus of the internal surface of the labia pudendi, which occurs in some females in the decline of life, and which is often intolerable and difficult of removal.—*Journ. de Connaiss. Méd.*, May, 1840.

21. *Experiments on the Mechanism of Inflammation.*—Dr. ROBERT LATOUR, details in the *Revue Médicale*, for January, 1840, a number of experiments which seem to demonstrate, that cold-blooded animals are not susceptible of the inflammatory process; and that, consequently, the experiments of Wilson Philip, Thomson, Hastings, Kaltenbrunner, Gendrin, and others, made on these animals, with the view of demonstrating the nature of the inflammatory process, go for nothing. M. Latour has in vain endeavoured to excite inflammatory action in carps and frogs, by applying various irritant substances to the skin, to the abdominal cavity, and to the other tissues of the body; and eighteen experiments are given in detail in proof of his statement. The following is a short abstract of the results:—

Deep incisions were made through the skin and muscular fibre of carps and frogs, and the wounds afterwards stimulated by the application of various acrid agents; as ammonia, concentrated acids, &c., which, though they caused great pain, were not followed by any reaction, either local or general. A peg of wood remained three days in the muscular fibres of a carp; pins were left several days transfixing the limbs of frogs; a piece of wood was left for thirty-six hours in contact with the mesentery of a frog; a piece of potato was for a much longer

time within the abdominal cavity of another; and a seton was kept in the thigh of the same animal for more than a month; the skin of a carp was cauterised with sulphuric acid; a red-hot iron was applied to the thigh of a frog; and yet in not one of these numerous and oft-repeated experiments, could the least appearance of inflammatory action be traced to the irritated wound; there was neither redness, swelling, sanguineous injection, nor suppuration. Nay, more, in those experiments where the muscular fibre of the animal was exposed, the redness which came on immediately after the incision was made, disappeared, and the wound filled with a glutinous matter, which served as the basis of the cicatrix. These animals were not, however, insensible to pain, as they showed by their writhings how much they suffered from the operations.

These results being in direct opposition to those arrived at by other experimentalists, M. Latour endeavoured to find out the cause of the difference. As it was chiefly on the frog that former physiologists had experimented, and it was from the phenomena observed in it that they announced they had developed inflammatory action, he repeated their experiments, and succeeded in producing a sanguineous injection, very visible to the naked eye, on the upper and inner surface of the thigh of a frog, by pinching it with a pair of forceps previously dipped in ammonia. He remarked, however, that these parts became covered with a tolerably abundant viscous sanguinolent secretion, and that the animal was seized with convulsions, and expired. M. Latour then discovered that the blood had been coagulated by the action of the ammonia, after having parted with its fluid parts, in precisely the same manner as happens to the blood of the frog when acted on by ammonia out of the body; as soon as the two liquids come in contact they lose their fluidity, and become a homogeneous blackish mass, of a plastic nature, and not easily broken up.

M. Latour inferred from this, that the redness caused by the ammonia was not of an inflammatory nature, but that it was the effect of the decomposition of the blood, which, being deprived of its fluid portions by its affinity for the alkali, was consequently stopped in its circulation by its coagulating within the vessels.

When a frog was plunged in salt water the skin was reddened, and the animal killed. In this case the blood was also decomposed, became more fluid, and the colouring matter was precipitated, and it is to this circumstance that M. Latour attributes the increased redness of the skin. The same peculiar colour was produced by mixing the blood of the frog with a solution of sea-salt.

Similar results followed the application of a red-hot iron to the webbed foot of the frog when placed in the focus of a microscope. As the red-hot iron was brought nearer and nearer to the web, the blood became coagulated first in the smaller vessels and afterwards in those of a greater volume.

These facts throw doubts on all the conclusions which have been drawn from the observations of experimentalists, on the excited vascular actions of the cold-blooded animals. M. Latour is inclined to the belief, that inflammatory action can only exist in those classes of animals where the temperature of the body is constantly in an exalted condition,—in fact, in the warm-blooded animals alone. Many of his opinions are too fanciful, and rest on too insufficient data to be further noticed.—*Edinburgh Med. and Surg. Journ.*, July, 1840.

22. *On the Causes of Scrofulous Diseases.*—M. LUGOL proposed to himself the question whether scrofulous diseases ought to be regarded as the result of accidental external causes, or that of a hereditary predisposition? And the conclusions to which he has arrived are the following:—

The accidental causes do not necessarily produce scrofula, at least it is very doubtful whether they are alone sufficient to produce the disease. The production of scrofulous diseases, however, by hereditary descent, is the most common and the most clearly proved, and which we are enabled to trace in the great majority of instances.

The appearance of scrofula in one child is a sure sign of the whole of the rest of the family inheriting the scrofulous constitution, by virtue of which all the