

ignorance in appreciating their effects. It is even said that any medication whatever is indifferent with regard to the progress of the disease—a pitiful falsehood, that proves how entirely the part enacted by irritation has been misunderstood.

But enough of this attempt to do away with gastro-enteritis.—*Translated by Dr. Gulby for L. M. & S. Journ.*

## MATERIA MEDICA.

17. *Quassin*.—WINKLER has succeeded in obtaining the bitter principle of the *quassia amara* in its pure crystalline state. He prepares it by digesting 3 ounces of pulverised quassia wood in 2 lbs. spirit of wine of 80 per cent. evaporating the tincture in a water bath, dissolving the remainder in water, filtering the solution; he then evaporates it in the water bath to the consistence of a thick extract, and treats it with water and spirit of 80 per cent., with small portions of absolute alcohol as long as they take up a bitter taste. The spirituous tincture is then filtered, evaporated in a water bath, the dry residue treated with hot water, when a small quantity of dark brown matter remains. The filtered solution possesses a yellow-wine colour; it should be decolorized by animal charcoal, and evaporated at a gentle heat; the quassin separates in fine white prisms. From the watery extract no crystals can be obtained, but merely a yellow-deliquescent mass. Quassin is soluble in water, more so in spirit, very little in ether. By diluting the alcoholic solution the quassin is obtained in the form of a woody mass. The aqueous solution is precipitated white by tannin and corrosive sublimate.—*Records of General Science, June 1836—from Centralblatt, Jan. 1836.*

18. *Chinese Rhubarb*.—For the discovery of the true plant which supplies this drug, (usually called Indian), the Russian government have for several years offered a reward of 30,000 roubles. M. PARAVEY, among some Chinese works which he has examined at Paris, found two figures of the plant with violet and white flowers, shewing that the source of this medicine is not confined to the *Rheum palmatum* and *R. Undulatum*.—*Id., from L'Institut.*

19. *Rapid mode of preparing Mercurial Ointment*.—According to VAN MONS mercury can be rapidly killed by adding some drops of *Balsamum sulphuris terebinthinum*.—*Id., from Buchner's Reptorium.*

20. *Extract and Tincture of Rhubarb and Extract of Gentian*.—It is difficult to clarify the aqueous extract of rhubarb. GEISELER recommends digesting the entire root of the rhubarb with water, and setting it aside in a close vessel exposed to the action of the steam. The extractive parts dissolve completely, the solution becomes clear, and the root consists only of fibres. The specific gravity of the preparation thus obtained is 2.048, and a pound of *Rheum muscovit.* gives 8½ ounces of a soluble extract of the consistence of pills. In the same way he has prepared extract of gentian. Six pounds of *Rad. gentian.* gave four pounds of a dark-yellow soluble extract.—*Id., from Centralblatt, Feb. 1836.*

21. *Infusion of Rhubarb*.—The roots cut down are to be placed in the carbonate of potash, in the requisite quantity of cold distilled water. The vessel should then be introduced into a steam apparatus, and allowed to digest at the temperature of 189½°. It should then be filtered, and after the addition of cinnamon water, placed in a cool situation. This infusion contains very little starch, and will keep longer than when prepared with boiling water.—*Id.*

22. *On the Influence of Temperature upon the Developement of the Volatile Oil of Mustard*.—It has hitherto been supposed, that the volatile oil, on which the stimulating properties of the powdered mustard seed depend, was more abundantly developed by hot water than cold; and many treatises on Materia Medica, recommend, from the observations of Thibierge, (*Journ. de Pharm.* v. 447.) the powdered mustard to be mixed with boiling water for the preparation of sinapisms and pediluvæ, and to wait afterwards for the mixture to cool sufficiently for