

on the uneven surface of the whole cornea.

Mine, however, was not a case of this kind. The most minute examination after Dr. Brewster's most approved method, did not show any irregularity on the surface of the cornea. Nor did a pin-hole in a card—which might perhaps answer as well as the "*tubular spectacle frame, &c.*,"—render the vision one whit more distinct.

The known properties of the iodine in promoting absorption, presented themselves to my mind as offering the best means to diminish gradually the quantity of the aqueous humor, and to produce a corresponding alteration in the shape of the cornea. I directed the patient to rub the surface of the lids with a small portion of the ointment of iodine every night and morning.

The first application of the ointment generally vesicates. It did so in this case. My patient, however, courageously continued its employment, and in four days she had so far recovered her sight as to be able to walk alone from the Navy Yard to my dwelling, a distance of upwards of two miles. The convexity of the cornea I found much diminished, and its transparency in no way injured. She was in the highest spirits at so wonderful an improvement, and continued to attend with the greatest diligence to my directions. In less than three weeks, she was able to read and to sew, from which she had been debarred for many months. She was anxious to return to the country. I directed her to continue in the moderate use of the iodine.

From that period I never heard of her till April, 1830, when she

came into the city to procure another box of the ointment. Her vision had remained distinct, and for upwards of a year she had not used the iodine. She had lately taken a severe cold, and feared her old disease was returning. I detained her in the city till she had used a portion of the iodine, and till she was perfectly satisfied that the disease was absolutely under the control of the remedy.

Conical cornea is a rare disease. Many surgeons of great practice have never seen a case. I know of no remedy that has been so successfully used in the disease, as the iodine in the case related. Should a more extended trial prove its efficacy, I shall feel great pleasure in having thus communicated it to my professional brethren.

V.

NOTICE OF IRON FOUND IN THE POWDER OF CINCHONA BARK. BY CHARLES ELLIS.

From the Phil. Journ. of Pharmacy.

A CIRCUMSTANCE occurred with a highly respectable house in Baltimore, to which we are indebted for a knowledge of an accidental impurity in the powder of cinchona, which is believed to be of sufficient importance to interest the readers of the Journal.

An ounce of calisaya bark in powder was procured of them, and directed by the physician to be made into a decoction. The liquid when decanted was nearly the color of ink. A second ounce was obtained and infused in an earthen vessel, with precisely the same result. The conclusion was, either that the bark or the water contained iron; and to de-

termine to which of these causes to assign this change of color, and to ascertain whether the bark were really impure, these gentlemen submitted it to the following experiments, viz:—1. A small quantity of the powdered bark was examined by the aid of a microscope, and the whole surface found studded with small metallic specks, some black, some bright, giving it quite a lustre. 2. A quantity of the powder was boiled in a Florence flask with distilled water. The decoction was of a deep black color, taste similar to ink and entirely devoid of the sensible properties of a decoction of pure cinchona; suffered to stand, the supernatant liquor was of a greyish blue color, and the precipitate of a dark brown, approaching to black. 3. A quantity of the powder was exposed, in a shallow vessel, to a stream of water, so as to wash away the lighter particles, and the deposit left in the bottom of the vessel consisted of small black grains of a metallic lustre. The inferences drawn from these experiments were, that the powder contained a metallic substance which proved to be iron; and that the precipitate in the decoction was owing to the action of the components of cinchona upon the iron.

These results led to an examination of other parcels of powdered bark, and in upwards of twenty different samples examined by my friend John Farr, and a number by myself, there were none in which the magnet did not detect minute particles of iron; in some much fewer than in others.

In order to ascertain the amount of impurity in a given quantity of

bark, I washed carefully half an ounce of the same lot used in Baltimore, and obtained one grain of iron in a metallic state: there was perhaps from a fourth to half a grain lost in the operation. From one ounce of another parcel there was half a grain separated by the magnet.

It will be readily perceived, from the nature of this admixture, that it was entirely accidental, and fortunately not of a character calculated to do any injury.

Inquiry having been made of the powderer, it was ascertained that his machinery does not materially differ from that in general use; that the revolving stone is shod with iron, and passes over a cast-iron plate—a sufficient cause for the existence of minute particles of iron in the powder, particularly as in this instance the bark was not dusted, a process by which the impalpable powder is separated from the heavier and coarser particles.

Although it is not probable that the quantity of iron found in this cinchona would render it objectionable in many cases, still it is desirable at all times to have our remedies free from all foreign admixture—that the physician may know precisely what he is directing, and the patients may neither be alarmed nor disgusted with unexpected, and to them unaccountable dangers. From the well-known hardness of the French burr stones, we may readily conclude that bark might be ground by them without the fear of adulteration.

It may be observed, in passing, that barks, roots, &c., of nearly every kind, are more eligible for decoction or infusion when coarsely powdered, or bruised, as it is

technically called, than when reduced to an impalpable powder.

VI.

ON AROMATIC OR SPICED SYRUP OF RHUBARB. BY ELIAS DURAND.

DR. COXE, in the last edition (1830) of his American Dispensatory, has very judiciously observed that this syrup, prepared agreeably to the Pharmacopœia of the United States, possesses a defect which may be easily obviated, without changing the proportions of its ingredients. In fact, evaporating to one half an infusion of rhubarb and aromatic substances, is quite inconsistent with the present improvements in pharmaceutical manipulation; it is too well known that these articles lose, by ebullition, a great portion of their active properties.

This fault, as well as many others which have crept into that national work, has not escaped the attention of our practical pharmacutists. From the first time I had to compound the aromatic syrup of rhubarb, this defect struck me, and I amended the formula by the following, which undoubtedly affords a preparation very superior to the other, both in nicety and activity. I first prepare an alcoholic tincture with the rhubarb and the aromatic ingredients, and then form my syrup by the addition of a relative quantity of simple syrup.

Aromatic Tincture of Rhubarb.

R. Rhubarb of good quality, parts v.
Cloves and cinnamon, of each,
parts iv.

Nutmegs, part i.

Alcohol of 20 deg., parts lxiv.

Bruise the ingredients and macerate them for about a week.

Aromatic Syrup of Rhubarb.

R. Aromatic tincture of rhubarb,
part i.

Simple syrup of 35 deg., parts iii.

Mix well. This syrup marks 28 deg. on Baume's pèse syrup.—*Ib.*

VII.

WHETHER ANIMAL DECOMPOSITION IS
PRODUCTIVE OF FEVER?

*To the Editor of the Boston Med.
and Surg. Journal.*

SIR,—A correspondent has, in your Journal, noticed my Essay on Animal Malaria, in a manner that entitles him to my thanks, notwithstanding the opposition he frankly avows to my opinions. As my only wish is to arrive at the truth upon an important question, I am bound to feel as grateful for evidence that tends to refute my opinions, as for that which supports them, especially when offered in such a candid and agreeable manner.

Of the seventeen instances I have adduced of fever caused by animal decomposition, he examines only one. I have stated it thus:—"Dr. Rand, in his history of the yellow fever in Boston, relates the case of a person who was employed to remove some hides in a very putrid state, upon a point of land opposite Wheeler's wharf, and who sickened and died on the third day. This history of Dr. Rand describes the masses of animal matter in a putrid state on Forthill, Stoddard's wharf, &c., and the cases of the fever that originated from them. Three lads, apprentices to Mr. Marston the cooper, by repacking some of this beef, were seized with the fever and died. Now had the same number of persons been employed