

admitted indeed, that the numbers of mutilated persons of different ranks, in the streets of this metropolis, are so many proofs of recoveries after the operation; but we ought to reflect, that an equal number (perhaps at least) of those who are buried soon after amputation, are forgot. It is not with a little satisfaction therefore, that we consider our former zeal to recommend and enforce this most humane and necessary caution in all such cases of surgery, as have hitherto been too thoughtlessly deemed the subjects of mutilation; which it seems to us to be the absolute duty of the operators to repent of, and to reform, from reflecting, that more lenity, skill, and patience, are requisite to the preservation of one desperately injured limb, than to the Amputation of many: and surely a greater benefit is conferred in the former, which should justly intitle the preserver, whenever it is not inconvenient, to a greater munificence. To demonstrate that on this point we have been always consistent, we refer our medical and chirurgical Readers to Review, Vol. XXV, p. 10, 11, and Vol. XXVII, p. 100, 193, 194, 228 to 230.

An Essay on the Use and Effects of the Root of the Colchicum Autumnale, or Meadow Saffron. Shewing that it is a powerful Remedy, and sometimes cures the most obstinate Distempers, when other Medicines utterly fail. With a Figure of the Plant; and an Appendix concerning the Cicuta or Hemlock. By Anthony Storck, M. D. &c. &c. 8vo. 1s. Becket & De Hondt.

WE find this humane and very assiduous Physician engaged here, in farther perils of poisoning himself, for the chance of curing or relieving the sick, more effectually we must suppose, than any former simples or compositions had done: since this hazardous investigation of mere new ones, implies an insufficiency of all that had been hitherto experienced. The Root of the Meadow Saffron, which has been ranked by all physical writers amongst the strongest poisons, is the object of his latest researches. Upon applying the Root bruised, when full of sap, to the tip of his tongue for two minutes, it became, as his Translator not unaptly expresses it, first unwieldy, then rigid, and at last benumbed, continuing for six hours almost void of all sensation. Dr. S. applied no remedy to it; but the Saliva flowing copiously, the free exercise of the part returned; and its sensation at last (we are not told how long after) returned also. From an infusion of three grains of it in Austrian wine, he found no inconvenience, except a heat in the urinary passages

passages a few minutes after, which terminated in a large discharge of paler urine than usual. He bit the Root, after steeping it in strong vinegar several hours; and rubbed it against his tongue and the roof of his mouth, which affected him only with a slight sensation of heat and constriction. But upon taking almost half a grain in substance, after dinner, several violent symptoms (particularly a difficulty of urine) succeeded, and confined Dr. S. severely for three days, he not fully recovering until the fourth.

Two drachms of the Root being given to a middle-sized dog, he expired in less than twenty-four hours in great misery and violent convulsions, notwithstanding he had vomited up the sixteen morsels into which it was divided, an hour and a half after taking it. In the space of 13 hours he vomited fifty-six times, and evacuated forty times by stool and urine. His stomach was found gangrened in several parts, and every where inflamed: there was such a violent contraction of all the guts, as would scarcely admit of a small probe; and their membranes [that is such of them as were not gangrened] were so hard, and nearly callous, that it was difficult to cut them with scissars. Nevertheless, our Author's confidence in the correcting power of acids, induced him to make a vinegar of it, by infusing one ounce sliced in a pint, for forty-eight hours. This vinegar he afterwards further mitigated into an oxymel, by the addition of two pounds of honey: and finding no bad effect from tasting, nor even from swallowing a little of it, he took one drachm-weight of it in a cup of tea; whence in two hours, on a very sudden and pressing call, he discharged a large quantity of pale, and almost inodorous urine; but then eat, and rested well at night. He repeated the same quantity on seven different days (making but two intervals, of one day each) experiencing just the same effects, and on the eighth, found himself in very good health. This disposed him to think it might be useful in dropsies.

Of course, the first case in which Dr. S. gave it was hydropical. The patient had been greatly relieved by rhubarb, and other medicines: but his legs still continuing oedematous, the Dr. gave him, in the space of five days, twelve drachms of the oxymel; giving but two at twice the first day, three on the third, as many on the fourth, and four on the fifth, but never exceeding one drachm at once. At the end of nine days all his swellings disappeared; he was purged with a drachm of rhubarb, and was cured: so that in this case this oxymel was not quite solely relied on.

The second Patient, an old woman, afflicted several months
with

with a violent cough, and an expectoration of green foetid Pus, with her face violently puffed up; after taking many other medicines to no purpose, took about thirty drachms of this oxymel in nine or ten days, which dispersed all her swellings, but did not allay her nightly fever. It does not certainly appear how long this medicine was continued, but she died in the fifth week, and we are told, her cure had never been expected. Such desperate cases, however, seem the most proper for hazarding medicines of this class and character. The third case was just such another in such a subject: she is said to have been greatly relieved the second day after taking this oxymel of Colchicum; all her swellings decreased on the third; her pulse, and even her appetite, was improved; but she died on the fifteenth, and the Dr. affirms her distemper was abated, and her life lengthened [tho' surely very little] by the Meadow Saffron. This is what, he says, the physician must be satisfied with, when the force of the distemper is superior to their art and medicines: and this is certain to be the case at last, in spite of the highest remedies and rankest poisons. It should seem however to be Dr. Storck's opinion here, that this woman died only for want of living long enough to be cured by the Colchicum; especially as we find in the next history, a woman of sixty-two years, cured of an Ascites and Anasarca, of four months standing, with a great difficulty of breathing, and a violent cough. The whole quantity of this oxymel which she took, is not clearly ascertained; but on the fourth day she took eight drachms, in four doses, which are affirmed to have conquered her distemper. The fifth hydropical Patient seems to have been cured in less than five weeks; as all his swellings are said to be dispelled, and his appetite and sleep to have returned. The quantity given is uncertain; but on the fifth day he took two drachms four times, and is then said to have discharged daily more than twelve pints of urine. The sixth Patient was phthical, and had also a dropsy; this last disease was cured, tho' it seems to very little purpose, as she died in two months, to which term he supposes the oxymel to have prolonged her life. The right lobe of the lungs was *converted*, we are told, into Pus, and many black spots were discovered upon the Mediastinum.

A man of 50 years old had taken many medicines for an Ascites, a dropsy of the belly, to no purpose. Four drachms of this oxymel in a day had scarce any effect; but eight made him discharge so much urine, that in eleven days no symptoms of the dropsy remained. A woman of thirty years was cured of a dropsy, which arose on the cure of a tertian ague, of six months standing, and in two weeks, when she was discharged

well from the hospital, where no other medicine had relieved her. The ninth case was a very severe complication of a jaundice and dropsy, attended with large discharges of blood from the mouth and the fundament. We are told, the Meadow Saffron performed wonders in this case, the subject of which was sent as incurable to the Pazmarian hospital at Vienna. It is clear, however, she was not fully cured, tho' Dr. S. terms it a cure, at the end of the case; as, after mentioning the return of her appetite and strength, he immediately adds—These circumstances made us *hope*, that she would, *in time*, attain to perfect health. The tenth case is a very uncommon one, being a swelling of the belly, thighs and legs, which were as hard as wood, and prevented the Patient from either sitting, standing, or bending her body. By the use of this oxymel, she discharged so vast a quantity of urine, that in a fortnight her body was reduced to its natural size and softness. She is now out of bed, moves her feet, and walks; but the cure was incomplete at the publication of the original Latin Treatise.

This Medicine failed to remove a strangury, occasioned by injecting a preparation of lead [its salt probably] to stop a venereal running. But, contrary to its failure in some of the former cases, it abated the Patient's cough, and removed his difficulty of breathing. This fact, or event, may be credited, on our Author's veracity, without our being certain, that this oxymel occasioned it. The 12th case is an incomplete cure of a cough, but an entire removal of a great and general oedematous swelling, the Patient gaining strength when the original was published. The thirteenth and last case, seems to have been an extraordinary cure of a woman, at the age of 90, who was brought in a kind of insensible apoplectic state to the hospital, with a rattling in her throat, a weak intermitting pulse, and a great noise when she coughed, as though it was occasioned by some moveable matter in her breast. Her whole body was monstrously swelled; and her belly, being quite full of water, was very protuberant and tense. She recovered entirely in three weeks; all her swellings subsided; her strength was pretty well recovered; her cough was quite gone, and she eat and slept well. All this was effected solely by this oxymel; and baron Van Swieten is mentioned as a witness of this most extraordinary cure.

The conclusion of this little tract affirms, that several hydropic patients, now in the hospital, all experience the good effects of this remedy; and some of them are already almost cured by it. It draws a few corollaries from the several cases, and more particularly ascertains the dose and manner of giving it; Dr. S. averring,

averring, that he never knew any disadvantage ensue from the exhibition of it; and engaging, that he will certainly declare it, whenever any does: There is a just and pretty good engraving of this Plant and it's Root prefixed to the title-page; and an exact botanical description of it occurs p. 5, of this translation. As it is probably a native here, as well as in Germany, we have been the more particular in relating its effects, which may possibly dispose curious practitioners to repeat some trials of it, in desperate hydropic cases, where the most potent, tho' safe, hydragogues have failed. This will be essayed on a much more benign principle, than what instigates the vindictive Juno to say—*Flectere si nequeo superos, acheronta moveo.*

The Appendix very briefly relates several cases, lately occurring in Dr. S's private practice, which have been cured by his extract of Hemlock, citing many accounts to the same effect from his correspondents; and also informs us, that an account of the cures performed by it in their hospital will soon be published. It adds, that many experiments, made by different physicians, do now confirm what he had said in his former essay on the virtues of the Thorn-apple, Henbane, and Wolfsbane, the last of which, he says, merits the greatest commendation. And indeed we heartily wish, that some benevolent practitioners would take the pains, for the expence is trifling, to try the extracts of these plants, and of the Wolfsbane particularly; as possibly some of them might succeed more generally with us than the Hemlock has hitherto done. It is incontestable however, that many eminent physicians on the continent, and particularly the learned Dr. Tissot, have since given a very favourable opinion of the Cicuta, in scirrhus and cancerous cases.

A Dissertation on the Oleum Palmæ Christi, sive Oleum Ricini, commonly called the Castor Oil; in which its History is illustrated, its Properties and Virtues explained, and its Uses in bilious, calculous, and other Disorders, recommended. By Peter Canvane, M. D. (of Bath) and Member of the College of Physicians in London. 8vo. 1s. 6d. Vaillant, &c.

A Just, and not inelegant engraving of this curious plant, which may be seen in most good collections of Exotics, is prefixed to the title-page of this performance, and renders that botanical description it commences with, less necessary. Dr. Canvane observes, that the seeds, which have been called Ricinus, from their strong resemblance to a full-swoln Tick, were used instead of the *Grana Knidia* by Hippocrates; and