MELLITA.

PREPARATIONS OF HONEY.

Remarks. — *Honey* is a peculiar secretion by the nectariferous glands of flowers, from which it is extracted by bees. It is carried into the "crop," which is a dilated portion of the œsophagus; but does not appear to pass so far as the stomach, for it has never been found there. When disgorged by the bees, it forms common honey.

Varieties. — *Virgin* honey is the first crop produced by a swarm of bees, and is considered to be the best. *Narbonne* honey is common honey which has derived a peculiar flavour from the flowers upon which the bees feed. Rosemary is sometimes added to honey to give it this flavour. *Comb* honey is honey still contained in the cell; and *run* honey is obtained by allowing it to drop or run from the everted comb.

Composition. — Chiefly two kinds of sugar; one of which is crystallisable, and the other is not. When fermented, it yields a liquor termed "mead." It is sometimes adulterated with starch or flour, which may be discovered by boiling the honey in water, and when cold, adding iodine. If either is present, a blue colour will be produced, which is not the case when the honey is pure. It has lately been adulterated with sugar obtained from starch. If pure honey is boiled with the blue hydrated oxide of copper, precipitated by *liq. potassæ*, and rendered *slightly* alkaline, the oxide does not change its colour. If starch sugar is present, even in small proportion, the blue oxide is converted into the red dinoxide, which imparts a reddish-brown colour to the sediment, when the mixture is at rest. Several minutes boiling is requisite to produce the full effect (*Ure's modification of Trommer's test*).

Properties. — *Emollient; demulcent; nutritious;* and *laxative.* It is liable to cause griping, if used in large quantities.

Uses. — Honey is employed as an emollient, as well as for its flavour, in *gargles;* and is a useful *vehicle* for the *application* of more powerful remedies to the *mouth* and *throats of children.* Mixed with barley water and lemon juice, it forms a favourite drink for allaying tickling coughs. It is sometimes spread upon boils to promote their suppuration.

MEL DEPURATUM (DESPUMATUM, *D.*).

Clarified (Despumated) Honey.

Melt the honey in a water-bath, and strain it, while hot, through flannel.

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Remarks. — By this process, any wax accidentally remaining, or sand, or other impurities, are removed.

Test. — If it is dissolved in water at a heat of about 170°, and when cold, mixed with iodide of potassium and dilute sulphuric acid, it does not exhibit any blue colour.

MEL BORACIS, *L. D. E.*

Honey of Borax.

Take of Borax, powdered, a drachm.
Honey (despumated), an ounce.
Mix (by trituration, *D.*).

Medicinal properties and uses. — *Detergent* and *cooling* in aphthous affections of the tongue and fauces.

BORAX, Sodæ Biboras (Biborate of Soda).

Synonyme. Sub-borate of Soda.

Description. — This salt is in irregular translucent masses, which, if regularly crystallised, would be oblique rhombic prisms. They are colourless, readily soluble in hot or cold water, fuse in their own water of crystallisation, when heated, and when dissolved in spirit, with the addition of a little sulphuric acid, and set on fire, impart a peculiar green colour to the flame. Borax effloresces very slowly and slightly in the air. The aqueous solution changes turmeric paper brown, like an alkali. It is, however, considered to be really an acid salt, and to consist of

1 eq. of soda; 2 eqs. of boracic acid; and 10 eqs. of water;
$NaO, 2\,BO^3, 10\,HO$.

There is, however, a difference of opinion about the equivalent of boron, which occasions a difference in the statements as to the constitution of borax.

Medicinal properties and uses. — The taste of borax is saline, cooling, and slightly alkaline. When applied in solution to open sores, it causes smarting. When swallowed in a large dose, it occasions vomiting, and is thought also to cause contraction of the uterus, and expulsion of the fœtus. It is seldom used internally, but is recommended by Dr. Copland as an addition to secale, for exciting the failing action of the uterus.* As he always gives it in conjunction with secale, it is not easy to judge how much of the effect is due to it, and how much to that drug. Mr. Audland, of Abbey Tintern, tells me that he has observed better effects in amenorrhœa, from the aloes and myrrh pill combined with three grain doses of borax than from the pill alone.

* Dict. of Pract. Med. p. 11. and 115.

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It is, however, chiefly employed, topically, in the form of lotion or combined with honey, for the cure of *thrush* in *children*, to *check excessive mercurial salivation*, and to cure some cutaneous diseases, as *pityriasis* and *ringworm*. It is sometimes employed in the form of ointment to *piles*.

Dose and *administration.* — To promote uterine contractions, gr. x to gr. xxx. As an emmenagogue, gr. viii, three or four times daily. A solution of ℥j to f℥v of water, with a little honey, is a good gargle in the early stages of salivation; and ℥j in f℥ij of vinegar has often cured obstinate ringworm (*Abercrombie* and *Christison*).

MEL ROSÆ, *L.E.*

Honey of Rose.

Take of Red rose (petals) dried, four ounces.
Water, boiling, twenty-four ounces (two pints and a half, *E.*).
Honey (despumated), five pounds.

Macerate the rose petals, first pulled in pieces, in sixteen fluid ounces of the water for two hours; then press them gently with the hand, and strain. Macerate again, for a short time, what is left in the remainder of the water, and pour off the liquid. To this add half the first infusion, and set half aside. Then add the mixed liquors to the honey, and evaporate in a water-bath, so that the liquid which was set aside, being mixed, it may be of a proper thickness.

Medicinal uses. — An agreeable addition to detergent and astringent gargles, &c.

OXYMEL, *L.D.*

Oxymel.

Synonyme. Oxymel Simplex.

Take of Honey (despumated), five (one, *D*). pounds.
Acetic acid (of commerce, *D.*), seven (three, *D.*), fluid ounces.
Distilled Water, eight fluid ounces.

Mix the acid, added to the water, with the honey made hot.

Medicinal properties and uses. — *Detergent;* principally used as the basis of gargles and expectorant remedies. Dissolved in barley

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water, it forms a pleasant cooling drink in fevers and inflammatory affections; but it is liable to cause griping in some persons.

Dose. — f℥j to f℥ij.

OXYMEL SCILLÆ, *L.*

Oxymel of Squill.

Take of Honey (despumated), five pounds.
Vinegar of squill, two pints and a half.

Boil down the vinegar, with a slow fire, to twelve fluid ounces, and mix it with the honey made hot.

SQUILL, Scilla Maritima (Hexandria Monogynia; Liliaceæ.)

Description. — The fresh bulb is large and varies in weight from half a pound to four pounds; but is cut into slices, previous to being dried. These are white, or pale yellowish-white, thin, and twisted. When perfectly dry, they are brittle, but they quickly absorb moisture from the air, and become soft and tough. When dry they can be easily powdered, but unless the powder is kept in very well stopped bottles, it soon becomes moist, and forms a hard mass. Before weighing squill for making any of the preparations, the slices ought to be freshly dried.

Composition. — *Scillitina*, which is a bitter crystallisable principle; and a variety of apparently unimportant constituents. It yields its active principles to water, acetic acid, and proof spirit. It contains gum, which renders the acetum scillæ liable to spoil.

Medicinal properties. — *Diuretic; expectorant; emetic;* and *purgative.* When taken even in small doses, it frequently causes nausea, and some degree of purging. It acts *more beneficially* in *anasarca* than in ascites, or other local dropsy. It is considered *objectionable* in dropsy dependent upon *diseased kidney*, or where *inflammation* is present. Its *diuretic effects are much increased by combination with mercury*, or with digitalis. It is often considered to be a *stimulant* expectorant, and unsuited to the early stages of bronchitis or catarrh; but Christison affirms this to be quite a mistake. It is not, indeed, easy to see in what way a medicine which reduces the pulse, and very commonly causes nausea, if not vomiting, is a stimulant. It increases the secretion from the bronchial mucous membrane, but its expectorant properties are rather uncertain. As an emetic, its operation is so uncertain and violent, that it is seldom used; but Thomson says, that when it acts gently, it is the best emetic that can be employed in hooping cough. It is never employed as a purgative. It is *not* so well adapted as the more stimulating balsams to the *chronic bronchitis* of old persons or those whose *strength* is *much depressed.*

Characteristics. — As a *diuretic*, squill is nauseant, but very efficient. As an *expectorant*, it is rather uncertain, and depresses

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the pulse; but its purgative properties allow it to be combined with opium, without causing constipation. As an *emetic*, it is very uncertain; sometimes acting violently; at other times, not acting at all. As a *cathartic*, it is very uncertain and violent; and, therefore, is not used with this intention.

Medicinal uses. — In *anasarca*, especially in leucophlegmatic habits, or dependent upon heart disease or bronchitis (combined with mercury or digitalis). In *chronic bronchitis* and common coughs (combined with opium or compound tincture of camphor). In *hooping cough*, as an emetic, and sometimes also in *croup*.

Dose and administration. — In dropsy, the solid squill is to be preferred. Dose, gr. ij, night and morning, or oftener, in combination, as above mentioned, and increased till some degree of nausea is produced, or until the dose is raised to gr. iij or gr. iv.

The oxymel is a very common and convenient form, and is often combined with opium, or compound tincture of camphor. It is chiefly used as an expectorant, and not as a diuretic.

When troublesome nausea, vomiting, or purging is caused by squill, opium is the best remedy.

Dose of oxymel scillæ, f℥ss to f℥j.

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