

## Miscellaneous.

---

Dr. Gaudichard, in a recent number of the *Répertoire de pharmacie*, comments on the knowledge of the ancients as regards opotherapy and its various ways of utilization. Thus in the early centuries we find that the products derived from the animal kingdom were in the shape of powders. This primitive notion was necessitated on account of the rudimentary states of all tools at this epoch. Preference was controlled by circumstances. In the fifth century, Sextus Placitus Papyriensis advocated the use of the animal vulva, desiccated and pulverized. In the sixteenth century various parts of animals were first roasted, then burnt, after which pulverization was easily effected. At this period thought was also given to the conservation of organic products by sprinkling them with yellow sandalwood, or surrounding them with wormwood. The animal powders were even combined with other remedies. Baudon, in his pharmacopeia, writes as follows: "The electuary of lungs is prepared by mixing sugar with equal parts of the lung of the fox, liquorice juice, maidenhair, fennel- and anise-seeds." And in the seventeenth century, Van Helmont placed desiccated blood above all other preparations. Organic extracts, though not called by this name, were utilized in ancient times. In the beginning of the Christian era (about 65 A.D.) Dioscorides, of Anazarba, a Greek physician, who had gained renown by a treatise on materia medica, wrote to this effect: "The liver of the hedgehog, dried in the sun in a pot exposed to the full rays of sunshine, taken with honey, benefits and cures diseases of the kidneys and dropsy." A bouillon prepared after a fox's lung had been desiccated was considered an excellent draught in all cases of difficult breathing. Pliny prescribed hogs' testicles, macerated in milk, in epilepsy. In the centuries which followed, macerated testicles did not lack in popularity. Joseph du Chesne's favorite prescription as an aid to conception was rams' testicles soaked in wine and then dried. Afterwards they were pounded, macerated and boiled over a slow fire in two litres of malmsey, a wine of Napoli di Malvasia. Here is surely an extract that can well hold its own among all extracts!

Syrups containing extracts from animal organs were not ignored by the ancients. The archives devoted to opotherapy abound with enough instances to show that these preparations were held in high esteem in the earliest centuries. Dioscorides, in his "*Materia Medica*," recommends for a cough the daily use of