

## TINCTURE OF HYOSCYAMUS.\*

BY M. DONOVAN.

Some years since I published, through the medium of the *Medical Press*, an account of the trials made on myself and others, with a view to discover what doses of tincture of hyoscyamus should be given in order to produce its sedative effects. The experiment was made on several persons, beginning with a drachm dose, increasing it to six drachms, and in my own case to one ounce, of the tincture of the Dublin Pharmacopœia. In no case were any effects observed beyond dryness of the throat and fauces. The experiments were made with tinctures prepared from the dry leaves of garden-grown plants, from wild plants collected in a mountainous district of North Wales, and from the leaves dried and undried.

I was under the impression that some of the plants employed in making the tinctures on which I experimented were in the second year of their growth, but the trials now to be described have convinced me that none of them could have been more than one year old. At that time I was not acquainted with the means which I have since discovered of testing the age of the plant.

I satisfied myself by these experiments that tincture of hyoscyamus prepared, as I believe it generally is in this country, from leaves of one year's growth, is all but powerless. I was strengthened in this opinion by finding that M. Hertz has given upwards of fifteen grains of the extract, most probably made from the plant in its first year, without any sensible effect.

Mr. Houlton had long before affirmed the inertness of the one-year old plant, and the activity of that of two years old.

In order to come to some determination on this subject I adopted means of procuring a tincture certainly made from the latter, and from trials with it soon convinced myself that it was an article of very different value from the tincture of the one year old plant, and that all my former experiments must have been made with the latter, although I was led to believe that, in some of them, the plant of two years' growth had been used.

My first trial was on myself. I took one drachm, and for an hour or two felt no effect beyond dryness of the mouth. On a subsequent occasion I took two drachms, and in two hours had proof that I had taken a sufficiency. My sensations were indescribable: one was a feeling of uncertainty of my steps in walking, although they were really quite steady, and a slight sensation of giddiness. This trial convinced me that I had taken as full a dose as prudence would permit. To a lady who suffered from headache I gave, at her own request, one drachm of this tincture. In about two hours she

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