

# THE USE OF NUT OIL IN PHARMACY, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE PREPARATION OF UNGUENTUM HYDRARGYRI NITRATIS.\*

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In a brief review of former formulæ for the preparation of citrine ointment, the author calls attention to the large increase which has taken place in the relative proportion of the nitric acid to the mercury. The proportions indicated by Baume, in 1785, were nitric acid 128 parts, mercury 96 parts, lard 1000 parts. The mercury has been gradually increased until, in the Codex for 1866, where equal parts (500) of olive oil and lard are ordered, the nitric acid is 100 parts, and the mercury 50. Thus the proportions which originally were 4 of nitric acid (sp. gr. 1.28) and mercury 3, have become nitric acid (sp. gr. 1.42) 2, and mercury 1.† Without blaming the progressive diminution of the metal, since even with this reduction the medicament still remains very powerful, the author objects to the great excess of acid. Suggestions have been made to remove the excess of acid by washing the ointment with a large quantity of water, and then adding an equal weight of almond oil, but have been rejected in consequence of the length and difficulty of the operation, and it being far from certain that the whole of the acid excess would be thus removed.

The author having had occasion to make a comparative investigation of pure olive oil and the oil of the ground nut (*Arachis hypogæa*), found that the arachis oil possesses a great aptitude for the nitric solidification. Hence he conceived the idea of suppressing entirely the lard in the preparation of nitrate of mercury ointment. The product so obtained seemed to present such marked advantages as to induce him to make known the process :

Mercury .....	5 parts.
Nitric Acid (sp. gr. 1.42) .....	10 "
Nut Oil .....	100 "

Dissolve without heat the mercury in the acid; pour the mercurial solution into the oil, agitating from time to time with a glass or earthenware spatula. After two or three hours, according to the quantity operated upon, and at a temperature of about 20° C., the mixture begins to take a milky consistence, which lasts for about an hour, then thickens to that of a soft butter. This latter stage lasts

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† In the B. P., where more olive oil is used, the proportions are, nitric acid 3, mercury 1.