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August, 1868. 4-ly

thirds. Most of the analyses of opium enumerate, in order to explain its composition, several very doubtful bodies besides the above named principles. Among these, extractive, mucilaginous, and coloring matters occupy the first place. By successively treating with various liquids small quantities of opium, which alone admit of absolute exhaustion, we may separate its constituents into several portions. For the following assays I took a good Turkish opium containing 10 per cent. of morphia, which I finely powdered and entirely deprived of water. The first agent to which it was submitted was benzol. After the action of this liquid the powder was dried, without removing it from the funnel, weighed and then exhausted in the same filter with absolute alcohol. When it yielded nothing more to alcohol, the powder was dried and weighed again as above, and then exhausted with cold and hot water, with acetic acid, and with ammonia. Lastly, the residue was examined microscopically. It consisted of fragments of the poppy capsule, which now had become very obvious.

The benzol solution on evaporation yielded the narcotine and caoutchouc, which may be separated by acetic acid. Fatty matters occur, but only in slight traces.

Alcohol takes up the largest bulk; nearly all the bodies enumerated at the outset as peculiar to opium* are contained in the alcoholic tincture, and besides them sugar, a very small quantity of resin, and coloring matters. This portion of opium, representing the largest part of it, appears certainly to deserve the most attentive examination. I am sorry to state that I have not yet succeeded in isolating from it any new principle in a state of sufficient purity. The coloring matter, for instance, is extremely alterable.

Water dissolves chiefly mucilage from powdered opium, which has been previously exhausted by benzol and alcohol. The mucilage is precipitated by neutral acetate of lead, but not by silicate of soda; I have not found in opium any gum analogous to gum arabic. This fact, if confirmed by the examination of large quantities of good commercial opium, would enable one to say that any opium containing gum must necessarily be adulterated.

After the action of the water, acetic acid removes some salts and a little coloring matter, all in small proportion.

Finally, ammonia acts very manifestly upon the residue of the preceding operations. The powder swells and yields a brown liquid, which being viscid, cannot easily be filtered. On the addition of an acid, of alcohol or even of chloride of sodium, a thick jelly at once separates. The pectic acid, thus obtained, has not yet been found by other observers, as far as I can see, though I think that it must henceforth be considered as one of the regular constituents of opium. I met with it in several sorts of the drug which happened to be at my disposal and likewise in a good standard opium from Asia Minor, for which I am indebted to Mr. E. Merck, of Darmstadt, who furnished me with the residues of the drug, which had been previously exhausted by hot water and by hydrochloric acid. It would be interesting to examine in this respect the various Indian opiums, which I presume to be of a somewhat different composition. From all the various reports on

* Narcotine only excepted, as it has been met with in aconite tubers by Messrs. Smith.

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