

the temporary and the permanent function of the gland, viz., that in both, *waste of tissue* is at a *minimum*. In the younger animal, muscular activity, which mainly contributes to this waste, has not commenced; in the hibernating animal it is suspended. Now the waste of tissue being at a minimum, the pabulum for the support of the respiratory process must be supplied from some other source."

This source Mr. Simon declares to be the nutritive matter laid up in the central cavity of the thymus as in a reservoir, and he therefore assumes the office of that gland to be that of sequestering nutritive matter, whereby it becomes "a sinking fund of nourishment in the service of respiration."—*Ranking's Digest*.

## SURGERY.

### ON THE USE OF THE PIPER ANGUSTIFOLIUM (MATICO) IN CERTAIN HÆMORRHOIDAL AFFECTIONS.

By Dr. O'FERRALL.

There is a form of disease, engaging the verge of the anus, and a portion of the mucous membrane above it, in which I have found this vegetable astringent to produce unequivocal and rapid amendment. As the matico will, probably, be much employed, and as it may occasionally disappoint our expectations, we should endeavour to observe and define the cases, to which its properties bear a therapeutic relation.

The condition, to which I allude, presents some characters in common with the "vascular tumour of the rectum," in which the nitric acid recommended by the late lamented Dr. Houston, is so often useful. But it does not, like the vascular tumour, require the nitric acid,—it is not, like the inflamed varix, much influenced by leeching—and the operation for fissure, is unnecessary for its cure.

It appears to be the simple result of chronic inflammation of the integument, at the verge of the anus, and of a portion of the mucous membrane above it, the latter assuming the appearance of that hypertrophy, which is usually termed the villous state.

When examined externally, the verge of the anus presents a considerable swelling, of a purple colour, and divided into separate tumours or prominences, by fissures or folds of the skin. When these tumours are separated, (which gives exquisite pain if hastily done) the bottom of the clefts is exposed, and the cuticle is there found to be abraded, and the surface covered with a sero-purulent discharge. These fissures are, sometimes deep, and penetrate through the cutis to the cellular tissue beneath. The consistence of the swellings is firmer than that of the true hæmorrhoid in the recent state, but wearing its purple tint. They cannot be emptied by pressure. They are, on the other hand, less firm than the hæmorrhoid in the state of chronic consolidation. The cellular tissue of the part appears to be in a state of œdema, and covered by a thickened skin. Where the parts are forced or drawn out, the mucous membrane is found to be tumid, vascular, and apparently deprived of its epithelium; it is easily made to bleed.

This condition of the mucous membrane, does not extend very far upwards, and its prominence is little, compared with that of the vascular tumour of the rectum. It is not protruded at stool, and therefore, perhaps, yields little blood, compared with what oozes from the former when occasionally strangulated by the sphincter.

These are the anatomical characters of the condition, in which the matico will be found to succeed. It appears to consist of chronic inflammation of the inner and external integument and cellular tissue, the prominence of the skin throwing it into folds, the clefts of which are apt to ulcerate,

and, when stretched during defecation, may occasion pain, which resembles, in some respects, that of fissure. I have not seen any trace of true varix, internally or externally, in this affection. The purple tint appeared to depend on congestion of the extreme venous radicles only.

This complaint begins gradually, and is chronic in its formation, but at length becomes so painful, that the erect or sitting posture, can scarcely be borne. There is pain in defecation, which persists for a short time only afterwards. There is occasional, but not constant bleeding, and only in trifling quantities, but there is constant painful uneasiness, with sense of weight, increased by walking, and at length rendering the erect position almost intolerable.

I have seen this state, in several persons, at, or beyond, the middle periods of life. Both sexes are liable to it. It is called "piles," but leeching and cold applications produce only temporary benefit, and warm applications have been found to increase the morbid sensibility of the parts.

The mode of employing the matico, in this affection, is in the form of ointment, or lotion. Dr. Young of Winslow recommends the ointment in "external hæmorrhoids." In the affection here described, the decoction appeared to me to succeed best. A dossil of lint, soaked in a decoction, made by boiling two drachms of the leaves in six ounces of water, is to be introduced within the anus three times daily; another piece of lint, in form of a compress, similarly charged, is laid outside, and covered by oiled silk: the whole is supported by a T bandage.

If the resemblance to vascular tumour should induce the application of nitric acid in this affection, it will be found to have done too much. The tumour of the mucous membrane, is too slight to bear the escharotic, and the patient will be worse than before. It may, therefore, be found practically useful, to describe a state of parts in which the matico is really an innocuous and adequate remedy.

In the following case, which requires no subsequent comment, one of the instances of its efficacy is afforded:—*Chronic Painful Swelling of the lower extremities of the Rectum—Superficial Fissure—Treatment by Matico—Cure.*

J. Walsh, aged 30, a servant, admitted into hospital August 24, 1845.

He states that he is suffering severely from "piles," under which he has laboured for a length of time; latterly, however, within the last month, the pains have become very excruciating, being greatly aggravated when he goes to stool. He has a most anxious, distressed expression of countenance, avers that he has not closed his eyes in sleep for several nights, and earnestly implores that something may be speedily done to relieve him. Upon examination, several large, swollen, and intensely painful tumours, of a purple hue, are found to surround the anus; there are two or three fissures with the usual cracked edges and ulcerated bases, and the opposed surfaces of two of the tumours have become red, and denuded of cuticle. Upon being desired to force down, the mucous membrane of the gut is protruded of a highly red and inflamed appearance, and presenting very much the character of "vascular tumour;" bowe generally confined, has never had much hæmorrhage from them.

August 24th—

Electuarium Lenitivum,  
Nocte, maneque, ad alvi solutionem.

R

Folior: Piper: Angustifol: drachmas duas,  
Aquæ Puræ, uncias sex,  
Coque s. a. fiat. lotio.

A piece of lint, moistened with the lotion, to be kept constantly applied, internally and externally.

26th.—The tumours are smaller, and much less inflamed. Continue.