

**An essay on the Rhus toxicodendron : with cases of its effects in the cure of paralytic affections, and other diseases of great debility / By John Alderson.**

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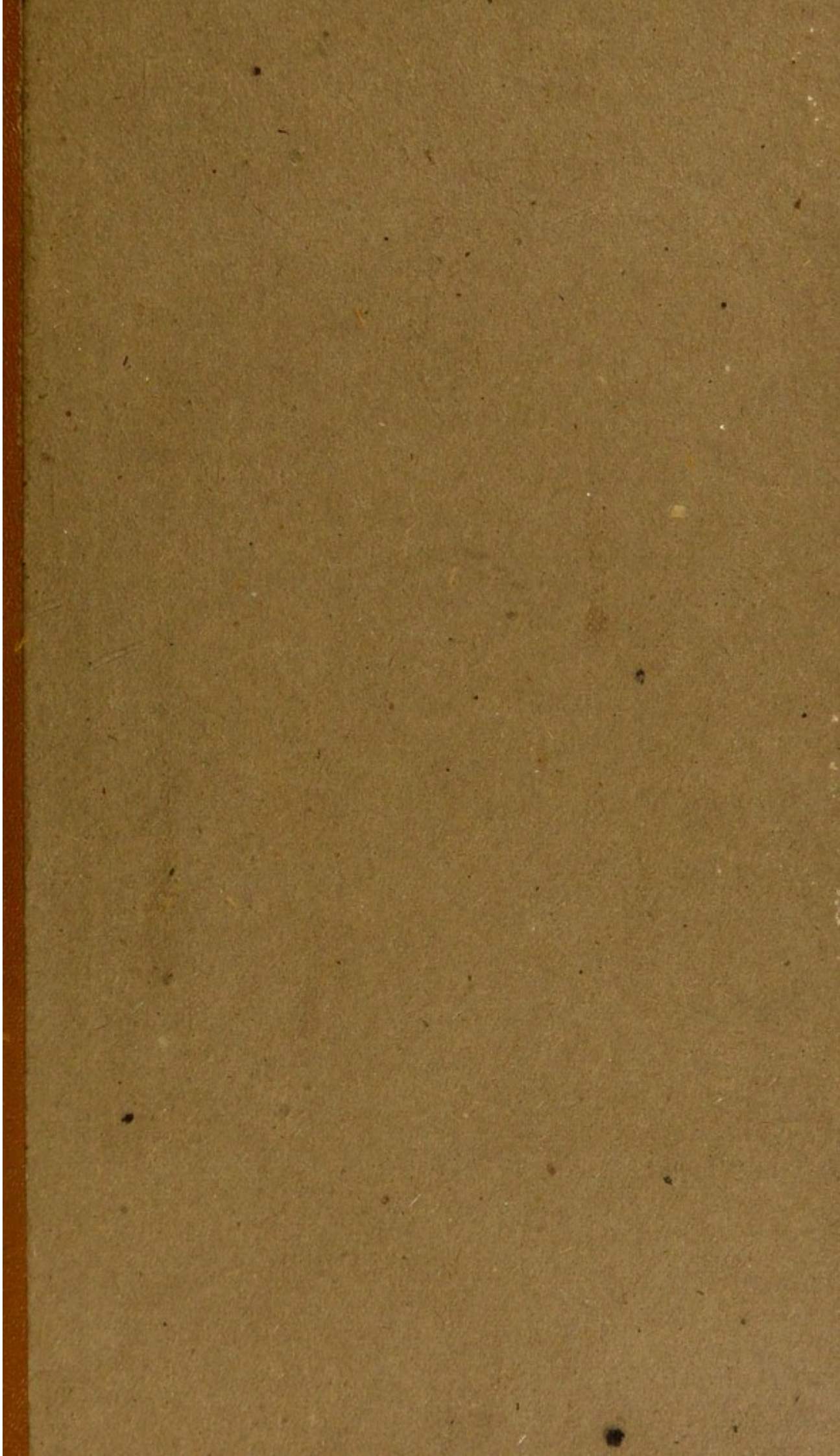
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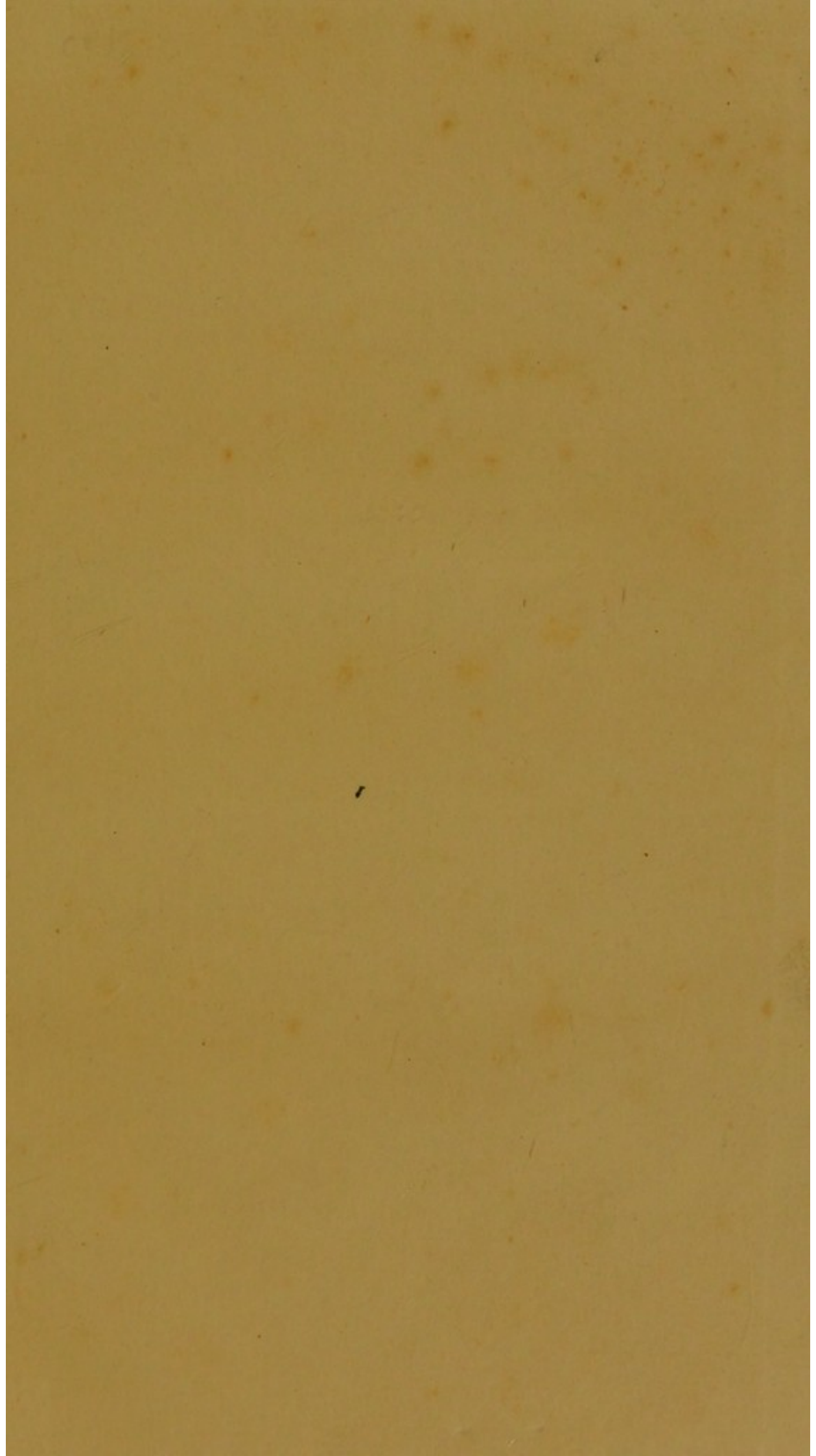


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Department of Education



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*Rhus Toxicodendron.*

AN  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
RHUS  
TOXICODENDRON,  
WITH  
*CASES OF ITS EFFECTS*  
IN THE CURE OF  
PARALYTIC AFFECTIONS,  
AND OTHER DISEASES OF  
GREAT DEBILITY.

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By JOHN ALDERSON, M. D.

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*Third Edition enlarged.*

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*Sæpe Venenum  
Vergebant; nunc dant aliis solertius ipsi.*

LUCRET.

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HULL:

PRINTED BY W. RAWSON; AND SOLD BY J. RODFORD,  
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AND BARRAT, BATH.

1804.

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## INTRODUCTION.

AFTER a long and attentive observation of the effects of the TOXICODENDRON, and thirteen years experience of its efficacy, in the removal of some diseases, I feel it a duty I owe the public to comply with the request of the Book-fellers, and re-publish the following Essay, with a few additional Cases.

From the knowledge thus acquired, I am thoroughly convinced that it possesses as just a right to a place in our Pharmacopeias, as any other Plant to which the Faculty have recourse in their general practice.

We have seen *Cicuta*,\* *Columbo*,§ *Cardamine*,|| and *Foxglove*,† in turns warmly recommended for the cure of diseases by the most eminent of the Faculty, and though none of these remedies have perhaps fully justified all that was said of them by their admirers, yet still they have each of them added something to our stock of means for alleviating

\* By Dr. Stork. § By Dr. Percival. || By Sir George Baker  
† By Dr. Withering.

alleviating the distresses of mankind, and so far those who introduced them are entitled to our best thanks.

In the first trials which were made of the powers of the TOXICODENDRON, no small degree of alarm was excited in the minds of those who took it, and the apprehension of being made the subject of experiment with a reputed poison, was sufficient to affect the conclusions to be drawn from the operations produced by its exhibition, hence the effects of the Medicine were not fairly appreciated. In one Lady a disagreeable sensation, a kind of angina was repeatedly induced by only one fourth of a grain, and in another nausea, tremors, &c. by a third; yet in these instances, I now believe, that terror had a considerable share in producing those effects.

From variety of constitution and those peculiarities which are called Idiosyncracies, and which experience alone can fully inform us of, no one can pretend to say to what extent such a medicine as the TOXICODENDRON ought to be ventured on at first, and though I have sometimes observed that the most certain and permanent good has been obtained from vegetable poisons as medicines, when the peculiar effect of the plant has been safely induced  
by

by large doses early employed, yet I have always recommended caution in the exhibition of this plant, for I have seen convulsions brought on by a too rapid increase of the quantity.

This uncertainty of effect, though a considerable objection to the employment of the *TOXICODENDRON*, is not peculiar to it, all the other vegetable poisons are liable to the same inconvenience, and I am persuaded, that the beneficial effects these plants are capable of producing by perseverance, are too often lost by their being prematurely rejected, either as inert or unsafe, and the good which might have been obtained, from a careful and long continued course, has been thus thrown away.\*

Another

\* I must also deprecate the practice of making up any of the dry powders of these plants into pills, with mastic of Gum Arabic, for I once saw the most deleterious effects produced from a large dose of the Foxglove, which had been incautiously given, in consequence of several former doses made into pills having had no effect whatever on the pulse; but these pills had been made up with Gum some days before, were grown extremely hard, and in the weak state of the organs of digestion, had passed through the stomach undissolved. The increased dose was given in powder, and acted so powerfully on the action of the heart, that the patient was with difficulty saved from immediate death, by the most active exertions.

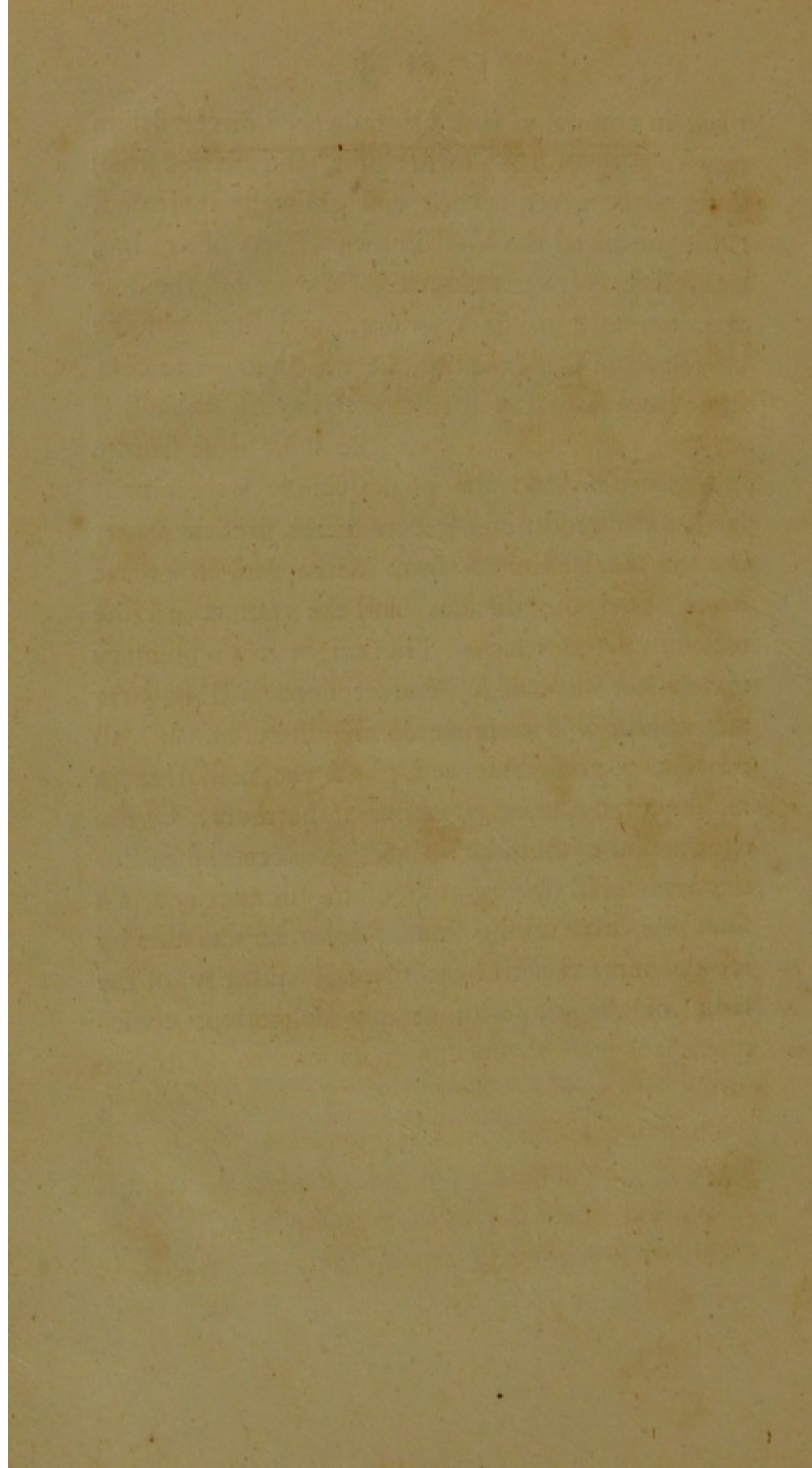
Another and very material objection is, the unequal degrees of strength in equal portions of the same plant; for light, heat, moisture and situation, affect all the vegetable poisons; the greatest attention is required not only in their preparation\*, but even in their preservation; for, however carefully the plant may have been prepared, yet two parcels of the same specimen, the one exposed to the light and the other not, will be so affected, that they will have different degrees of strength. These plants, likewise, are more or less active as medicines, as they have been gathered in shady or open places, § I must therefore caution all those who are in the habit of employing them, that they do not estimate the strength of the dose of any fresh sample by their experience of a former parcel. The following case will justify this caution:

I was some years ago called upon to visit the son of the Rev. Mr. W. whom I found affected by all the symptoms of scrophula. I ordered him Hemlock, *Conium maculatum*. Having gathered the  
plant

\* In some instances the Toxicodendron has lost five-sixths of its weight in drying, in others four-fifths.

§ It is also right to defend the character of the genuine plant by observing here, that every species of Sumach has been occasionally sold by the druggists for the Toxicodendron.

plant in company with his father, I directed him how to prepare the powder of it, and advised small doses to be given at first, and gradually increased, till it produced the well known effects of vertigo, trembling, &c. As those effects wore off, the dose was increased to sixty grains, and finding some benefit from this quantity, he was induced to continue the use of the medicine; having exhausted the first collection, he gave the same dose from a fresh sample, and the consequences were almost fatal, for it produced a general paralysis: the under jaw fell, the saliva ran from his mouth, the urine dropt from the bladder, and the contents of the rectum were discharged; in short, every voluntary muscle lost its energy, and he continued for near an hour in this most deplorable state, unable to move or to command the slightest exertion, though all the time perfectly sensible; however, by the application of stimulants, frictions, &c. he gradually recovered the motion of his limbs, and in a few days, after taking smaller doses, he was able by regular increase, to bear the full quantity of the same collection, without any deleterious consequences.



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AN  
ESSAY, &c.

**A** Distinguishing feature of the present times, in a medical point of view, is the general prevalence of nervous diseases, and the gradual increase of paralytic disorders. The origin of these affections is not difficult to be ascertained. Does there not appear a determination in all ranks, to call forth into immediate action all the resources of existence, by an employment of the most powerful agents? and to stake in the gratification of the moment their whole stock of nervous energy? To such inordinate movements, kept up by a repeated use of the most active stimulants, may we not justly look for the cause of that derangement, which physicians have to encounter under the multiplied forms of nervous debility? Various chemical, pneumatic, and mechanical operations, it is well known, are constantly going forward in the human body, and when any of these is too much accelerated, or precipitately urged, the machine itself is destroyed,



destroyed, or is rendered useless.\* Strongly incited to animal gratifications, man but too frequently overlooks those conditions of his constitution that were originally attached to it by the Author of Nature, which, so far from implying a constant series of pleasures, necessarily render him incapable of many real enjoyments without some preceding §inconvenience; thus inculcating, upon human creatures, the necessity of repose and abstinence, in order to give time for the proper accumulation of that excitability, which is necessary for the due performance of the animal functions. However, as was said, but few attend to the admonitions of their animal constitution, they aim at acquiring what Nature, more provident than they, has prohibited to be attained; and by a lavish use of wine, spirits, or laudanum, endeavour to procure to themselves

\* “ If the exertion of the voluntary motions has been still more energetic, the quiescence which succeeds is so complete, that they cannot again be excited into action, by the efforts of the will, in this manner the palsy and apoplexy, (which is an universal palsy) are frequently produced after convulsed or other violent exertions.”

*Darwin's Zoonomia.*

§ *Nusquam emolumentum ferme sine impensa opera est—Labor voluptasque, dissimillima natura, societate quadam inter se naturali sunt juncta.*

*Livy.*

the power of perpetual enjoyment. They take no warning from experience in the fate of others, and solicitous only to appear replete with spirit and animation in the eyes of those with whom they associate, (who probably have recourse to the same incitements) they continue to urge on the processes of life, till some part of the apparatus gives way, and they suddenly feel all the symptoms of a ruined constitution, not to be repaired by the utmost efforts of medical skill.—*Hinc Genæ pendulæ tremulaque Manus!* Hence proceed that train of nervous symptoms, which no less impede the operations of the mind, than occasion painful bodily sensations, sensations so acute, as to drive the unhappy victim into the hands of daring empirics, to whose pretended skill they too often sacrifice those lives and fortunes, which ought to have been devoted to the good of their connections.\*

By this increase in the consumption of spirit and opium, which the account in the note exhibits, we  
may

\* From the accounts I have received from the retail shops, I find from three to four hundred pounds weight of solid opium are consumed every year in Hull, independent of what is dispensed by the Surgeons. And the Druggists all agree that it is a yearly increasing trade, for that thirty years ago scarcely twenty pounds were sold in this way; and the following comparative statement from the Custom House, in answer to my enquiries, will exhibit at one view the enormous increase in the demand for spirit:

may also see how the surplus population of this country, which has been the boast of politicians, may be disposed of, without having recourse to war, famine, and pestilence. From the number of infants which are yearly sacrificed by giving them opium, in order to enable their parents to labour, and rest undisturbed by the cries of importunate hunger, and of men and women who shorten their days by drinking Laudanum and Spirit, that they may be able to produce pleasurable sensations at will, there is no danger that this country will ever be overstocked with inhabitants, at least active ones. Nor do these dreadful habits merely keep down  
 population

## IMPORTS, 1802.

BRANDY.	GENEVA.	RUM.	WINE.		
Gallons.	Gallons.	Gallons.	Tons.	Qrs.	Galls.
102,348	188,264	11,259	1738	2	21

To this may be added that more than half the Opium is dissolved in about 1600 gallons of British Spirit before it is taken, loaded with the most pungent essential oils.

## IMPORTS, 1764.

BRANDY.	GENEVA.	WINE.		
Gallons.	Gallons.	Tons.	Qrs.	Galls.
57,128	2,134	1007	3	6

“ Under the name of Rum, Brandy, Gin, Whisky, Usquebaugh, Wine, Cyder, Beer, Ale, and Porter, is Alcohol become the bane of the christian world.”

*Darwin's Zoonomia.*

population directly, by destroying those who have them, but they act indirectly, for these vices at the time they increase the temporary enjoyments of the senses, destroy their final cause, and the axiom in mechanics, that what is gained in speed is lost in power, applies with great truth to the human body, with respect to the senses, he who makes too rapid a use of what he possesses, must expect to be early left destitute of power.

These destructive practices are daily increasing among all ranks, but with an infinitely greater rapidity among mechanics and labourers, as may be inferred by the Imports of the more common sort of spirit. I have seen boys not 14 years of age, drink Rum before day-light, and in a manner that convinced me their throats were accustomed to it; and a friend of mine one morning, saw 220 mechanics and labourers call at a dram shop, before they went to their daily occupation.

I am told too, that it is no uncommon thing in some towns, for women to meet to drink luddy (Laudanum) and smoke their pipes, for in every village opium is sold in one shape or other at the little grocers shops, the masters valuing themselves as much on their different receipts for Godfrey,

Paregoric, or Laudanum, as wine merchants do for the flavour of their Wines. Nor are they content with the comparatively simple stimulus of Opium and Spirit, as the most pungent essential Oils are added, such as Oil of Juniper, Oil of Anniseed, &c. and even Volatile Alkali is sometimes taken with their Brandy; and such is the avidity of mankind for sensual gratification, that large sums are daily expended in purchasing Spirits, which are vended as restorative medicines, under various appellations, such as Oriental Cordial, Balms, Elixirs, &c. all of which produce their effects by inordinate excitement.

In the further prosecution of my subject I shall avoid every thing that has the appearance of theory, for though speculation may assist our enquiries into the laws of nature, or the origin of diseases, yet it is experience and observation alone that must determine our opinions and direct our judgment, at the bedside of our patients, and though the theories of Professors and Lecturers may serve to excite our imaginations, and furnish amusement at discussions in Society Meetings, yet a few decisive cases from actual experience, are of more real importance to mankind, than all the speculative doctrines to be found in our Systems of Physic. I shall therefore not attempt to account for the *modus operandi* of  
the

the plant, but leave the facts here faithfully related, to produce their legitimate effects on the mind by fair induction, and as the plant is not to be found in our *Materia Medica*\* at present, I shall as briefly as possible describe it, give its history, and relate the cases in which it has been successfully employed.

No attempt was ever made in this country to ascertain, by experiments, the power of the *Toxicodendron*, as a medicine, before the cases related in the first publication of this Essay in 1794. In France it had been made the subject of enquiry for some time; for Monsieur Fontana speaks of the many celebrated writers§ who have considered it as a most virulent poison. The experiments however, which he made upon animals, and has related, are not necessary to be introduced here, since I hold all experiments on animals as insignificant, and irrelevant to the effects of any medicine on the human subject; and those  
made

\* It has found its way into the Edinburgh Pharmacopeia, probably in consequence of its being noticed in Darwin's *Zoonomia*.

§ “ Que les Ecrivains les plus celebres ont communément regardé comme un poison tres puissant, quoique quelques Physiciens modernes ne l'aient pas trouvé tel pour certains Animaux.”

made on himself, go to shew merely the manner in which it affected the skin, and seem to have terrified him\* from any internal exhibition.

Since the first Edition of this Essay, Dr. Kok, in the Memoirs of the Philosophical Society at Haerlem, has published a case of Paralysis in the lower extremities, cured by the *Rhus radicans foliis ternatis*; this case was that of a woman about thirty years of age, who had been paralytic above four years; having tried without success, all the medicines of which he had either heard or read, he gave up the patient as irrecoverable, but after an interval of a fortnight, he resolved to make an experiment with the †extract of the *Rhus radicans*: he began

\* “ Mais j'ai été forcé d'abandonner, des les commencement, mes recherches sur cette plante, parceque j'ai eu le malheur de m' en poisonner moimeme par trois fois de suite, avec ses feuilles.”

Fontana.

I have had an opportunity of seeing several cases of its virulence when externally applied, in the Nursery Grounds of Mr. Phillipson, of Cottingham, where the plant is cultivated for medical purposes; and some of the workmen have gone so far as to assert that their general health had been injured by transplanting it.

† An elegant extract of the genuine Toxicodendron has been prepared by Messrs. Bacon, Mander and Weaver, at Wolverhampton.

began on the 5th of May, by administering twenty grains, three times a day, and gradually increased the dose to two drachms, the patient felt not the least inconvenience from the medicine, by persevering in which she mended daily, and on the eighth of June she was completely cured.†

There has also lately been many other cases published in France, in which the *Rhus radicans* has been given with the best effects; but as none of these Authors have ever honoured this publication with notice, although it has been translated both into French and German, I cannot say whether the plant they have given be the same as the one here employed or not.

† Monthly Review, vol. 28 p. 24.



## Rhus Toxicodendron\*,

PUBESCENT POISON OAK,

OR

## SUMACH.

RHUS. *Lin. Gen. Pl.* 369 PENTANDRIA  
TRIGYNIA, *Flores inferi.**Cal.* 5. *partitus.* *Petala* 5. *Bacca* 1. *Sperma.**Leicr. Soci. Families of Plants.**Juss. Gen. Pl.* p. 369.*Tournef.* 381.*Giseke Prælectiones Botanicae.* p.Sectio \*\* *foliis ternatis.*RHUS *Toxicodendron* *foliis ternatis* : *foliolis petio-*  
*latis angulatis pubescentibus, caule radi-*  
*cante, Lin. Sp. Pl.* 381. *Syst. Veg.* ed.  
*Murr.* p. 293. *Syst. Veg. Lichf. Soc.* v. i.  
p. 230, *Syst. Nat.* ed. 13. *Gml. Tom.* 2.  
494. *Ait. Hort. Kew.* v. 1. p. 367. *Walter*  
*Flo. Carolin.* p. 255? *Gaert. de Fr. et Sem.*  
*Cent.* 3. t. 44. f. 5? *Bulliard. Herb. Franc.*  
t. 143. *Gron Virg.* 149.

RHUS

\* For the following botanical description of the TOXICODENDRON, I am much indebted to my truly ingenious friend, A. H. HAWORTH, Esq. late of Cottingham, now of Little Chelsea, whose indefatigable industry in investigating, and critical acumen in distinguishing plants, I have frequently witnessed.

- RHUS foliis ternatis : foliolis petiolatis angulatis pubifcentibus. *Clayt. Flo. Virg.* 46.
- RHUS *Toxicodendrum Hill's Hort. Kew.* p. 453.
- TOXICODENDRON. 2 (*pubescens.*) foliis ternatis : foliolis ovatis inciso-angulatis ; pubescentibus. *Mill. Gard. Diët.* abr. ed. 6 ?  
*Mill. Gard. Cal.* ed. 14. octavo. p. 166.
- TOXICODENDRON tryphyllum folio sinuato pubescente. *Tournef. Inst.* 611.
- TOXICODENDRON 2 *Boerb. Ind. alter. Hort. Batt.* 1727. 2. p. 229.
- HEDERA Virginiensis, trifolia. *Park. Theat.* 679. f. 5.
- HEDERÆ Trifoliæ Canadensi affinis Planta, Peregrina, arbor venenata quorundam. *H. R. Par.* 84.
- HEDERÆ Trifoliæ Canadensi affinis, furrecta, Arbor Tinctoria, virginiana multis. *Plunken Alm.* 181 ?
- EDERA Trifolia Canadensis. *Corn. Can.* 96. t. 97. *Barr. Icon.* 228.
- VITIS Canadensis, *Muntin Phytogr.* t. 60.
- ARBOR Trifoliata venenata virginiana, folio, hirsuto. *Raj. Hist.* 1779.
- RHUS 3 foliis ternatis, foliolis petiolatis, ovatis, acutis, pubescentibus, integris sinuatisq. *Hill's general natural Hist.* v. p. 351.
- RHUS *Toxicodendrum.* Marshall's arbustrum americanum. p. 131.

The Pubescent Poison-Oak or Sumach, is a deciduous shrub of moderate growth, rising to the height of about four feet, it is covered with a greyish coloured somewhat striated bark, which is usually marked with minute spots, or glandular appearances, not greatly unlike the effect of an insect, they have also a distant resemblance to some of the smallest species of *Sphæriæ*, for like *Sphæriæ* they seem to arise from the wood, and finally cause a sort of bursting or opening of the bark, immediately over them equal to their own size; they further resemble *Sphæriæ* in being largest on the older and more stunted shoots, particularly in the winter season; but in all likelihood they are the common excretory ducts of the plants, whose fluid being excessively acrid, may possibly require more capacious outlets, than shrubs of a milder juice.

The lower shoots, on and near the ground, in moist shady situations, which the plant most affects, trail considerably, like the *Rhus radicans* *Linnaei*\*, (smooth rooting Poison-Oak or Sumach) and have like that shrub, the property of sending down  
radicles

\* *Toxicodendron* may be distinguished from the *Radicans* by the latter being a less shrub, with smooth and slender shoots, roots entire and somewhat smaller leaflets, which stand upon shorter and slenderer general footstalks.

radicles into the earth, by which the plant admits of greater increase, in any of the winter months.

In such situations, however, I have not seen it produce seeds so readily, as in drier and more pinching places, where it looses in a great degree, it's radicating principle, grows more stiff and robust, and produces annual crops of pale yellow striated berries.

There is a remarkable instance of this kind, (the singularity of which induces me to mention it) now existing in a *wall*, in the Physic Garden of the Company of Apothecaries at Chelsea, out of a chink in the side of which, and near the ground, grows a strong plant of this *Rhus*, that has prospered there ever since the time of the celebrated Miller, and which Mr. Fairbairn, the Company's present gardener, obligingly assured me, was that Miller called the second species of *Toxicodendron*, in his Gardener's Dictionary; it is, in all probability, the identical plant from which the description in that well known work was made; it feeds annually, but none of it's lower shoots exhibit the least radicating propensity, although other plants of the same kind, in the shady parts of the same garden, have that quality in great perfection, but I believe they rarely produce seeds; so much do local

circumstances affect and alter the most permanent and distinguishing characters of vegetables.

I believe it is pretty generally known to Gardeners, and others concerned in the pleasant and instructive employment of horticulture, that many other fibrous rooted plants, which, like the *Rhus Toxicodendron*, possess the power of encreasing themselves in any considerable degree by their roots, have that property materially lessened, when the place they grow in happens to be dry and poor,\* for nature has chiefly allotted them rich and moist habitations, and, with her usual care, constructed their constitutions accordingly; the alteration such plants undergo, in such a soil, is doubtless in the direction of their juices, which (being fewer) appear to pass by the lower and less noble parts, (before rendered luxuriantly radican or prolific) and mount upwards by a natural and almost instinctive impulse, to feed and mature, with collected force, the infant germs which they had before too sparingly supplied with nourishment.

Thus Nature checked by art or accident, in any customary channel of renewing her works, kindly  
searches

\* See many remarks corroborating this doctrine, in the first part of Mr. HAWORTH'S observations on *Mesembrianthema*.

searches out and perfects another, that she may not be disappointed in the multiplication of her productions, for

“ \_\_\_\_\_ each mofs,  
 “ Each shell, each crawling insect, holds a rank,  
 “ Important in the plan of Him who fram'd  
 “ This scale of Beings ; holds a rank, which lost  
 “ Would break the chain, and leave a gap behind  
 “ Which Nature's self would rue.”

I am not acquainted with any common plant that more abundantly exemplifies the above doctrine, than the Lilly of the Valley, *Convallaria majalis* Lin. which is well known to all who possess a garden, to flower freely, and increase amazingly by the root, in a moist north border, yet few, I fancy, have seen it produce perfect seeds in that situation, notwithstanding the vigour of its growth ; but when it is planted and confined in a garden pot, and its increase by the root consequently checked, it will frequently produce good seeds.

*Vinca major et minor*, greater and lesser Periwinkle, *Tussilago Petasites*, Butter Burr, and many other plants, as remarkable for the sterility of their seeds, as their great increase by roots, might, in all probability, experience a similar effect, if under  
 similar

similar circumstances;\* their supposed sterility, therefore, should seem to result chiefly from the peculiarity of their situation and constitutions, and not from any real defects in the formation of all, or any of their parts of fructification, as has sometimes been ingeniously conjectured by botanists and others; but, to return to the *Rhus Toxicodendron*.

The leaves are alternate and threed, and stand upon remarkable long petioles, the lateral leaflets are usually supported on very short petioles, which frequently lose themselves by a kind of dilatation, in the substance of the leaflets; the terminal leaflet has often a footstalk half an inch long or upwards; all the leaflets are dull green, have a drooping posture, and possess the unpleasant aspect so common to noxious vegetables, which by their (usually) gloomy haunts and dingy features, forbid, as it were, the approach of the animal world; they are oval-angulate and nervose, with a kind of undulated margin, which sometimes forms distant tooth-like crenatures. The young wood-buds, petioles, and the nerves on the undersides of the leaflets, are furnished with a very visible degree of pubescence, on which account I have ventured to give the plant the English name of Pubescent Poison Oak, or Sumach, for the purpose of distinguishing it from  
the

\* Will not the Potatoe propagate best by root, when all possibility is cut off of its propogating by seed?

the *Rhus radicans* Lin.\* which has much smoother leaves and shoots ?

The minute and inconspicuous flowers are produced in June, July and August, on short crowded axillary racemi, which are paniculate, and in a state of nature, dioecious. In our specimens, however, (which were cultivated luxuriant ones, and the only ones which we could procure in a state of fructification) a few of the flowers were hermaphrodite, and had an increased number of parts, particularly, a minute six cleft calyx, six small lance-oval whitish, rather striated, petals ; and six short stamina, supporting as many antheræ.

When not rendered unnaturally luxuriant by cultivation, the male flower consists of a minute calyx with five shallow clefts, a corolla of five small petals, and five stamina which support as many antheræ,

\* There is this characteristic difference also to be observed in the two plants, whilst growing under similar circumstances, that the leaflets of the *Toxicodendron* turn their edges towards their upper surface, or appear concave, whereas those of the *Rhus radicans* turn their edges towards their under surface, or appear convex, a distinction that evidently implies something very different in their habits and probably in their virtues ; the former is the plant whose effects are here detailed, and for whose powers I have pledged myself.



antheræ, and the germen in the female flower is roundish, and when a little magnified, appears somewhat bottle-shaped, and support<sup>t</sup> a short stylus, which is crowned with three very small stigmata.

The fruit or seed arrives at maturity in England about the month of October and November, it is a round, dry, pale-yellow, striated berry, which is somewhat scariose, and nearly the size of a small pea, and encloses one hard compressed end-nicked kernel, which has a thick furrowed mealy covering.

The germination of the seed, I am sorry to add, I have had no opportunity of observing.

The *Rhus Toxicodendron* is a native of North America, it has been introduced into England ever since the year 1640, and was cultivated in this country as a curious shrub in the time of Parkinson, who figures it in his Theatre.\*

I shall conclude this long account of the *Toxicodendron* by observing, that my specimens did not in all points accord with those preserved in the  
Herbarium

\* See *Parkinson's* Theatrum Botanicum and *Aiton's* Hortus Kewensis.

Herbarium of the great Linnæus, which were very obligingly twice compared with mine, by the present learned and well-known possessor of that inestimable treasure; my specimens are larger in all their parts, their leaflets are less undulate, and possessed of somewhat longer footstalks than those of Linnæus, the lateral leaflets of which are nearly sessile, but his specimens were probably gathered wild in North America, and mine were the luxuriant produce of young plants, in the strong moist loam of a Yorkshire Nursery.

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The following history of cases in which this plant has been employed, will enable the reader to judge of its power as a medicine.

The following case is inserted as drawn up by my late ingenious friend Mr. B——, an eminent surgeon in this neighbourhood, who paid the greatest attention to the exhibition of the medicine, and has related, in a clear and interesting manner, the gradual recovery of his own wife.

#### CASE I.

Mrs. B——, aged 38, always enjoyed remarkable good health, till about eight years ago, at which

which time she complained of a disorder in her bowels, which she described to feel as if the bowels had lost their sensation, and that a cold wind seemed to rise up the œsophagus. As she was costive, two ounces of the Ol. Ricini were given at four doses, which having no effect, stronger purgatives were administered, but without producing a stool; after which the smoke of tobacco was thrown up, the warm bath applied, a dose of calomel given, and a blister put upon the belly. At length an evacuation was obtained; and from the large quantity of cathartic remedies used, the bowels now took on the other extreme, and a violent purging ensued. She now complained of a pricking pain on the right side of the abdomen, which went off upon her voiding by stool a piece of a large plumb stone, one side of which was worn as sharp as the edge of a knife. After this she was frequently troubled with obstinate constipations of the bowels, and obliged to have recourse to purgative medicines. In the year 1789, she had two fits, which, I believe, were epileptic; but, as I happened not to see her in either of them, I cannot be certain. In the month of September, she was seized with pains in her hands and feet, which were supposed to be gouty; and when these went off, she lost entirely the use of the extensor muscles of the wrists, and soon after those of the feet, which was followed by the loss of  
the

the extensors of the fingers and toes. A tumour now arose upon the metacarpal bones of each hand, which seemed a swelling either of the periosteum or bone itself, and had greatly the appearance of a scrophulous affection. The tumours seemed sometimes likely to suppurate, but about the end of the year 1790, they gradually disappeared. The hands now looked livid, and the extensor muscles, upon the arms and hands, wasted and shrivelled; her feet felt like logs of wood, and the fingers and toes were contracted from the action of the flexor muscles; she could not walk without help, and when she attempted it, always complained of something drawing her backwards. During this time, she took a variety of volatile, cardiac, and tonic medicines, but without any good effect. In the month of September, 1791, Dr. ALDERSON was consulted, and advised her to take the TOXICODENDRON. Six grains of the powdered leaves of that plant were infused in eight ounces of boiling water, a table spoonful to be given three times a day. The whole of this was taken without any sensible effect, except a slight pricking sensation in the feet and hands:

Oct. 3d, She took one fourth of a grain of the powdered leaves made into a bolus with Conf. Cort. Aurant. twice a day.

Oct.

- Oct. 4th, The same; the pricking sensation continues, and the arms, to the ends of the fingers, feel as if warm water was running down them.
- 5th, Medicines continued three times a day.
- 6th, The same. In the evening had an irregular spasmodic fluttering in the toes.
- 7th, Medicines continued. Was agreeably surpris'd to find she could extend her fingers and toes a little. Her hands a little swelled, and her feet and ankles much more so. She has, in a great measure, recovered the use of the extensor pollicis of the right hand, and that of the left in a smaller degree; has also lost the dead hard sensation in her finger ends, which was always her constant attendant.
- 8th, Medicines continued.
- 9th, One third of a grain ter die.
- 10th, The same. Walked up stairs without help, her hands also stronger and better, but the extensors of the wrists still inactive.
- 11th, The same.
- 12th, Took half a grain ter die. Begins to walk tolerably well, and can use her hands better, the extensor, adductor, and

and abductor, muscles of the thumbs, having recovered their action.

15th, Three grains were made into four boluses, and one taken three times a day. At night the sensation, as if hot water was running down the arms, very troublesome, with the pricking feel in the fingers.

17th, One grain ter die.

30th, Takes one grain and a half ter die; and this day perceived that she had recovered the use of the extensor muscles of the wrists,

She continued the medicine, gradually increasing the dose to four grains ter die, for some time longer. It seemed to act as a gentle aperient, and frequently, when the large doses were taken, occasioned a slight vertigo, with a pain across the forehead, and a nausea for about half an hour after taking it. She has now left off the medicine twelve months, has entirely recovered the use of her hands, and walks a mile or two very well; but the muscles of the feet are not so well recovered as those of the hands, and she always lifts the feet very high when she walks, which may be owing to a remembrance that in her former state, if she attempted walking,  
and

and met with the smallest obstacle, a fall on the face was generally the consequence.

*Barton*, July 25, 1793.

This Lady has continued free from her paralytic complaints ever since.

March, 1802.

## CASE II.

GREG, mariner, complained of the loss of one side, which he attributed to falling asleep upon the deck, after being exhausted by fatigue during a gale of wind. I ordered him half a grain of the powdered leaves of the *TOXICODENDRON*, three times a day. On the second day, he felt an unusual twitching, or convulsive motion, in the arm and leg affected; and when I saw him on the Monday following, he could, without any assistance, bring the deceased leg across the other, and had much more use of his arm. He continued his medicine a week longer, when finding himself so far recovered, that he could be employed as a pilot in the river, he was content not to complete his cure, lest it should subject him to be impressed. He has continued in much the same state for some time past, having

having gotten more use of his limbs than he ever expected. It is but right to observe, that during two years previous to his application to me, every other means had, in vain, been employed, to restore the action of his leg and arm.

### CASE III.

Mr. B—, surgeon, aged 47, after having been afflicted for many months with a complication of disorders, hæmoptysis, jaundice, mesenteric obstruction, and general atrophy, lost entirely the use of all his limbs; and even his mental faculties underwent a similar paralysis. All his powers of ratiocination were suspended, and he was reduced to a state nearly as helpless as that of a child only six months old. In this situation I gave him the *TOXICODENDRON*, half a grain three times a day, which, in the course of a week, improved his appetite, and removed the habitual costiveness to which he had long been subject. The dose was gradually increased to one grain, three times a day. It produced some twitching across the abdomen, with irregular or convulsive motion in the limbs; and when the nervous influx seemed to pass to the extremities, it excited in the brain such a sensation of pain, as made him frequently exclaim most violently: but when any one asked him where his  

pain



pain was, he answered, he could not mention any particular place, but that all his limbs were, as if stretched forcibly. This was more especially the case after sleep.

The dose was gradually increased to three grains four times a day. His brain has recovered its wonted functions; his stomach and bowels do their office more completely than for years; he rests without opium, though for a long time in the constant habit of taking it; his animal spirits are wonderfully invigorated; and although he has not yet acquired the perfect use of his limbs, they seem to be recovering their tone, and I have every reason to hope, that he will, in time, be restored to the full enjoyment of life.\*

#### CASE IV.

GEORGE FORD, ship carpenter, aged 24, of a strong athletic make, and full habit of body, was admitted into the Hull General Infirmary, on Wednesday the 13th of November, 1793, for a paralytic affection, which had deprived him of the use of

\* This Gentleman increased the dose the following year to twenty grains, was perfectly restored, and went through the duties of his profession several years afterwards.

of his right side ; his recollection was so impaired, that he could not give any account of the attack himself, but his wife informed me, that, for a week before he lost the use of his limbs, he had, at times, complained of a dull pain in his head, and numbness in his right hand and foot ; that, by the advice of some old woman, he had been bled on the Monday, and that upon going out of doors soon afterwards, he was seized with hemiplegia. In which state he was admitted into the Infirmary, on the Wednesday following.

A vomit was given him soon after his admission, which was followed the next day by a warm purgative, and volatile and stimulant medicines for the course of the first week ; but thinking that he was not likely to gain any ground from the usual plan, and being desirous of trying the power of the *TOXICODENDRON* in a recent case, I ordered him half a grain of the powdered leaves of this plant in pills, three times a day ; on the second day, after the exhibition of this medicine, he felt a sudden convulsive twitching, or involuntary motion in certain muscles of the affected side ; from that moment he found he had the same motion at will ; every succeeding day he felt some muscle or other convulsively moved, and it was always remarked,

by

by the other patients in the same ward, that he possessed the power of voluntarily employing all those muscles that had been once convulsively affected in consequence of the TOXICODENDRON. He regularly pursued the medicine, and gradually increased it to one grain every four hours, taking care always to add to the dose, till he found some convulsive action was produced.

In the course of three weeks, in which time every injured muscle had felt the influence of this powerful drug, he regained the free and perfect motion of his leg and arm; and recovered the full enjoyment of his mental faculties, which had been equally affected from the first attack.

December 24, 1793.

#### CASE V.

I. BIRD was admitted into the Hull General Infirmary, with symptoms of hemiplegia, having lost the use of his left arm, and feeling a numbness in the leg and thigh of the same side. He informed me, that the week before, he had been suddenly seized with a fit, whilst at stool in the necessary, that when he first became sensible of his situation, he found himself upon the floor, unable either to  
articulate

articulate or rise, that in a short time, however, he so far recovered the use of the lower extremities, as to be able to get up, and go into the house, when he found he had been absent two hours, his speech now recovered, but he was totally deprived of the action of his arm, which hung useless by his side: in this situation he was admitted into the house, and put under a course of the TOXICODENDRON. He took half a grain three times a day, which was gradually increased to three grains per dose. The general feeling began to recover on the affected side, but the arm was obliged to be suspended by a sling, for so weak was the action of the muscles, that by the pressure of the arm against the body, the circulation of the lymphatics was considerably obstructed, and by its weight the ligaments of the joint at the shoulder became so lengthened, that one might put a finger between the head of the bone and the acetabulum. He always expressed great pleasure in taking the medicine,\* and was persuaded that it would cure him, but not being sufficiently supplied with the plant at this time, I was obliged to discharge him, only relieved, under the promise of admitting him again when spring should enable us to prosecute

Monf. Fresnoi says, that the infusion of the *Rhus radicans* had an exhilarating effect.

the trial. He was accordingly admitted the 28th of May, in exactly the same state in which he was discharged, having in the mean-time, neither lost or gained power. He began his medicine without loss of time, and pursued it with unremitting attention till he was perfectly cured, in August; his dose having been increased as far as twenty grains. He worked at his trade, as a joiner, for some years afterwards, and died of a pleurisy.

#### CASE VI.

PEACOCK, aged 60, by trade a carpenter, about a fortnight before he applied to me, was suddenly, whilst at work, deprived of the use of the right arm, and at the same time, found himself unable to articulate. He immediately sent for a Surgeon, who very properly applied all the common stimulants for a fortnight, though to no purpose; he then recommended him to my attention as a proper subject for the *TOXICODENDRON*, he had the symptoms of palsy already mentioned. I ordered him one grain three times a day; on the second day he found a tingling sensation at the ends of his fingers, and soon began to recover the use of his hand. In the course of seven days, in which he took only twenty-one grains, he was perfectly recovered, and was able to speak as articulately as before.

CASE

## CASE VII.

I was called upon to visit Mr. J——, aged 55, labouring under a complaint which Dr. DARWIN calls the palsy of the liver.\* He complained of constant retchings, total loss of appetite, swimming in the head, noise in the ears, alternate diarrhœa, and constipation, a total abhorrence of flesh meat, general emaciation and all the hypochondrical horrors so constantly the effects of indulging in the use of distilled and fermented liquors. As I had, on former occasions, been able to give him temporary relief only, by employing the whole class of stimulants, tonics, &c. I determined this time to try the power of the TOXICODENDRON, and ordered him half a grain of the powdered leaves  
 three

\* “ Palsy of the liver is known from these symptoms—The  
 “ patients have generally passed the meridian of life, have drank  
 “ fermented liquors daily, but perhaps not been opprobrious  
 “ drunkards, they lose their appetites, the flesh and strength  
 “ diminish in consequence, there appears no bile in their stools  
 “ nor in their urine, nor is any hardness or swelling perceptible  
 “ in the region of the liver; but what is peculiar to this disease,  
 “ and distinguishes it from all others, at the first glance of the  
 “ eye, is the bombycinous colour of the skin, which, like that  
 “ of the full grown silk-worms, has a degree of transparency,  
 “ with a yellow tint, not greater than is natural to the serum  
 “ of the blood.”

three times a day, with a grateful mixture of stomach tincture, &c. It produced no visible agitation in the system, and he gradually recovered the tone of the viscera, his digestive faculties were improved, and their various functions more completely performed than I ever expected they would be, and he has been enabled, by its use, to recur to his old habits of dram drinking, longer, without injury, than for many years, having now for two years been free from his usual fit.\*

### CASE VIII.

#### NERVOUS HEMICRANIA.

Mrs. L. informed me that she had been for many months afflicted with a painful affection in the face, which usually began with the sensation of extreme coldness descending from the eye through the *antrum maxillare*, into the upper jaw, and thence to the lower, attacking only half the face. This pain usually continued twelve or fourteen hours,

\* This plant has been frequently employed in cases of dyspepsia and atonic gout, and with more success than any other tonic, few however of these cases can be recorded as cures, because the subjects of them were too constantly recurring to their habits, destroying by habitual intemperance the good effects of medical attention.

hours, producing the most excruciating agonies, till it began to grow warm and swell, she then got ease, but the part affected continued swelled for twelve hours longer; the complaint always left her much debilitated, and subject to colliquative sweatings, till the period of its return; this usually was after an interval of five or six weeks, but in less time, if she got cold by any little imprudence.— She had taken, before I saw her, a variety of opening and tonic medicines, and when I visited her was taking a decoction of bark with the elixir of vitriol, Believing, at that time, that the complaint was merely an intermittant of the head, and that it had continued only from the want of a sufficient quantity of the bark being thrown in, near the period of its recurrence, I ordered an ounce of the powder of bark, to which was added ten grains of the volatile alkali, to be taken in twenty-four hours, as near the time of its usual accession as possible; this was complied with, and the fit was certainly less violent than had ever been before; she had no return of the sweating during the interval. Prior to the next paroxysm she repeated the dose of bark, and felt but little of the fit; still, however it did return, and although it was kept under during the remainder of the summer, by repeated doses, it recurred again in the autumn, and grew more distressing than ever;

I now



I now proposed to her to try the *TOXICODENDRON*, which she did, by taking at first the third of a grain, but in a few days a most distressing nausea was induced, accompanied with the utmost horror of the medicine, and I could not, by any arguments, persuade her to a farther continuance in its use; the fit never afterwards returned, and she has remained ever since free from this most painful disease.

### CASE IX.

J. RICHARDSON, aged 70, labourer, was seized with a hemiplegia, and deprived of the use of the whole right side. He took the *TOXICODENDRON* for five weeks, and perfectly recovered, without experiencing any sensible convulsive action, except during the night, when in his sleep, the paralytic side would frequently start. He never took more than five grains for a dose nor less than one.

### CASE X.

*Extract of a letter from Mr. Featherston,  
Apothecary and Druggist.*

“ DANIEL BARTON, aged 14, of a spare habit of body, when playing on a ship’s mast, lost his  
hold,

hold, and fell, his foot however catching in the shrouds, he received no external injury, nor did he make any complaint when he got home. About a month after this his mother perceived a remarkable alteration in his hand-writing, and his master was induced to punish him for inattention: a great awkwardness was observed in the manner of eating his meals, his right hand usually hanging by his side. His mouth was drawn on one side, his speech affected, the right foot in walking was not properly lifted up, but trailed. At this time his hand-writing resembled that of a boy just beginning to learn. His parents finding reproof to have no effect, applied to me for assistance. I ordered him the TOXICODENDRON, a quarter of a grain to be taken three times a day; the quantity of the dose was afterwards increased to half a grain, without producing any sensible effect. When however I gave him ten grains a day, he felt a tingling sensation in his fingers, and a starting in his toes, with a great warmth in the extremities. The doses were increased to six grains each, and his recovery gradually proceeded, and was strikingly observable in the progressive improvement of his hand-writing. He continued in the use of the medicine, gradually diminishing its strength, till his recovery was completed."

HULL,

H. FEATHERSTON.

CASE

## CASE XI.

SMITH, aged 40, was admitted into the Hull General Infirmary, with univerfal paralysis of the extremities, under the care of Dr. T. by whose direction he took the TOXICODENDRON as far as fifteen grains a day. He was fo much relieved by the medicine, that being able to follow his employment, he requested to be discharged. He returned, however, in about two months, with a *colica pictonum*, and general inability to exert the muscles of the extremities; evidently arising from the use of red lead in his business. Opium, in repeated doses, removed his cholic, but left him paralytic. He took the TOXICODENDRON, five grains three times a day, which was increased to half a drachm; in the space of a month, he was fo far recovered by it, that he was discharged, and able to follow his occupation as usual.

## CASE XII.

SARAH PULLEN, aged 7 years, labours under a total paralysis of the lower extremities, occasioned by a distortion of the spine, in consequence of a long continued series of illness, about two years ago. Every means has been employed to stop the progress of the complaint, by a justly eminent  
Physician,

Physician, without success; and it was thought a proper case for the application of caustics on each side of the spine, in the York Infirmary, but as her friends were not willing to suffer the operation, she has been brought to me. September 14, 1795, I have ordered her one grain of the TOXICODENDRON twice a day; September 28th, is able to extend her limbs. and almost to bear her weight, two grains, twice a day; October 12th, can walk alone, and appears in better health and spirits, three grains twice a day; October 26th, appears to have recovered the perfect use of her limbs, continues her medicine a little longer; November 2d, no farther occasion for the medicine, being perfectly cured.

#### OBSERVATION.

In some cases of Hemiplegia, it may perhaps be suggested that the patients were in a state of convalescence before the exhibition of the TOXICODENDRON, and hence, that the medicine is not entitled, in such cases, to all the merit I am desirous to attribute to it; but the preceding is a most unequivocal case, for the child was gradually growing worse to the day she began the medicine, and from that time rapidly grew better.

## CASE XIII.

September 14th, J. BELL, aged two years and a half, has been lame on one side from the time he had several severe convulsions, when fourteen months old: the mouth drawn a little on one side, hand and arm flaccid and withered, the foot a little distorted, the action of the flexors being less injured than that of the extensors, and though this is so clearly a case of hemiplegia, yet the poor child has been severely tortured by a celebrated bone-setter; as the case has been gradually growing worse, the child is now unable to make the least use of the side affected: I have ordered him half a grain of the TOXICODENDRON three times a day. September 21st, his mother thinks him somewhat better, one grain three times a day. September 28th, continues to mend, a grain and a half. Oct. 5th, having got cold I have ordered the medicine to be omitted. 12th October, ordered the medicine again, two grains three times a day: 19th Oct. walks alone. November 2d, quite well.

## CASE XIV.

September 21st, — HOLDSWORTH, aged 55, complains of nervous tremblings, and severe catchings in her hands when she attempts to take  
hold

hold of any thing; ordered her two grains three times a day, and to be gradually increased. Nov. 2d, thinks herself much better, and that her recovery has been gradual ever since she took the medicine. November 19th, thinks herself perfectly cured.

#### CASE XV.

August 3d, — JARVIS, aged 10 years, has been for some months affected with all those convulsive actions which constitute the true St. Vitus's Dance, seems to be more affected on one side than the other, his complaint was brought on by a fright, and has been gradually increasing. Half a grain of the TOXICODENDRON every night. August 10th, evidently less convulsed, one grain and a half every night. August 24th, much better, was suddenly seized after his dose one night with stupor, which went off in about an hour. August 31st, continues to mend; takes the medicine twice a day. Sept. 21st, progressive amendment, no apparent convulsive action ever produced by the medicine, three grains twice a day. September 28th, has been at the mast head as well as his comrades, continues. October 12th perfectly restored.

#### CASE XVI.

November 2d, E. HARVEY, when pregnant, first perceived a remarkable convulsive twitching in  
the

the flexors of the wrists, which gradually increasing, frequently drew her arm up to her head: says she always found some relief from bleeding, and that about seven weeks before she was brought to bed, she was thrown into convulsions by a fright, she was then blooded, very copiously and repeatedly, by the advice of her surgeon. She recovered tolerably well during the month, but has found herself very weak, and subject to nervous tremblings ever since, is now very pale and debilitated, about two months gone with child, and feels the same convulsive propensity in the flexors of the arms, accompanied with universal tremors. I have ordered two grains of TOXICODENDRON, three times a day. November 19th, much better, feels her spirits always exhilarated, and her hands made steady by the dose; four grains. November 16th, feels herself almost well, no convulsive actions, no tremors, continues. November 30th, thinks herself perfectly well, is much improved in her looks.

She has had several children since, without any return.

#### CASE XVII.

Mrs. ——— aged 50 years, after having suffered a variety of complaints, was suddenly seized with hemiplegia, and at the time I saw her had been for  
above

above a fortnight incapable of moving the affected side, I ordered five grains of TOXICODENDRON twice a day; at the end of the first week she began to walk, and use her hands, she continued the use of her medicine, and the dose was ordered to be daily increased; but taking twenty-five grains upon going to bed, she was suddenly seized with a violent pain in her foot, resembling the cramp, it went off upon getting out of bed; the same effect was repeated after the same dose the next night, the foot was drawn downwards, and the ankle distorted. As I had never yet seen any lasting convulsive action from the medicine, and as the dose, though large, was ordered to be gradually increased, I was somewhat surpris'd at these effects; it however was at length accounted for; she had constantly received her increased doses from the Apothecary, but had only now and then taken a paper of any that was at hand; one time she had taken ten grains, the next twenty-five grains, and it was after this sudden increase that she first felt the cramp, and saw the foot swelled. Upon examination I found the whole leg tumid and inflamed, and the flexors of the foot in constant action; from this time she gave up the use of the medicine, and I had the mortification of losing another opportunity of adding a cure to the above. One thing however, I learnt from the case, that the  
 medicine



medicine is capable of doing harm if too suddenly increased; but these effects wear off, for this patient has now been without medicine two months, the cramps and swellings have left her, and she is nearly in the state to which she was brought by the medicine when it produced its best effect.

### CASE XVIII.

By Mr. FIELDING.

E. G——, a widow, aged 60, was seized on the 12th April, 1795, whilst walking across her room, with a vertigo, so as to stagger considerably, and remaining in that state for some time, upon recovering a little found herself unable to move the left arm and leg. I saw her on the 19th following, when I found the above mentioned, with a little retraction of the muscles of the left side of the face, and a degree of coldness in the hand and leg, of the same side; pulse natural, appetite pretty good, belly regular—gave her one grain of the TOXICODENDRON every two hours. April 22. Continues the same, except a little pain sometimes in the calf of the left leg.—two grains and a half. April 23. Pain in the calf of the leg, a little prickling felt at the end of two or three fingers of the left hand, complains of some vertigo, continue TOXICODENDRON. April 25,  
warmth

warmth of the affected side still increasing, the motion of the leg becomes less difficult; vertigo quite gone off, continue the medicine as before. April 26. Is able to cross her room with assistance; motion and sensation of the leg still continues to increase, continues. May 1, pain of the arm, and prickling of the hand and fingers, feels frequent flushes of heat in the affected arm returning at intervals; can walk across her room with very little assistance. Strength and warmth of the leg continue to increase very sensibly. July 6, till this day the medicine was discontinued, not being able to procure any. During this interval she has continued to gain strength very gradually, so that she can now walk about pretty well, though the leg feels weak, arm remains in the same state except the prickling, which went off on discontinuing the medicine; the flexors of the fingers seem most affected; though a general numbness and incapability of much motion continue in the whole of the arm. Four grains to a dose. July 15, feels a prickling and sense of heat in several parts of the arm, but particularly in the course of the extensor digitor: com: ordered to take a dose of opening pills to obviate costiveness, continue four grains. July 17. from this time till about the 30th the dose of the medicine was gradually increased to eighteen grains every two hours, during which time she

gained

gained considerably the use of her arm and hand, and the leg became nearly well.

### CASE XIX.

By Mr. FIELDING.

Mrs. R—, a widow. aged 50, of a florid complexion, was seized with an apoplexy, whilst walking in the street, on the 17th of August, 1790; she remained for some days in a state of entire insensibility, after which she began gradually to recover her reason and senses till December, from which time her complaints were almost stationary. She had then a paralytic affection of the whole of the left side, a retraction of the muscles of the face of the same, some faltering in her speech, and her understanding and memory considerably impaired, she was in other respects pretty well, excepting want of sleep, for which she was ordered four grains of purified opium, every night; this never failed to procure her a good night, and render her cheerful the next day; for the paralytic affection, electricity and a variety of other remedies were used for a considerable time with very little effect.

March 21, 1794, complaints remain much the same, excepting that her friends suppose her understanding and memory rather more impaired: half a grain

grain of TOXICODENDRON ter die. The dose of the TOXICODENDRON, after this time, was gradually increased to three grains three times a day, and continued for about a fortnight, without perceiving the least effect; judging that this might be occasioned by the quantity of opium taken at the same time, I began on the 24th of April to lessen the dose of the anodyne, and in the course of about two months, by proceeding very gradually, she was brought to sleep tolerably well without it. June 29, the symptoms was now much the same as before; ordered to take four grains of the TOXICODENDRON, three times in the course of the day. July 10, some prickling in the ends of two or three fingers of the left hand, and likewise some sudden convulsive motion of the leg on the same side, her friends suppose that her memory is somewhat improved, continue medicine, nine grains three times a day. July 11, slept ill in the night, prickling of the fingers and convulsive motion of the leg remain, memory improved, as she can distinctly remember things spoken yesterday, whereas about ten days ago, she could not remember any thing said to her for an hour. July 12, much the same; the medicine was continued in the same dose for some days longer, during which time her memory was much altered for the better, and she gained considerably the motion of the arm and leg; but as she continued

to sleep ill, her friends grew impatient, the use of the medicine was discontinued, and she had again recourse to the opium, which was continued till May, 1795; when she was attacked with another fit of the apoplexy, which she only survived a few days.

HULL, Dec. 1, 1795.

*Copy of a Letter from Mr. RINGROSE, Surgeon.*

SIR,

According to promise I give you the particulars of the paralytic case I mentioned to you, and the effect of the TOXICODENDRON therein.

THO. GOODBARN, aged 56, was seized the 18th of September, with a hemiplegia, which deprived him totally of the use of his limbs of the left side, being determined to try the remedy above-mentioned; I gave him it as follows:—September 23d, iij. grain nocte maneque; 24th, vj. ditto; 25th, x. ditto; 27th, xv. ditto; 28th, xx. ditto; 29th, xxx. ditto; 30th, xl. ditto; October 2d, lx. ditto; 3d, xc. ditto.

Having no more I desisted, not without having the satisfaction to find him so much better, as to proceed in his business, (a shoe maker) as usual; and to walk almost as well, except from a weakness

of

of the extensor tendons of the foot and toes, which I consider as a local weakness entirely; you will observe the man was something better before I gave the medicine; but however, he says, he began to feel himself recover rapidly, after he began to take it; though he experienced no sensible effects, such as twitchings, sickness, nor indeed any uneasiness. As to the largeness of the dose I employed, it might be perhaps owing to the plant being gathered just before I used it, being late in the season; though it appeared green, and when powder'd smelt strong of the fresh herb.\*

I am, Sir, &c.

W. RINGROSE.

*Cottingham, March 1796.*

\* This man has daily performed the duties of a post-man between Hull and Cottingham for many years since his recovery, travelling on foot near twenty miles a-day, and when I pass him on the road he always says "God bless you."

March 1804.

I cannot omit the following letter, as it comes from a justly eminent physician, who practised for more than half a century.

DEAR SIR,

I received the favor of yours, am vastly better of my paralytic complaint, and I really do believe by the use of the TOXICODENDRON, have  
the

the highest opinion of it, and do certainly think better of it, if possible, than when I before gave you my opinion of it. I can safely pronounce it a very valuable medicine, of great active powers, from my own experience. When I increased the dose more than twenty-seven grains in a day, it gently stimulated my bowels, in every other respect perfectly agreed with me, and I daily grew better. Was obliged to leave off its use, from having a most violent vomiting, pain in my stomach, and terrible rheumatism, with which I am yet extremely tormented, and not able to say so much of the medicine to you as I wish, writing being a trouble to me. The medicine was and is certainly worth my attention, and yourself justly entitled to my best thanks.

I am, Sir, &c.

*Beverley.*

J. JOHNSTON.

### CASE XX.

By Mr. ELLIS.

Jan. 31, 1803, I was requested to attend MARY SIMPSON, a young woman, aged 20, milliner. I learnt that she had been attacked about a week before with a violent pain in the head, and on the morning of that day, the 31st, on getting up she perceived

perceived her mouth drawn very considerably to one side, she had no feeling on the right side of her face, and the half of her tongue on the same side was perfectly void of sensibility, and her speech scarcely intelligible. I ordered a stimulant embrocation to be applied to the face, and three table spoons full of the infus amar to be taken every four hours. Feb. 2. no alteration having taken place, I ordered six grains of the TOXICODENDRON to be taken with each dose of the infusion, and a blister to be applied behind the right ear. Feb. 3, she felt a slight tingling in the right cheek, with a little dizziness and pain in the head; the medicines were continued, and on Feb. 5th, the mouth was become nearly in its natural situation, she could speak more intelligibly, and her tongue had nearly regained its proper feeling; the TOXICODENDRON was continued until the 16th, when she was so perfectly recovered as to need no further remedies.

### CASE XXI.

By Mr. ELLIS.

On the 8th of September, 1803, ELIZABETH MEEK, aged 40, of rather a delicate habit, while attending the funeral of a child was seized with hemiplegia. I saw her about an hour afterwards, and found a total deprivation of feeling and motion  
had



had taken place on the right side, the face considerably distorted, and such a loss of speech as to be with difficulty understood; her pulse was quick, and she complained of being thirsty. I ordered her the mist: camphor: with aq: ammon: acet: and a stimulating embrocation to be applied to the parts affected. Sept. 9th, the paralytic affection as yesterday, the skin moist with less thirst; I ordered the mixture to be discontinued, and eight grains of the TOXICODENDRON to be taken every four hours, the embrocation to be used as before; 10th, the right side as on the 9th, she complained of a slight dizziness, sickness, and loss of appetite. I ordered three table spoons full of the compounded infusion of gent. to be taken with each dose of the powders; 11th, the dizziness and sickness rather abated, the limbs as before, I ordered the powders and infusion to be taken every three hours, and a large blister to be applied to the leg and arm; 12th, the dizziness rather increased, the diseased side as before, the blisters had acted but very slightly; I had them dressed with ungu. resin flav. and directed the medicines to be continued.

Sept. 13. Ten A. M. she complained of the dizziness being much increased, and of a prickling sensation in the skin of the right thigh and leg; the blisters were again dressed, and the medicines directed

directed to be given as usual; 6 P. M. I was requested to see her immediately; I found the face much less distorted, her speech much plainer, and the sense of feeling and motion gradually returning in the thigh, but attended with the most violent pain in it, which increased in proportion with its power of action, so as to make it necessary to have two people to keep her in bed. I ordered the infusion and powders to be omitted, being unwilling to give an opiate, lest I should check returning sensibility. I ordered the embrocation, friction, and warm fomentations to be applied to the limb, but without any relief for two hours, and was then under the necessity of giving her a draught with twenty-five drops tinct. opi. in camphor julep. and also of repeating it in an hour after, when she became considerably easier. In the interim of my seeing Mrs. M. and the last ordered draughts being received, I found on my next visit the same pain was coming on in the right arm as had previously began in the thigh, but abated on taking the first draught; 14th, the face and voice remained better, the pain quite gone; she was free from dizziness, and had slept tolerably well in the night; but had lost the use of her thigh. I ordered the TOXICODENDRON and infusion to be resumed every four hours, but which from the dread of the pain being brought on again was neglected: at 7 P. M. the power of motion

was still weaker than in the morning, notwithstanding which I could not prevail upon her to have recourse to the powders again; 15th, the motion was entirely gone again, she then consented to take the powders, which I ordered to be repeated every three hours; 16th, Ten A. M. the pain was beginning to come again in the thigh and leg, which increased considerably during the whole day, but was not so violent as on the 13th, and at 7 P. M. she could again draw up her leg and thigh as she laid in bed, her speech was also much better; 17th, the motion of the leg and thigh continued increasing, but the arm remained perfectly useless; the pain had been so great in the night as to prevent her sleeping, and she complained much of the dizziness and sickness; I ordered her medicine to be given every four hours; 18th, she had a restless night, but the pain, dizziness and sickness were rather abated, and the motion of the leg and thigh better; in the afternoon she was able to sit up a little on the edge of the bed for the first time since her attack, but complained, on setting her foot to the ground, of great numbness in it; 19th, she had slept better, the pain, dizziness and sickness almost gone, and she was able, with the assistance of two people to walk from the bed to the fire, her mouth and speech had nearly recovered their natural state, but the arm still remained exactly as before. On the 20th, 21st and 22d, she kept gradually getting better,

better, and could walk with the help of a crutch, no alteration had taken place in the arm; on the 23d I encreased the dose of TOXICODENDRON to ten grains, which she continued to take without any particular effect, excepting an increase of dizziness until the 26th, when she felt a pricking in the skin of the arm, and a tingling of the fingers, and on the 27th she could move her arm a little; from that time to October 5th no alteration took place, she began to be tired of taking medicines, and wished to try what effect time would produce upon her. The disease, however, remained exactly stationary; finding her unwilling to resume her medicines, I advised her to try electricity, which having done for about ten days, her hand and arm began to have more feeling in them, and in a fortnight longer only a slight weakness remained, since then she has regained her strength sufficiently to attend to her family concerns.

April 24, 1804.

### CASE XXII.

A Young Lady between 11 and 12 years of age, was seized with a violent pain in her head, so as to render it necessary to apply to an eminent Physician, by whose orders she was bled repeatedly with leeches and lancet, her eyes were so affected that she saw every object double, from which circumstance the  
 disorder

disorder was judged to be an accumulation on the brain. When the pain in the head left her, we discovered that she had lost the use of her legs. A caustic was applied to her loins by the late Mr. CRUIKSHANK, and every kind of bath, such as shower, air and fumigated, hot and cold; after that sea bathing warm and cold, without the least effect, till by the advice of the late Dr. KIRBY, of Dorking, and Dr. JOHN CRAWFORD, she took the RHUS TOXICODENDRON made into pills, one grain each; she first took a single pill night and morning, for a week, after that time she increased one, night and morning, every three or four days, till we found her stomach nauseate, we then lessened the number to one, increasing again as before. After taking them a few weeks, she could press lightly with her foot; in the course of three months she was visibly better, when a very violent rash appeared; after which, in one month she was not only able to walk about the house, but out of it as much as half a mile, and continued mending till quite restored.

#### CASE XXIV.

By Mr. BROWN.

I was called on early in the morning of the 9th of April, and found THOMAS PERRY, partly in an insensible state, with the entire loss of one side, his mouth much contracted and drawn to one side, and his speech so much impeded that it was scarcely possible

possible to understand him, his pulse was then very tense and full, but doubting the uncertain effects, in these cases, of bleeding, I declined it. I gave him some strong purgative medicine, such as the infus. fennæ, made strong with the tinct. sacra and tinct. jalapii; by these means I procured a sufficient evacuation. I then thought it a very proper case to try the effects of the RHUS TOXICODENDRON recommended in a pamphlet by Dr. ALDERSON. I began with two grains three times a day, but found no particular effect for two or three days, excepting that he was a little better, and could articulate with more propriety. I then increased the dose gradually, till I came to six grains three times a day, and in two days more found their effect—I mean to say he had a general convulsive spasmodic affection, something like electricity—a peculiar kind of twitching and distortion in all his limbs—a strong involuntary irritation in all his muscles, and he believed all these effects proceeded from his medicine. I encouraged him by all means to persevere, and as an inducement, in strong terms pointed out to him that his life was indebted to them, that he was already much better, and that by a little longer continuance I did not doubt but he would be perfectly well. This had the happiest effect—ten days longer with the same dose, viz. 18 grains divided into three doses, in 24 hours, had uniformly the same consequences, and he then could  
walk

walk about and speak very plain. I after this gave him the Peruvian bark in large doses, the consequence was, that he soon became able to attend upon his horses as usual, and is now perfectly well. Much fatigue overpowers him, so that at times he complains of want of strength—at other times when he has sufficient rest, he tells me, for a few hours in the day, he thinks himself as strong or stronger than ever in his life. This is not the only case in which I have tried the RHUS TOXICODENDRON. I lament much that many of my patients when they found that very uneasy disagreeable irritation all over the body, and finding it proceeded from the medicine, obstinately refused taking more, but in all cases I found it had uniformly the same effect, and I have no doubt had it been continued longer, I should have been able to give Dr. ALDERSON a more flattering and more successful account of this noble medicine, for which the world in general is much indebted, and the Faculty in particular, to him who first brought it into use, not only for this, but for correcting many abuses and errors in the practice of physic in this town, in being always ready to communicate to medical men his ideas, and lastly, ever indefatigable in assisting the needy and distressed.

THOMAS BROWN.

*Hull, Aug. 5, 1796.*

FINIS.

