ANOTHER CASE OF POISONING BY THE SO-CALLED "HOMŒOPATHIC SOLUTION OF CAMPHOR".

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I AM indebted to my friend Mr. Philip Grubb of Warminster for the following notes of a case of poisoning by homœopathic camphor. The notes were sent to me in consequence of my having published some cases of poisoning by this dangerous drug in the *Clinical Society's Transactions*, 1874, vol. vii, p. 27. Subsequently, cases of the same kind were published by myself and others in the *JOURNAL* (1874 and 1875). The following is Mr. Grubb's history of his recent case.

"On Wednesday, April 11th, the following case occurred in my practice. A young gentleman aged eighteen years, reading for Oxford, of fair average health, in whose family no trace of hereditary tendency to epilepsy exists, for the cure of a cold took on sugar, between 6.30 A.M. and noon, seven doses of homœopathic camphor. Each dose, he says, was three drops, though I fully expect that he took more than three drops each time. Within five minutes after taking the last dose, without the slightest warning, he had a severe epileptic fit, in which his tongue was badly bitten. I did not see him during the actual convulsion, but from the description there can be no doubt as to its nature. It lasted more than fifteen minutes. He has been under treatment ever since the fit, feeling, as he says, 'queer', complaining of a peculiar cold sensation on the tongue, extending for about half an inch from the tip. After the immediate effect of the attack went off, I put him on the bromide of potassium, which, however, did not seem to agree with him. I am now (May 7th) giving him *nux vomica*, liquor potassæ, and infusion of *cuscuta*; and he is all but well, though not yet quite what he was before this occurred. I enclose the two labels which were on the bottle containing the camphor.

"Saturated Spirit of Camphor, as used by Dr. Rubini. Ten times the strength of the ordinary Spirit of Camphor."

"Concentrated Solution of Camphor. Dose: two or three drops on sugar every fifteen minutes; less frequently when relieved. Prepared by J. J. O. Evans, Chemist, and Agent for Homœopathic Medicines, Medical Hall, Teignmouth."

"It is right to mention that, about a month before the fit, my patient had a fall while hunting; but he declares that this left not the slightest trace of injury."

DEDUCTIONS FROM THREE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN OBSERVATIONS OF THE ACTION OF CHRYSAROBIN—A NEW EMETIC-PURGE.*

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CHRYSAROBIN is the term which has been selected to designate what is more commonly known, because so first known, as Goa-powder. It has been chosen for these reasons: that Goa-powder is so called only because it is derived by the rest of India from the port named Goa; that the same powder is known over South America as Bahia-powder, except in the province of that name from which the other parts of the country receive it; while in that province it is known by its native name of Aroba-powder. But since this powder is the active part of a whole tree, rather than continue the compound word Aroba-powder, it is convenient to substitute the single word *arobin*. Yet further, while Goa-powder (or old powder) is brown, Aroba-powder (a newly prepared powder) is yellow. Yellow is its right colour. Hence, to *arobin* is added the prefix *chrys*-, and thence is formed *chrys-arobin*, *i.e.*, yellow Aroba-powder. The following is

Professor Attfield's Analysis of Chrysarobin.†

Constituents.	Parts per cent.
Moisture	1
Glucoside	
A bitter principle or principles }	7
A variety of arabin	
Chrysophanic acid	80-84
Resin-like bodies	2.
Woody fibre	5-5
Ash	.5

* Read before the Harveian Society of London.

† *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, March 1875.

The large proportion of chrysophanic acid which enters into the constitution of chrysarobin gives some reason for believing that it may be the active principle. The crude powder and the extracted acid, indeed, have the same locally irritant effects. Either, kept in contact with the skin, produces irritation, inflammation, and discoloration of the cutis. Either, introduced in minute quantity to the eye, causes conjunctivitis. Farther, some other vegetables, which contain chrysarobin, possess active properties which are in some respects similar to those both of chrysarobin and of chrysophanic acid. Thus, the common dock contains chrysophanic acid; and the common dock, made into a poultice or used as an infusion, is well known to be in common use by the country people for the cure of some cutaneous disorders—the same purpose for which Sir Joseph Fayrer introduced chrysarobin to the notice of the profession in 1874. Senna has purgative properties; and, without asserting that this power is owing to the chrysophanic acid which senna contains, it may be stated that purgation is one of the properties of chrysophanic acid taken internally. The same may be said of rhubarb, and more too; for rhubarb is a cholagogue, and I believe I have ascertained that chrysophanic acid is a purgative of decided cholagogue powers.

These facts led Professor Attfield to surmise that chrysophanic acid might be possessed of active therapeutic powers; and, upon his suggestion, Messrs. Young and Postans of Baker Street entrusted me with the clinical investigation of this body, in the course of 1875. With the exception of one or two specimens elsewhere procured, this firm has supplied all the preparations employed in the three hundred and nineteen observations, the deductions from which I shall presently describe.

Chrysophanic acid occurs as a granular powder of a fine bright orange colour. It possesses neither odour nor taste. It may be crystallised. The resin, as appears from Professor Attfield's analysis, is of two kinds. I used a combination of these two; they form a body of a deep reddish-brown colour, brittle, and shining. The aqueous extract is black. The crude chrysarobin presented the usual appearances, which are well known. These constituents were offered as perfectly isolated from each other.

First Series of Observations.—All that could be proved of chrysarobin was that it would be slightly purgative; for such is the action ascribed by Schroff to chrysophanic acid. All that was known of it was its powerfully irritant property, shown by its action on the skin and the conjunctiva. It seemed possible that it might prove an irritant poison. I soon ascertained, by a series of personal experiments, that it possesses no power, in a moderate dose, so active as this. On reaching a dose of six grains, I experienced, at the fourth hour, sensations of nausea, accompanied and followed by sensations of disturbance in the bowels; even an abortive attempt at vomiting; then relief from all symptoms; sixteen hours afterwards, a loose action of the bowels. The next higher dose was given to my brother, a student of medicine. He dined at seven; at half-past eight he took eight grains of chrysarobin made into a pill with confection of roses; at half-past ten he vomited; he then slept, but at twelve o'clock was roused by another attack of vomiting. The bowels remained unaffected. There was no depression except during the act of vomiting.

Second Series of Observations.—This includes ninety cases—thirty children and sixty adults.

The action of chrysarobin is emetic and purgative. Vomiting is always the first sign of action. This is not attended by any depression at all comparable with that caused by tartar emetic or ipecacuanha. In the doses presently to be named, it has not caused any distressing retching; and in children, as well as in adults, the acts of vomiting varied between none in three out of the whole number, and six in two out of the whole number. They were usually two or three; very often only one. The action on the bowels was much more variable—from none in a few cases to nine or ten in equally few cases; most often the range was between three and seven. There is no gripping pain, but the nausea continues more or less markedly until the bowels recover. The motions are very watery, and of such a brown colour as suggests its origin with the powder taken. If the vomiting be very early, then the purgation, although marked by a fluid stool or stools, will certainly not be violent; and in some cases, in which there was no vomiting, the bowels acted very freely. It does not always happen so, however, under the same condition; and I conclude, therefore, that some persons can take a larger dose than others. I cannot distinguish these persons any more than I can accurately gauge the amount of any other purgative which a given person will require at first seeing him. If the dose be taken into a full stomach, that delays its action and determines it to the bowels.

With regard to the dose of chrysarobin, from thirty of these observations which were made on children, I draw the following conclusions. A dose of six grains produces scarcely any effect upon children of twelve,