

tion from Bowdich (Mission to Ashantee), who observes that the king had at his court nearly one hundred negroes of different colours, through the shades of red and copper to white. He also suggests that the Leucæthiopes of Pliny were a tribe of negroes of a less dark complexion than ordinary. In his note to this he says, "that it is perhaps to this lighter colored negro, rather than to the proper albino, that we must refer, in part at least, the accounts which are given by travellers of the great number of white Africans that have been collected in certain situations.

There is no reason why such cases should not be said to occur amongst the races of India. It would certainly not be looked on as anything very remarkable or extraordinary, considering that every variety of shade is met with. At birth the depth of color is much less than it becomes afterwards, and it is no unusual circumstance to meet with very light complexioned individuals, the offspring of parents with the ordinary dark brown skin.

"For a correct knowledge of its physical cause, we are indebted, in the first instance, to an ingenious conjecture of Blumenbach's, who accounted for the red colour of the eye and its extreme sensibility to light by the absence of the pigmentum nigrum. This conjecture was shortly after verified by Ruzzi of Milan, who took advantage of an opportunity which presented itself of dissecting the eye of an albino, with the result that he could not find the pigmentum nigrum. He also examined the structure of the skin, which appeared to be deprived of the rete mucosum."*

The rete mucosum, however, is not deficient, but simply the pigmentary matter on which the various race tints depend. Fuchs is of opinion that, probably, the vascular network of the cutis may be less developed in albinos than is normally the case.†

The cause is quite unknown, and not one of the conjectures on the subject possesses even the element of plausibility. Wilson says that it is sometimes accidental, occurring at a period subsequent to birth, but these cases are simply very extensive leucoderma, in which the pigment may be entirely lost throughout the body, except in the eyes (iris and choroid). I have seen one case in which only the color of the eyes, and a small brown rim round them on the palpebræ, remained to show that the individual was aught but an albino born. The not improbable loss of even these small remains of cutaneous colour would, with the exception of the eyes, have left him in all respects an albino.

Bostock mentions cases of this kind, but they were all cases of acquired albinismus.

(To be continued.)

INDIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS.

PART II.

By Surgeon B. EVERS, Civil Surgeon, Seoni.

(Continued from page 39.)

Calosanthos Indica.—N. O. Bignoniaceæ.

THE Gonds call this plant the "jaimangal;" and it was from a Gond that I first heard of its medicinal properties. The tree is common in Bengal, Burmah, South and Central India, Ceylon, and Java. According to Brandis, "the barks and fruit are used in tanning and dyeing, the seeds are used to line hats, and placed between two layers of wicker work to make umbrellas. Root, bark, leaves, and seeds are used in native medicine." The Gonds employ a decoction of the bark as a discutient application to rheumatic swellings. They do not, however, administer any part of the plant as an internal remedy.

* Bostock op. cit.

† Hebra, Vol. 3, p. 157.

I have made trial of the powder and an infusion of the bark, and have found it to be most powerfully diaphoretic; the drug has slight anodyne properties, also a bath, prepared with the bark, I have frequently employed in rheumatism. Twenty-eight cases of acute rheumatism were treated with this drug, and in all, the results have been most satisfactory. The dose of the powder is from 5 to 15 grains, thrice daily; of the infusion (1 ounce of bark to 10 ounces of boiling water) an ounce three times a day. Combined with opium it forms a much more powerful sudorific than the compound powder of ipecacuanha. The drug does not possess any febrifuge properties. Roxburgh makes no mention of the medicinal qualities of this plant.

Pongamia glabra.—N. O. Leguminosæ.

The natives of the south of India thread the legumes and tie them round the necks of children suffering from whooping cough. It is said by them to be of use in these cases. Probably the friction of the legumes against the chest, or it may be, the exhalation from them, might have something to do in mitigating the distressing cough. I have employed the powder of the dried pericarps in the treatment of whooping cough (14 cases), and in chronic bronchitis (25 cases), and must acknowledge its efficacy in these affections. Most of my patients were quite relieved in from 10 to 12 days. For an adult the dose of the powder ranges from 5 to 10 grains; for children, 1 to 3 grains, thrice daily, given with a little syrup or honey.

The oil obtained (by expression) from the seeds is employed by the natives in the treatment of "scabies, herpes, and other cutaneous diseases." It is also employed as an embrocation in rheumatic affections. According to Brandis, "the pods and the leaves are used in native medicine."

Holarrhena antidysenterica.—N. O. Apocynaceæ. Seeds.

An infusion of "the oat-like seeds (Anderjun of the Taleef Shereef) is said to be effectual in arresting hæmorrhage from piles." "In the only two cases of this affection that came under my care, I employed the drug with advantage. It is one well worthy of further trial. For further particulars regarding the value of this plant, I must refer my readers to Ainslie's *Materia Medica*, Vol. I, p. 88, and to Waring's *Pharmacopœia of India*, p. 137. The bark (Conessi-bark) of this plant has long been held in high repute as a remedy for dysentery.

Jatropha curcas.—N. O. Euphorbiaceæ.

The juice of this plant is used by natives to arrest bleeding from wounds, &c. The seeds possess purgative properties; and the oil obtained from them is said to be useful in cutaneous affections and in chronic rheumatism. Not long since my attention was attracted to a notice of this plant in the *Indian Medical Gazette*, by Mr. Udoj Chund Dutt. He reports that the milky juice of this plant is a most powerful hæmostatic. In two cases, in which trial was made, he says that the bleeding was at once arrested; and to use his own words, "the blood seemed to be at once curdled up." Before this notice appeared, I had the following case under treatment:—

Bugloo, aged 25 years, was admitted into the Seoni Main Dispensary on the 3rd October 1874. He was suffering from a large open abscess in the heel of the right foot; the abscess had resulted from an injury. The patient stated that it was not so much the pain and swelling of the foot that caused him anxiety, but the frequent hæmorrhages from the abscess. On removing the rags, &c., that enveloped the foot, hæmorrhage, (evidently venous) at once occurred. Immediately above the internal malleolus I found a pulsating tumour about the size of a pigeon's egg; pressure on the posterior tibial artery on the proximal side of the swelling at once arrested the bleeding; the superficial veins in the neighbourhood were enlarged, and a faint thrill could be detected in them. Taking into consideration the situation of the tumour, and the character of the hæmorrhage, I diagnosed the case as one of varicose aneurism. The bleeding from the tumour was easily checked by the applica-

tion of the tourniquet, but the distress occasioned by the pressure of the instrument was so great that before evening the patient begged that it might be taken off. After this instrumental and digital pressure were resorted to alternately. In the meantime the abscess in the heel was gradually filling up. On seeing Mr. Uday Chund Dutt's paper, I determined to give the jatropha juice a trial, and accordingly, on the 12th October, I injected a drachm of the juice into the tumour by means of the hypodermic syringe; the result was astonishing; in twenty minutes' time the pulsation was so faint that no non-professional person could have detected it; and by evening all pulsation had ceased, a good firm coagulum had been produced, the nozzle of the syringe was retained in the tumour for about ten minutes; and on removing the instrument just one drop of blood escaped through the puncture; a small piece of dry lint and a piece of sticking plaster were applied to the puncture. No ill effects resulted from the injection of the juice. I was anxious to watch the result of this treatment further, but on the evening of the 16th October the patient left hospital without permission, considering that it was no longer necessary for him to stay in Seoni. People from his village inform me that the man is now (fully three months after the operation) quite well. This is only a single case it is true, but it illustrates how a very simple and speedy operation may be had recourse to in place of others more serious. We all know what a difficult thing it is to treat aneurismal affections. Holmes in his System of Surgery, (Vol III., p. 512) has the following passage:—"The discovery of a fluid of great coagulating power, and devoid of irritating properties, is a desideratum in this method," i.e., the treatment of aneurisms by injections. I make no pretensions to originality, but I ask that others with better opportunities than myself may give this drug a trial.

Two children were brought to me for the purpose of having the frænum of the tongue snipped, and in both these cases, after the operation, I employed jatropha juice as a styptic; there can be no doubt of the value assigned to it by natives. The jatropha curcas is a very common hedge plant. Drury states that the juice "is of a very tenacious nature, and if blown, forms large bubbles, probably owing to the presence of caoutchouc." "A decoction of the leaves is used in the Cape Verd Islands to excite secretion of milk in women."

Sesamum Indicum.—N. O. Pedaliaceæ.

Not long ago I found in the *Pioneer* newspaper that the mucilage obtained from the leaves of this plant is considered a specific for dysentery in some parts of Australia, and this led me to make trial of the drug. Waring remarks on this subject:—"The leaves (*sesami folia* or *Benne leaves*) are official in the secondary list of the United States Pharmacopœia; they abound with thick viscid mucilage, which is readily imparted to water, and an infusion of them is much used in the southern states of North America in all affections requiring demulcents. One or two full-sized fresh leaves, infused or agitated in half a pint of cold water, will soon render it sufficiently viscid for the purpose. If the dried leaves be used, hot water should be substituted for the cold. How far the leaves of the Indian-grown plant may be used in this way remains to be determined." I have employed the mucilage, obtained from the leaves of the *Indian* plant, in the treatment of sixteen cases of dysentery, and in all recovery followed. From six to seven days was the time necessary for such treatment. I confess, however, that my cases were not of the virulent type seen towards the end of the rainy season. The drug acts simply as a demulcent, and does not, in my opinion, exert any specific influence on the disease; furthermore, it is necessary to combine an opiate with it, to relieve the tenesmus, so that probably the opium added has as much to do in checking the disease as the mucilage itself. Waring again states that "the seeds have powerfully emmenagogue properties assigned to them, and it is believed by the natives and Indo-Britons that, if taken

largely, they are capable of producing abortion. The alleged emmenagogue properties of these seeds deserve further investigation." In three cases of congestive dysmenorrhœa I administered the powder of the seeds in ten-grain doses, three or four times a day, with benefit. I have at the same time employed the hip-bath recommended by Waring. It is commonly believed in the south of India that the seeds, when eaten by a pregnant woman, are likely to induce abortion; but no instance of the kind has ever come under my notice, nor have I heard of any. Further trials with the drug are necessary. The seeds of this plant yield the common til or jingelly oil of commerce.

The leaves of the *pedalium murere*, another plant of the same natural order, also yield a viscid mucilage when agitated in cold water. The natives use the mucilage thus obtained as a demulcent and diuretic in the treatment of gonorrhœa, and there can be no doubt of its value in such cases. The plant is very common in the south of India.

January 12th 1875.

NOTES ON A TRIP HOME BY CHINA AND AMERICA.

By a PERIPATETIC CONTRIBUTOR.

THE establishment of the two fine lines of Pacific steamers, and the opening of the trans-continental railway from San Francisco to Omaha, have rendered the home journey *via* China and America so easy and pleasant, that the number of Indian officers who choose that route has already become considerable, and is sure to increase yearly, till the new road becomes almost as familiar as the old Cape voyage was to our predecessors or the P. and O. is to modern home-goers. As, however, the novelty of the thing has not yet worn off, a few stray notes on the medical aspects of the countries traversed may be interesting to your readers, and induce them to follow—slight and superficial as such glimpses as are alone possible in a hurried journey must of necessity be—our footsteps when the welcome furlough comes.

We left Calcutta by one of Messrs. Apcar and Co.'s excellent opium steamers, and reached Penang after a pleasant trip of seven days. The beauties of the betel-nut island are too well known to need description, and our stay was too short to allow of our visiting its medical institutions. Two days more brought us to Singapur, where, although our stay was only 26 hours, the kindness of one of the local physicians enabled us to see most that was interesting of its medical lights. The profession is officially represented by a principal civil medical officer and two colonial surgeons, and non-officially by about eight local practitioners. The principal medical officer's duties are chiefly administrative, and embrace Penang and Malacca as well as Singapur, but he is also health officer at the latter port. The colonial surgeons divide the executive work between them, one having the European hospital and jail, the other the pauper hospital, leper asylum, &c. The European hospital, which can accommodate from 30 to 40 in-patients, we did not see, but we carefully inspected the pauper hospital.

The name is somewhat a misnomer, since all patients who can pay, and these are a considerable number, are charged a dollar a day for board and treatment. It was originally founded by a rich Chinaman, named Tan King Ching, for the benefit of his own countrymen, but was taken over by Government some years ago, and is now open to all, and supported from the common funds. The buildings consist of nine blocks, forming roughly two squares, one within the other, but sufficiently apart for efficient ventilation. One block contains the shop, quarters for resident officials, &c., six of the others are large wards of 60 beds each, another the eye ward has 40 beds, and the last contains two wards for females. The