

**Medical Matters.****"CRAW CRAW."**

ON the west coast of Africa, an obscure cutaneous affection called "Craw Craw" or "Kra Kra" is met with; according to some it is parasitic and is caused by a filaria, while others regard it as a microbic disease. While the pathogeny is obscure, the same is not the case with its pathology. This disease has for its seat of predilection the lower part of the leg, where it begins as one or more red maculæ, which are excessively itchy; by being scratched they develop into papules then into pustules and abrasions. At the same time, fresh lesions appear over other parts of the body, of which they sometimes cover a considerable portion. As the drugs usually employed (corrosive sublimate, permanganate of potash, carbolic acid, iodoform), only gave incomplete cures, a French Naval Surgeon, Dr. J. Emily, who having taken part in the Marchand mission, had the opportunity of seeing a large number of cases of "Craw Craw," was led to try the effect of boric acid powder. Having carefully cleaned the surrounding skin surface, removed all the scabs, and washed with 1 in 1,000 solution of perchloride of mercury, he spread a layer of boric acid powder over the affected parts; this was covered with sterilized gauze spread with boric vaseline, and over this cotton wool and a bandage. In the four cases treated in this manner, Dr. Emily made a complete cure in five or six days.

**AUSTRALIAN DRUGS.**

AUSTRALIA is rich in indigenous vegetable drugs, which may at some future time become largely utilised for medicinal and other purposes. Mr. J. H. Maiden, the New South Wales Government Botanist, has prepared a list of those at present known, and its length would astonish those unacquainted with the immensity of the vegetable wealth of Australia. Among the more useful kinds of indigenous vegetable drug found in New South Wales is a species of water lily, the leaves of which are astringent, and have been employed in cases of Phthisis and Dysentery. The *Polanisia viscosa* is used by the natives to relieve headache. It is found in other countries, and in Cochin China is used as a counter-irritant, also as a vesicant. In

the United States, the roots are employed as a vermifuge. In India, the leaves, boiled in ghee, are applied to recent wounds, and the juice to ulcers. The seeds are occasionally given in fevers and diarrhoea. The Jelly Leaf is used for diseases of the chest, also as a poultice for snakebites, stings of wasps, and other insects. In India it is regarded as a remedy for rheumatism. The Sneeze Weed has been successfully employed for the cure of blight, and in India is found useful in cases of paralysis, pains in the joints, and special diseases. The fever or bitter bark is used in the preparation of "bitters," and drinks thus made are said not to occasion headaches. The juice of a plant known to botanists as *Sarcostemma australe* is used in northern Australia as a remedy for smallpox, and by settlers in New South Wales as an application to wounds. It is said to cure warts and corns very quickly. The Native Centaury is useful as a tonic medicine in indigestion, liver complaints, diarrhoea, and dysentery. It is a popular herbal remedy throughout the colony. The Kai-kia is employed as a drink in cases of sickness. The stalks, leaves, and roots of *Evolvulus alsinoides* form a reputed remedy in dysentery and fever; and the boiled leaves of *Ipomœa pes-capra* are used externally as an anodyne in colic, a decoction being employed in rheumatism. The juice is given as a diuretic in cases of dropsy, the bruised leaves being at the same time applied to the dropsical part. The Brooklime is largely used by colonists as a remedy for liver and other complaints. The New South Wales Sassafras makes a useful tonic, as do many other kinds of indigenous plants. The Caustic Creeper, or Milk Plant, is said to be an infallible remedy for dysentery and low fever. The Native Quince, known also by other names, forms a good tonic, and is useful in low and intermittent fever, the dose consisting of ten grains of powdered bark, taken three times a day. The bark of the Bull Oak is used with advantage in chronic diarrhoea and dysentery, and in China is used as an astringent. The native Sarsaparilla, or Sweet Tea, has been recommended as an alterative, a tonic, and an anti-scorbutic. It has been used from the earliest days of Australian settlement. The common Maiden Hair Fern, which is abundant in New South Wales, is used as an astringent, as is the Brake Fern or Bracken, the rhizome of which has been employed as a substitute for hops.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)