

even in such, if not well dissolv'd, it sticks to the Folds of the Intestines and raises great Heats and Disorders.]

### 6. Of Mechoacan.

**M**echoacan, likewise call'd *white Rhubarb*, *Scammony*, or *Briony of America*, is a light Root, white both on the Outside and within, which is brought to us in Pieces from the Province of *Mechoacan* in *New Spain*, from which it takes its Name. There is likewise a great deal of *Mechoacan*, according to the *Sieur Rouffiau*, in the Island of *St. Domingo*, inasmuch that a Ship might be loaded with it from thence in a little Time. This Root, when in the Earth, sends forth Stalks that bear small Leaves like a Heart, of a whitish green, among which grow little Berries, which are green at first, and turn red by Degrees as they ripen. The *Mechoacan* is a winding Creeper, and differs little from *Briony*, only in the Figure of the Leaves and in Taste. The Root cut and dried cannot be distinguished from that of the *Briony*, but that the *Mechoacan* is of a Taste and Smell that is almost insipid, whereas the *Briony* has an intolerable Bitterness. We chuse the fairest Pieces of the *Mechoacan* that are white within and without, dry and ponderous, of an almost insipid Taste, and throw aside that which is dirty, thin and parch'd, and take Care there be no *Briony* mix'd among it, which is a common Cheat when *Mechoacan* is dear; but may be easily discover'd, in that the *Mechoacan* has its Lines thicker placed together and is of a sweet Taste, whereas the *Briony* is extremely bitter. It contains a great deal of Oil and essential Salt.

The *Mechoacan* being powder'd fine, is a gentle Purgative, and may be given in double the Quantity to *Jalap*. It is one of the best Medicines we have for purging watry Humours, and is to be prefer'd to *Jalap*, because it acts not with that Violence, and therefore may be administer'd both to Old and Young with Safety, in *Cachexia's*, *Scurvies*, *Jaundice*, or *Obstructions*, in Powder, with any proper Liquor, or infus'd in Wine. It is a good Hydragogue, purging watry Humours from all Parts of the Body, chiefly from the Head, Nerves, Breast and Lungs; it prevails against Catarrhs and the Venereal Disease, purges Slime from the Stomach, and is good to be given to Children against the Rickets, Kings-Evil, running Sores and Scald Heads. You may make a compound Extract of it thus: Take *Mechoacan* three Ounces, Ginger two, white Turbith one, Polypody of the Oak half an Ounce; make a Tincture with Spirit of Wine, after due Digestion,

deccant or strain it off clear, and add two Drams of Manna, Spirit of Vitriol five Drops, Oil of Cinnamon three, mix and make an Extract, whereof from half a Scruple to a Scruple is a good Dose.

*Mechoacan*, or *Rhabarbarum Album Indicum*, is a white light Root, which *Lemery* we have brought to us, cut in Pieces and dried, from *New-Spain*, and other Parts of *America*. This Plant is a Species of the *Winding-Briony*, which *M. Tournesort* calls *Brionia Americana repens folio anguloso*, the creeping *Briony* of *America*, with a pointed Leaf, which is large, thin and whitish. The Flowers produce small green Berries, which grow redder as they ripen; they contain in them a sharp-pointed Seed, but are of no Use in Physick, nor any other Part but the Root.

[It is the Root of the *Convolvulus Americanus Mechoacan Dictus*. *Tourn. Inst.* 84. *R. Hist.* 1. 723. *Brionia Mechoacana Alba*, *C. B. Pin.* 297. It was in great Esteem among the Antients, particularly in Arthritic Pains; but since the Discovery of *Jalap* it is quite disregarded.]

### Of White Briony, or the White Vine.

The *Briony*, or wild Vine, is a Plant which is so well known that it is needless to describe it; besides that, all Botannical Authors mention it, and that there is hardly a Garden or Hedge in the Country but what is full of it. The Root of this Plant is so violent, when fresh, that the Peasants call it the *Mad Nop*, which, if they happen to eat through Inadvertence, it makes them frantick, and sometimes they run the Risque of Death itself: But being dried, it is of some Use in Physick, as it has a Place in some Compositions.

The *Sieur Mathurin Seville*, the most famous Botanist we have had at Paris for many Ages, assur'd me that the true wild Turnep was the *Briony*, and that the Seed which was contain'd in the little dry Berries, was what ought to be put into the Composition of the *Venice-Treacle*. Some believe the *Briony* to be an excellent Remedy to cure the Biting of Serpents, and other venomous Creatures.

[The Fæculæ of *Briony*, when dried, are like Starch; but as this is found a Medicine of little Use, there is hardly any of it now made.]

### Of Black Briony, or the Black Vine.

There is yet another kind of *Briony*, call'd the *Black Vine*, to which some have given the Name of our *Lady's Seal*. But as we never sell either of these two Roots, I did not think it requisite to give