ariſe from one root, from an inch to an inch and a half high ; the leaves are linear, tabulate, and acuminated, ſomewhat hairy on the edges, and their points turned to one side of the ſtalk. The petals are white and about the length of the calyx. Lightfoot found this ſpecies on a hill in the iſle of Bute. He is doubtful whether the s*agina procumbens,* var. *β* of Linnaeus, be not the ſame plant with this. It flowers in July.

5. *Saginoides,* pearlwort ſpurrey, has ſmooth, linear, oppoſite leaves: the peduncles are ſolitary and very long. Aiton ſays it is a native of England, and flowers from June to Auguſt.

SPERM, the seed whereof an animal is formed. See Physiology.

SPERMACETI, a whitiſh, unctuous, flaky ſubſtance, prepared from oil, but chiefly from the brains of a ſpe­cies of whale called *phyſeter macrocephalus.*

The method of preparing ſpermaceti is kept a ſecret; but the proceſs is ſaid to be this : The brains being taken out of the animal, are then, as ſome ſay, melted over a gentle fire, poured into moulds, and when cold melted again ; and this proceſs is continued till they are purified. Others ſay, that after being preſſed and drain­ed they are more thoroughly purified by ſteeping them in a ley of alkaline ſalt and quicklime. The brains are then waſhed, and cut into thin flakes or ſlices with wooden knives. One fiſh is ſaid to afford ſome tons of brains. Good ſpermaceti is gloſſy and ſemitranſparent, in fine white flakes ; ſoft and unctuous to the touch, yet dry and friable ; in taſte, ſomewhat like butter, and of a faint ſmell like that of tallow. Some adulterate it with wax ; but the deceit is diſcovered, either by the ſmell of the wax or by the dulneſs of the colour. Some also ſell a preparation of oil taken from the tail of the whale inſtead of that from the brain ; but this kind turns yellow as ſoon as expoſed to the air. Indeed it is apt in general to grow yellowiſh, and to contract a ran­cid fiſhy ſmell if not carefully ſecured from the air. The more perfectly it has been purified at firſt, the leſs ſuſceptible it is of theſe alterations ; and after it has been changed, it may be rendered white and ſweet again by ſteeping it afreſh in a ley of alkaline ſalt and quicklime. It melts in a ſmall degree of heat, and congeals again as it cools.

Spermaceti is of uſe in medicine. Quincy ſays it is a noble remedy in the aſthma, &c. though chiefly uſed in bruiſes, inward hurts, and after delivery. For inter­nal uſe, it may be diſſolved in aqueous liquors into the form of an emulſion, by trituration with almonds, the yolk or white of an egg, and more elegantly by muci­lages ; or made into a lohoch, by mixing two drams of it with a suitable quantity of yolk of egg, then adding half an ounce of freſh drawn oil of almonds, and an ounce of balsamic ſyrup. Spermaceti is not capable of being diſſolved by cauſtic alkalis, and of forming ſoaps, like other oily matters : but it is altogether ſoluble in oils, and unites by liquefaction with wax and resins ; and in theſe forms is applied externally. But it is cer­tain, its greateſt property, and that which makes it ſo much in vogue in many places, is its ſoftening the skin. Whence it comes to be uſed by the ladies in paſtes, waſhes, &c.

Spermaceti candles are of modern manufacture : they are made ſmooth, with a fine gloſs, free from rings and scars, superior to the finest wax-candles in colour and luſtre ; and, when genuine, leave no ſpot or ſtain on the fineſt silk, cloth, or linen.

A method has been lately propoſed by Mr Smith Gibbes of Magdalen college, Oxford, to convert animal muſcle into a ſubſtance much reſembling ſpermaceti. The proceſs is remarkably simple : Nothing more is neceſſary than to take a dead carcaſe and expoſe it to a ſtream of running water: it will in a ſhort time be chan­ged to a maſs of fatty matter. To remove the offenſive smell, a quantity of nitrous acid may then be poured upon it, which uniting with the fetid matter, the fat is ſeparated in a pure ſtate. This acid indeed turns it yellow, but it may be rendered white and pure by the action of the oxygenated muriatic acid. Mr Gibbes brought about the ſame change in a much ſhorter time. He took three lean pieces of mutton and poured on them the three mineral acids, and he perceived that at the end of three days each was much altered ; that in the nitrous acid was much ſoftened, and on ſeparating the acid from it, he found it to be exactly the ſame with that which he had before got from the water ; that in the muriatic acid was not in that time ſo much altered ; the vitriolic acid had turned the other black.

SPERMACOCE, button-wood, in botany: A genus of plants belonging to the claſs of *tetrandria,* and order of *monogynia ;* and in the natural ſyſtem ar­ranged under the 47th order, st*ellatae.* The corolla is monopetalous and funnel-ſhaped, and there are two bidentate ſeeds. The ſpecies are eight, tenuior, verti- cillata, hirta, articularis, ſtricta, hiſpida, procumbens, and ſpinoſa.

SPERMATIC, in anatomy, ſomething belonging to the ſperm or ſeed.

SPEUSIPPUS, an Athenian philoſopher, the ne­phew and ſucceſſor of Plato. Contrary to the practice of Plato, Speuſippus required from his pupils a ſtated gra­tuity. He placed ſtatues of the graces in the ſchool which Plato had built. On account of his infirm ſtate of health, he was commonly carried to and from the aca­demy in a vehicle. On his way thither he one day met Diogenes, and ſaluted him ; the surly philoſopher refuſed to return the ſalute, and told him, that such a fee­ble wretch ought to be aſhamed to live ; to which Speuſippus replied, that he lived not in his limbs, but in his mind. At length, being wholly incapacitated, by a paralytic ſtroke, for the duties of the chair, he reſigned it to Xenocrates. He is ſaid to have been of a violent temper, fond of pleasure, and exceedingly avaricious. Speuſippus wrote many philoſophical works, which are now lost, but which Ariſtotle thought sufficiently valuable to purchaſe at the expence of three talents. From the few fragments which remain of his philoſophy, it appears that he adhered very ſtrictly to the doctrine of his maſter.

SPEY, a river of Scotland, rising from a lake of the ſame name in Badenoch, and, after a ſerpentine courſe of 76 miles, paſſes by Rothes caſtle, and falls into the German ſea at Garnoch near Elgin. Mr Pennant tells us, that the Spey is a dangerous neighbour to Caſtle Gordon, overflowing frequently in a dreadful manner, as appears by its ravages far beyond its banks. The bed of the river is wide and full of gravel, and the chan­nel very ſhifting. In 1746 the duke of Cumberland passed this river at Belly church, near Caſtle Gordon, when the channel was ſo deep as to take an officer, from

@@@[mu] Phil. T 1794.