

PHARMACOPŒIAL VEGETABLE DRUGS.

DIGITALIS

Digitalis purpurea occurs throughout the greater part of Europe, being, however, generally absent from limestone districts. It was used in domestic medicine in early days, and by the Welsh (see note, page 1) as an external medicine. Fuchs (252) and Tragus (650), 1542, pictured the plant, but remarked that it was a violent medicine. Parkinson (492) commended it in 1640, and it was investigated in 1776-9 by Withering (693), through whose efforts it was introduced into licensed medicine. *Digitalis* was originally employed as a remedy in fevers, in which direction it is no longer used. In 1799, J. Ferriar (233), of Manchester, England, contributed a treatise concerning the medicinal uses of this drug, which was also described by Withering (693), Bosch (89), Moore (450), and other authors of that period. At present it is largely valued for its poisonous action and is by some standardized by its physiological qualities when injected into the veins of lower animals, the United States Government having issued a bulletin on the subject.

The Eclectic uses of *Digitalis* are based on its kindly influence, instead of its poisonous action, the aim being to avoid heart shock. Consequently the Eclectic Specific Medicine *Digitalis* has not the physiological poisonous action that bases the old school drug valuation.

ELATERINUM

Elaterium is the dried juice of the fruit of *Ecballium elaterium*, common throughout the Mediterranean regions, from Portugal to Southern Russia and Persia, as well as through Central Europe. The method of preparing elaterium, as described by Dioscorides (194), is practically that of the present day. The drug is also mentioned by Theophrastus (633). Elaterium is a powerful hydragogue cathartic, paralleling *Croton tiglium* in its vicious action, and has been empirically known from the earliest times to the natives of the countries it inhabits. Clutterbuck (154), (1819, London Medical Repository, xii, p. 1-9) recommends a process of obtaining elaterium in irregular cake-like fragments, which is now the form in which it is employed in medicine, hence the common term "Clutterbuck's elaterium."

ERGOTA

This drug, from the earliest period, has been known as a disturber of flour, it having been long since observed that flour made of rye containing ergot gave rise to the disease now known as ergotism. When we consider that many of the malignant epidemics and frightful pestilences recorded in the history of mediæval Europe, including an epidemic occurring as late as 1816, were ascribed to spurred rye, it can be seen that such old terms as "convulsivus malignus" and "morbus spasmodicus," once applied to the ergot disease, were well chosen. Not till 1838, however, was the nature of ergot authoritatively determined by Quekett (529) in his paper read before the Linnæan Society,

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titled "Observations on the Anatomical and Physiological Nature of Ergot in Certain Grasses." Before that date, although recognized as a fungus, the stage known as ergot was considered a distinct species.

As with all natural drugs, so with ergot. It is a gift of domestic medicine, and was first mentioned by Adam Lonicer (394), Frankfort, Germany, who (1565) ascribed to it obstetric virtues, on the authority of women who considered it of "remarkable and certain efficacy." The English botanist Ray (536) alludes (1693) to its medicinal properties; a Dutch physician, Rathlaw, employed it in 1747; Desgranges, of Lyons (189b), praised it in 1777; while Dr. John Stearns* (611a), of Waterford, N. Y., 1807, under the name "Pulvis parturiens," highly commended it in a paper contributed to the Medical Repository, which gave ergot the American introduction that, supported by other authorities, pushed the drug into prominence. Ergot is a gift of home obstetric practice established over three centuries ago by the German midwives. (See Lloyd Brothers' Drug Treatise No. XII on Ergot.)

EUCALYPTUS

Eucalyptus globulus, and other species of eucalyptus, are indigenous to Australia, where the leaves are employed by the natives as a remedy for intermittent fever. It was thus introduced to Europeans towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Possibly its employment by the crew of the ship *La Favorite*, who in the vicinity of Botany Bay were nearly decimated by fever, from which they recovered through the use of an infusion of the leaves of eucalyptus, first gave the drug conspicuity, through the efforts of Dr. Eydoux and M. de Salvy. Dr. Ramel, of Valencia, however, has the credit of introducing the remedy to the Academy of Medicine, 1866, thus bringing the drug to the attention of the medical profession, by whom it is now used in extract form, in other directions than that for which it was originally commended. The distilled oil of eucalyptus has now an extended reputation and use. The date of its first use by the natives of Australia is unknown.

EUONYMUS

Euonymus atropurpureus and *Euonymus americanus* are probably collected indiscriminately, both varieties being known by the common name *Wahoo*. The bark of the root is the part used. This remedy, in the form of a decoction, was once a favorite in domestic medication, and was introduced from thence to the regular medical profession, as were other American remedies of like nature. It occupied

*Dr. John Stearns, the man who introduced Ergot to American practice, was born in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, May 16, 1770. He graduated from Yale in 1789, studying medicine with Dr. Erastus Sargeant, of Stockbridge, until 1792. He then attended the University of Pennsylvania, but probably did not graduate, as in 1793 he began to practice medicine near Waterford, New York, marrying in 1797 the daughter of Col. Hezekiah Ketchum. He became enthusiastic in behalf of medical societies, and was a leading spirit in the passing of the New York Medical Law, 1806. When the Medical Society of the State of New York was established, Stearns, being a leading spirit, was elected Secretary, filling the position for several years. In 1812 the regents of the University at Albany (where he then resided) conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine. He was elected President of the Medical Society of New York four times successively, 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820. In 1819 Dr. Stearns moved to New York City, where in 1846 he was a leading spirit in organizing the New York Academy of Medicine, being elected the first President. He died of blood poisoning, the result of a wound, March 18, 1848.

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a place in all the early domestic works on medicine, and seems to be alike credited to the American Indians and the early settlers. In Eclectic medication wahoo has been a favorite since the days of Dr. Beach. Under the names "nine barks" or "seven barks" it has a domestic record transplanted to proprietary remedies that use these titles. The Eclectic "concentration" *euonymin* has been conspicuous in England, but has since fallen into disuse. (See Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, No. XII, *The Eclectic Resins, Resinoids, Oleo-Resins, and Concentrated Principles.*)

EUPATORIUM

Eupatorium perfoliatum, boneset, or thoroughwort, is indigenous to the temperate regions of the Eastern United States, and in the form of an infusion or tea was very popular with the settlers; being found in every well-regulated household. As a bitter tonic its uses became known to the early members of the American medical profession, and was handed therefrom to physicians of the present day. Its American history is probably paralleled by the record of this herb in other countries.

FICUS

The fig tree (*Ficus carica*) is native to Asia Minor and Syria, extending into Africa and Oriental countries, the Mediterranean islands, and elsewhere. It is now cultivated in the temperate countries of the entire world. The fig tree and its leaves are repeatedly mentioned in the Scriptures, where they are symbolical of peace and plenty. Charlemagne, in 812, ordered its cultivation in Central Europe, and in the reign of Henry VIII fig trees still standing in the garden of Lambeth Palace were brought to England, though the fig was unquestionably cultivated in England before that date. The fig has been used from all times as a food and as a confection, and it is repeatedly mentioned in the Arabian Nights. Its tri-lobed leaf is synonymous with primitive religions and has occupied a more or less conspicuous place in symbolic worships from the earliest date.

FOENICULUM

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) is indigenous from the Caspian Sea to the Greek peninsula and other Mediterranean countries, growing wild over a large part of Southern Europe, especially in the vicinity of the sea. It is also cultivated in favorable localities, as in Saxony, France, and Italy. Charlemagne encouraged its cultivation. Its employment in Northern Europe has been from all time, as is indicated by the fact that Anglo-Saxon domestic medical recipes dating from at least the eleventh century give it a place. The use of the seeds in domestic medication in the form of infusion as well as its employment in bread-making is too well established to need more than a mention.