

PHARMACOPŒIAL VEGETABLE DRUGS.

VIBURNUM PRUNIFOLIUM

Black haw, *Viburnum prunifolium*. The bark of this tree was employed in American domestic medication during the first part of the nineteenth century. The first authentic reference we have observed is in the *American Family Physician*, by Professor John King, M. D. (356), 1857, where the drug is described and the statement made that it acts as a uterine tonic, its uses being practically those now recorded in medical literature. In 1860 Dr. I. J. M. Goss (*New Preparations*, 1878, p. 61) commended the drug, probably brought to his attention through the writings of King, as well, possibly, as from its local employment in his part of the South. He introduced it into his own practice and commended it to his professional friends. From this date black haw grew rapidly in favor, and through repeated publications, in medical as well as pharmaceutical literature, came into extensive demand, being finally given a position in the Pharmacopeia of the United States.

XANTHOXYLUM

Prickly ash, *Xanthoxylum americanum*, is a shrub native to North America, being somewhat abundant in localities where it is found, between the Mississippi River and the Western States. Long a domestic remedy, it became a favorite in the Eclectic school of medicine by reason of its use during the prevalence of the Asiatic cholera in Cincinnati, 1849, in which it was employed by them with great satisfaction. It had, however, as stated, a domestic as well as a seemingly professional record preceding that date, the same reaching back to the primitive medication of the Indians. Barton's Collection (43), Zollickoffer's (706) *Materia Medica* (1826), and other authorities on the domestic remedies of North America mention it conspicuously, the latter writer stating that the berries were used to relieve the toothache, a decoction of the bark in the treatment of rheumatic affections, whilst the country people employed an infusion of the berries in colic. It was therefore a popular remedy, possessed of marked carminative qualities, that, impressing such men as Barton (43), Thacher (631), King 356-357), Zollickoffer (706), and others, brought it into professional recognition. Prickly ash berries are used in large amount in some of the American proprietary remedies.

ZEA (STIGMA MAYDIS)

Corn Silk (*Zea*, or *Stigmata maydis*) seems to have crept into the notice of the medical profession in Europe before it had any conspicuity in America. In 1878 (*Revista de Madrid*), a Dr. Betherand mentioned it in print. Long preceding that date, however, a tea of corn silk had been employed in American domestic practice as a remedy for acute affections of the bladder. Dr. John Davis, a well-known Cincinnati physician, repeatedly informed the writer that, in his opinion, a decoction of corn silk, together with a decoction of dried pods of beans, was the most effective of all diuretics he had employed in his practice,

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as well as being most satisfactory in acute cystitis. The *Medical News*, August 10, 1881, commended a decoction of corn silk in the aforementioned directions, and in the *Therapeutic Gazette* (634), February, 1881, Professor L. W. Benson reported that in his practice the remedy acted very favorably and kindly. Following this, various contributions appeared in the foreign medical journals, one by Dr. Dufau in the *London Medical Record*, spoke of it as a little known, newly introduced remedy. Many commendatory articles followed this in European medical journals, which fact, together with the increased demand on American manufacturing pharmacists, led to its introduction into the Pharmacopœia of the United States.

ZINGIBER

Ginger, *Zingiber officinale*, is a reed-like plant native to Asia, but has been introduced to most tropical countries, and grows freely in some parts of the West Indies, South America, Western Africa, Australia, etc. It was known to the ancients, being extensively used by the Greeks and Romans, who considered it an Arabian product because it came to them, among spices from India, by way of the Red Sea. It was an article of common import from the East to Europe from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries A. D., and probably for a long period preceding that time. Ginger was taxed as a spice, in common with pepper, cloves, galangal, cubebs, etc. It was frequently named in the Anglo-Saxon domestic works on medicine of the eleventh century, and was used by the Welsh physicians (507) of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, being then next to pepper in common use. Marco Polo (518) observed it in China and India about 1280-90. In fact, ginger has been a spice and a domestic remedy from the earliest records, being extensively employed both as a spice and as an aromatic stomachic. It is still a popular domestic remedy as well as a favorite with many physicians.