

PHARMACOPCEIAL VEGETABLE DRUGS.

PRUNUS VIRGINIANA

The *Prunus virginiana* (*wild black cherry*), found throughout the eastern parts of the United States, has been widely used in domestic medicine since the days of the Indian, being perhaps more highly valued in this direction than by members of the profession, although it has been recognized in the Pharmacopeia since the first edition of this work, 1820. No more popular bark of a native tree, excepting sassafras, is known to home medication. It has a place in all works on early American domestic medication.

PYRETHRUM

Pellitory, or Spanish chamomile (*Anacyclus pyrethrum*), is a widely-distributed plant known in different countries under different names. According to Pliny (514) it was the herb used by the Magians under the name *parthenium* against intermittent fevers, and according to Dioscorides (194) it is the plant that, under the name *anthesis*, was used in the same manner. It is mentioned in the "Arabian Nights" (88) under the name *ukhowan*. It is found throughout European Turkey, and according to Forskal southward to the mountains of Yemen, where it is called *maniat*. According to De Candolle (122) its introduction into Britain was perhaps before the coming of the Romans. The European colonists carried it, according to Josselyn (345) to Northeast America before 1669, where it is to be found both under cultivation and, having escaped therefrom, as a wild plant. Once a popular remedy in agues, its use is now practically discontinued, even in domestic medicine. Physicians as a rule neglect it, but it is employed by them in a few exceptional instances.

QUASSIA

Quassia amara takes its name from a slave of Surinam, named Quassi (see article *Quassia Amara*, J. U. Lloyd, *Western Druggist*, Chicago, Jan., 1897), who used the plant as a secret remedy, with great success, in the treatment of malignant fevers common to his locality and climate. Daniel Rolander, a Swede, became interested in the drug, and "in consequence of a valuable consideration" purchased from the slave Quassi a knowledge of the drug composing his remedy. Rolander returned to Stockholm in 1756, when he introduced the drug to Europe. In 1760 (or according to another reference, 1761) Carol. Gust. Dahlberg, an officer of the Dutch army and an eminent botanist, a pupil of Linnæus (385), returned to Sweden from Surinam, where he too had become acquainted with the slave Quassi, and through kindness to him had so gained his affection that he revealed not only the composition of his secret remedy, but even showed to him the tree from which the drug was derived. Dahlberg procured specimens of the root, flowers, and leaves of the tree, preserving them in alcohol, and presented them to Linnæus, who named the wood *Lignum quassia*, in honor of the slave, and established a new genus for the plant, which

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he named *Quassia amara*. The drug was brought to the notice of the medical profession by Linnæus' lectures on materia medica, as well as through a dissertation written under his direction, in 1763 (385), by one of his pupils, Carolus M. Blom. Be it known, however, that more than a little questioning exists as to the exact plant employed by the slave Quassi. As pointed out by Dr. Wright, the leaves pictured in the Linnæan Dissertation belonged to another species than the *Quassia amara*, an error corrected by the younger Linnæus.

In this connection it may be stated that Philippe Fermin, a French physician and traveler in Surinam, spelled the name of the slave *Coissi*, questioning somewhat the fact of his having discovered the uses of the remedy, which Fermin states had been used in Surinam as early as 1714. In this connection it may be noted that, according to Murray, a spice dealer of Amsterdam, Albert Seba, is said to have had in his collection a specimen of a bark of a tree named *quasci* as early as 1730. Be this as it may, the drug known as quassia under the empirical introduction given by the natives of Dutch Guiana became known to European civilization, and in 1788 became official in the London Pharmacopœia. Concerning the origin of the drug, the German Pharmacopœia, 1872, demanded that it be the wood of *Quassia amara*. In the second edition, 1882, the *Picrana excelsa* was admitted concurrently therewith, the latter being the official quassia of the present Pharmacopœia of the United States.

QUERCUS

The bark of the oak, *Quercus alba*, is strongly astringent and has ever been used in domestic medicine where an astringent material is applicable, as for example, in dysentery, hemorrhages, etc. In the form of a poultice, a decoction, and as a tincture it has a domestic record, probably in common with other species of oak in all countries. The medical profession has added little, if anything, to the domestic uses of the drug, as recorded by Rafinesque (535), Porcher (520), Cutler (178), and the early American dispensaries and works on materia medica.

QUILLAJA

Soapbark, *Quillaja saponaria*, named by Molina (444), in 1782, in his "History of Chili," is the bark of a South American tree, having similar qualities to other soap weeds or barks, derived from various plants and trees, and used by the natives of different countries as a substitute for soap, or rather as a material for purposes similar to those of soap. Among the first contributions to the literature of saponaria is that of Henry, Jr., and Boutron Charlard, *Amer. Jour. of Pharm.*, 1841, xii, p. 209, in which the now well-known acrid, frothing qualities of the drug are mentioned, the statement being that the name originated from the Chilean term *quilloan*, meaning, *to wash*. In the *American Medical Intelligencer*, Sept. 15, 1840, Dr. Ruschenberger, of the United States Navy (*Am. Jour. Phar.*, 1841, p. 211), contributes an article on this bark, which, according to his observations in Chili, 1827, was

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used principally for cleansing purposes. Dr. Ruschenberger returned from Chili in 1829 with specimens of the bark, stating that as late as 1833 the extract had not been used in Valparaiso, although in 1835 Dr. J. Stiles, of Valparaiso, is authority for the statement that at that (1835) date the extract had been made in that city, and was being used experimentally. The natives of South America employ an infusion of the drug as a wash, which led Dr. Ruschenberger to say, "From what I have seen of the effects of this cold infusion, I should be disposed to give it a fair trial as an injection in leucorrhœa, with the expectation of very favorable results." The nature of quillaia, so nearly resembling the qualities of senega, led to the expectation that it would parallel that drug in its remedial qualities in the direction of coughs and pulmonary affections. It has not, however, become a favorite other than as a producer of suds and as a frother for syrups, in which direction the extract has been employed in the making of the popular American beverage, the so-called *soda-water*, which use the Government has now wisely prohibited.

RESINA, See TEREBINTHINA

RHAMNUS. (RHAMNUS PURSHIANA, U. S. P.)

Rhamnus catharticus (Buckthorn) is of wide distribution, prevailing over Northern Africa, most of Europe, the Caucasus, and into Siberia. In some instances it becomes almost a small tree, Fluckiger having a specimen 8 inches in diameter. It was known as a laxative before the Norman Conquest, being called Waythorn or Hartshorn. The Welsh physicians of the 13th century (507) prescribed the berries, under the name Syrup of Buckthorn, a title which, recognized by all writers on domestic or official medicine, still prevails. In the London Pharmacopeia, 1650, this syrup, aromatized, became official.

The official drug of the Pharmacopeia (*Rhamnus purshiana*) is not only related botanically to the above, but is therapeutically similar, being laxative in small doses and cathartic in large doses. The tree (*Rhamnus purshiana*) is distributed over the mountain ranges of the Western Pacific States, being most abundant in California and Oregon. Possibly collectors do not distinguish between this species and *Rhamnus californica*. To the settlers of that region it has long been known as Chittim wood, an infusion of the bark being used as a cathartic.

Dr. J. H. Bundy, an Eclectic physician of Colusa, California, impressed with its value, brought the bark, under the name *Cascara Sagrada*, to the attention of Parke, Davis & Co., of Detroit, Michigan. This energetic firm introduced it in 1877, through the columns of their publication, *New Preparations*, (1877 and 1878).

The remedy became a great favorite, and within a reasonable period was in demand throughout the civilized world, becoming official in the Pharmacopeia of the United States, 1890.