

One day an elderly gentleman, named McLaney, visited my grandfather, having walked around the head of Lake Ontario from the short hills in Pelham, and during the conversation alluded to the commercial value of Gensing, or Ginseng, a plant which grows freely throughout this country. I have a distinct recollection of his stating that it was held in high estimation, as a medicine, amongst the Chinese, and that its cultivation and collection might be a source of profit.

Pereira, in his work on *Materia Medica*, published in 1842, describes it as the root of the *Panax Quingue-folium*, and says: "The Chinese physicians ascribe the most improbable and extravagant virtues to Ginseng. They regard it as an invigorating and aphrodisiac agent. At Pekin it is said to have been sometimes worth its weight in gold. In Europe it is believed to possess very little power."

It is a curious fact that, to this day, Ginseng has maintained its singular reputation.

The other circumstance refers to the tomato. I recollect seeing some of these growing in my grandfather's garden. The fruit was smaller than those now grown, and they were regarded merely as curiosities which he called "Love apples," and were not considered to be edible.

Apart from my own personal experiences as a sufferer, to which I have alluded, one of my earliest recollections is of the outbreak of cholera in 1832, which carried off my grandfather, and many other prominent citizens. It was noted at the time that meat underwent rapid putrefaction. During the epidemic a remedy was in general use, called number six, whose efficiency was supposed to arise from its heating properties, in accordance with a system of medicine called "Thompsonianism," which was extensively embraced in town, and more largely in the country.

One Samuel Thompson had published a book, which I have still in my possession, called "Botanic family physician, and a complete system of practice."

The "system" was beautifully simple. He starts with the proposition that "the component parts of which man is made are the four elements, earth, water, air and fire. The earth and water are the solids, the air and fire are the fluids."

His next proposition is: "Heat is life, cold is death" for, "as death approaches the patient grows cold," and "as soon as life ceases the body becomes cold, which is conclusive evidence that its gaining the victory is the cause of death."

"All diseases arise from the same cause and are to be treated by the same means," and "Disease was a battle between cold and heat."