

Forgotten Friends, or Good Remedies Out of Fashion Reintroduced to Pharmacy.

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SOLOMON'S SEAL.—Although the rhizome of the *Polygonatum vulgare*, that common representative of the Lily tribe, has practically disappeared from the modern pharmacy, it is still one of the herbalist's favorite remedies. It is used in the form of a coarse powder as a stimulating poultice to congested bruises, in which relation Gerarde says of it:—"It taketh away, in one or two nights, any bruse, blacke or blew spots, gotten by falls, or woman's wilfulness in stumbling on their hastic husbands' fists."

SPIGELIA.—The well-known garden flower, Carolina or Indian pink (*Spigelia Marylandica*, natural order *Loganiaceae*) has long been known to possess anthelmintic and laxative properties. In the light of extensive experiments it bids fair to rival or excel santonin in the expulsion of the *ascaris lumbricoides* (round worm), and given in teaspoonful doses of the fluid extract (1 in 1), with an equal quantity of syrup of senna, it constitutes an efficient and pleasant remedy, possessing none of the evil effects of santonin, such as yellow vision, flavuria (yellow urine), and cystic irritability. In the author's opinion this beautiful plant has a great therapeutic future before it.

SUCCINUM.—(See *Origanum*.)—Oil of amber is one of the oldest rubefacients we have, constituting an ingredient in a famous embrocation. In the *British Medical Journal* for April 1st, 1893, Dr. Murrell recommends oil of amber as a rubefacient in whooping cough, and points out that on the Continent it is applied to the chest in incipient phthisis, and administered internally in flatulent dyspepsia and hysteria.

TANACETUM VULGARE.—Tansy is a composite plant, constituting one of the sheet anchors of the British herbalist and rural savante in the treatment of dyspepsia, debility and intestinal worms of every variety. Tansy tea (1 in 20) is certainly quite as reliable a bitter tonic as many of the official preparations credited with this property.

TERRESTRINA VENETA.—Venice turpentine is a cheap and reliable substitute for elemi and resin ointments. Internally, it is a useful diuretic and resolvent in doses of 3 to 5 grains.

TERRESTRINA CHIO.—The resinous exudation from the bark of the *Pistacia terebinthus* (natural order, *Anacardiaceae*), has the honor of being referred to in the current edition of Treve's "Surgery" as a remedy for cancer. Dr. Butlin says: "I am not aware of any internal remedy that will cure cancer, but I think I may say that I have seen patients improved by the administration of Chian turpentine.

The tumor, or ulcer, has lessened in size or partly healed under its influence, and the general health has improved. In no instance, however, have I seen a permanent cure effected, although I have seen several patients who have been treated by the originator of the treatment." Chian turpentine is also a valuable diuretic in certain forms of kidney disease. The dose of the drug, which should be fresh, is 10 to 30 grains in pills or bolus.

TORMENTILLA.—The dried root of the *Potentilla tormentilla*, natural order *Rosaceae*, is still a popular remedy among the Irish members of the profession in the treatment of the diarrhoea of phthisis, chronic dysentery, and the watery stools of summer diarrhoea. My uncle, a venerable member of the profession, used to invariably give his poorer patients afflicted with this malady a handful of the drug, and tell them to boil it in milk and take a wineglassful of the decoction every hour, with a pinch of black pepper.

TRITICUM REPENS.—This valuable remedy has fallen into disuse through ignorance on the part of dispensers, who invariably use the dried herb, which is almost inert. The fresh grass, including the root, should always be used, when it will be found to be a therapeutic agent of infinite value in the treatment of cystitis following gonorrhoea, and in all chronic inflammatory conditions of the bladder.

TUSSILAGO.—The decoction of Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara* natural order *Compositae*), prepared by boiling 1 oz. of the herb in a pint of water for 10 minutes, is an excellent basis for cough mixtures.

ULMUS.—The decoction of the dried inner bark of the *Ulmus campestris* (natural order *Ulmaceae*) was official in the 1867 B. P. In my hands it has yielded results quite equal to *Parcira brava*, but then the *Chondodendron tomentosum* has the advantage of coming from Brazil, while the elm is merely a homely English remedy.

VERATRUM ALBUM.—The White Hellebore (natural order *Melanthaceae*) is a potent remedial agent. In small doses it is a prompt cathartic, and produces speedy emesis in slightly larger doses. It is a powerful local anodyne, and applied to the nasal mucous membrane acts as a powerful errhine. Like black hellebore, it is said to act as an emetic or abortive. The dose of the powdered rhizome is $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 grs., but, owing to its extreme potency and the very considerable irregularity in its action on different people, it is hardly likely to ever become a popular remedy.

VERNASUM THAPSUS.—The Mullein plant has long been a popular remedy among the Irish peasantry in phthisis, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. They boil four ounces of the fresh plant in a pint of fresh milk for ten minutes, and drink the whole quantity thrice daily. It is the menstruum and not the basis of this preparation that, in my opinion, possess the therapeutic value; but Dr. Quinlan, who has experimented extensively

with and without the milk, is satisfied of the nutritive value of mullein when given alone. I have, however, tried it in five well-marked cases without any beneficial results, except the subjected improvement which a tubercular patient always experiences on trying a new drug. Cigarettes prepared from the leaves I can, however, strongly recommend in asthma and the hacking cough of phthisis.

VIBURNUM PRUNIFOLIUM.—The well-known Black Haw yields an extract which frequently relieves painful menstruation when nothing else will, and is a valuable preventative of abortion.

XANTHORRHOEA.—The Black Bay gum, a balsamic resin obtained from the bark of the *Xanthorrhoea hastilis*, a member of the lily order, is highly prized by the aborigines of Australia and New Zealand as a stimulating expectorant in chronic bronchitis, and, in fact, all chest diseases. It is now rare, and difficult to obtain in this country, but Australian subscribers should try it as a substitute for benzoin.

XANTHOMALON. The Prickly Ash (*Xanthoxylon fraxineum*, natural order *Xanthoxylaceae*) is another arrow from the well-filled quiver of the Indian medicine man's therapeutic armamentarium. It is one of his thousand and one remedies against his inveterate foe, syphilis, but, unlike many others, seems to possess undoubted powers in combating the incursions of the disease. It is also used against the Indian braves' two other chief maladies—rheumatism and cholera. Two ounces of a one-in-twenty infusion of the bark may be taken thrice daily, or two drachms of a one-in-ten tincture of the fruit every three hours.

And now I think I have referred to most of the old remedies which are worthy of being introduced to the craft as "Forgotten Friends," and although with the limited space at my disposal my sketches of the utility of the individual drugs are of necessity crude, imperfect, and incomplete, I can say they are at least accurate and, I trust, sufficient to prove that there are many old-world remedies which we have abandoned to the herbalist and rural savante well worthy of holding honorable positions on the jealously-guarded shelves of our modern pharmacies and surgeries. I have purposely confined my attention to the organic kingdom, as I consider that every member of the vegetable materia medica can claim antiquity to which the history of our oldest mineral remedies is but as yesterday. There can be little doubt that many of the drugs referred to in this article were in the hands of primitive physicians when the Pyramids were new; when Troy fell; when the foundations of Rome were laid; when Christ was crucified; when the Conqueror created the British Empire, when Columbus sailed, and when the massacre at Lexington was "news." They are grappling with disease to-day, and will probably remain the faithful servants of mankind when much of our modern science shall have sunk down the afternoon of history and the twilight of tradition, and been