

A

GUIDE TO HEALTH,

BEING AN

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES

OF THE

THOMSONIAN SYSTEM OF PRACTICE,

AND THEIR

MODE OF APPLICATION

IN THE

CURE OF EVERY FORM OF DISEASE;

EMBRACING A CONCISE VIEW OF

THE VARIOUS THEORIES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN PRACTICE.

BY BENJAMIN COLBY.

Third Edition, enlarged and revised.

Let us strip our profession of every thing that looks like mystery.—RUSH.

MILFORD, N. H.

JOHN BURNS.

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1846.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Quaint and antiquarian though this book may seem, Colby, a more polished voice than his mentor, Samuel Thomson, was dealing as best as possible with the arrogant, hubristic and mechanistic disarray of Medicine between 1800 and 1860. The Thomsonians were radical populists that espoused the rude concept that common sense and a little learning was a better doctor than professionals seemingly addicted to bloodletting, purging with heavy metals, and heroic cleanses. They were a popular and robust "sect", with lay practitioners crawling all over the woodwork like ticks on a feeble dog.

The substantial presence in later years of "irregular" physicians (licensed M.D.s) such as the Eclectics and the Physio-Medicalists, as well as medical Homeopathy, was opposed with almost religious fervor by the "regulars" of the Eastern Establishment. Better funded (often by public moneys) and with close ties to full universities, the regulars prevailed in almost all arenas by the first decade of the twentieth century. The last Eclectic Medical School closed to resounding indifference in 1938. Well before that time, mainstream American Medicine had responded to the CAUSE of opposition by cleaning its house, and reestablishing the general trust of most Americans. The populist movements, by whatever name, had served the greater good...and sealed their own doom.

Frankly, the problems of mid-nineteenth-century medicine uncomfortably resemble the state of medicine at the end of the twentieth century, with alternative medicine/healing/therapy presenting a populist resistance to Standard Practice Medicine that seems to be growing almost exponentially. The slow, ritually scathing indictment by Colby of Medicine in his day may seem quaint...unless you remember that the physicians he verbally eviscerates were products of the most rigorous training available anywhere. His denouncement of the quack remedies of his age are blamed upon the people's loss of faith in regular medicine, a state disturbingly similar to our present circumstance.

In my life I have seen DES therapy and the standard practice of thymus implants with radium come and go...a few brief years later scoffed at as "primitive". Yet hundreds of thousands of physicians still in practice dutifully used BOTH of these modalities at the time, with nary a question (until later). To the educated outsider, it seems astonishing how little attention is given by Medicine to its own history...even that of a decade or two past. History of Medicine as taught in medical schools consists of the exposition of its SUCCESSFUL lineage, whereas the most important parts are not who first observed the circulation of blood or saw the potential of the Digitalis in a Herb Woman's brew. The greatest lessons medicine has learned in the last several centuries has come from CORRECTING its mistakes.

If the last century is an example to learn from, it will be many frantic years before we "irregulars" bring about the re-ordination of mainstream medicine back into the vitalist center. In that context, as well as for some of its surprisingly sound observations, this popular little book from 150 years ago can serve as a parable for our present perceptions of the early-stages of medical decline.

Michael Moore

LATIN NAMES: These are all added by myself, since Colby did not use them in the original text. Herbs such as Coolwort were dropped rather quickly from latter Thomsonian and Physiomedicalist writings. References to "The Entire United States" must be viewed within the context of 1846. The plants, understandably and properly, were weighted heavily towards New England...where the whole thing started.

A GUIDE TO HEALTH

by Benjamin Colby
Milford, N.H., 1846

PART III.

MATERIA MEDICA.

Having mentioned the indications necessary to be accomplished in the cure of different forms of disease, we will now describe the articles calculated to answer each of these indications, and arrange them under their appropriate heads. It will not be necessary for us to describe all the remedies that might be used, but only such as are the best, and will accomplish the object in the shortest time. This course will reduce our Materia Medica to a small compass, but sufficiently extensive to answer all practical purposes. A few simple remedies, properly applied, will do all to cure disease that ever medicine was ever designed to do; air, exercise, diet, bathing, &c., must do the remainder, and they will often do more alone for the cure of disease than all other remedial agents.

The following classification of remedies has been adopted, in conformity with the theory advocated in this work. Under each head we shall mention those articles that may be used as a substitute for those we have described.

<i>Relaxants</i>	{	Lobelia inflata, Boneset, Vapor bath, Crawley root, &c.
<i>General Stimulants</i>	{	Cayenne, Ginger, Prickly ash, Pennyroyal, Canada snakeroot, &c.
TONICS. {	<i>Astringent</i>	{ Bayberry, Bethroot, Sumach, Red raspberry, Witch hazel, Hemlock bark, White pond lily.
	<i>Bitter</i>	{ Golden seal, Poplar bark, Balmony, Unicorn root, Winter green, Gum myrrh.
LOCAL STIMULANTS. {	<i>Laxatives</i>	{ Bitter root, Dandelion root, Butternut, Cayenne, Boneset.
	<i>Diuretics</i>	{ Queen of the meadow, Cleavers, Strawberry leaves, Elder bark, Coolwort, Burdock root, &c.
	<i>Expectorants</i>	{ Lobelia, Skunk cabbage, Pleurisy root, Hoarhound, Boneset, Cayenne.
	<i>Rubefacients</i>	{ Cayenne, red pepper, Oil of hemlock, " " cedar.
<i>Nervines</i>	{ Lady's slipper, Scullcap, Hops.	
<i>Demulcents</i>	{ Slippery elm, Comfrey, Irish moss, Buck-horn brake.	

RELAXANTS.

Relaxants are those substances that have the power of relaxing muscular fibre, and alleviating spasm. The best and most powerful is **LOBELIA INFLATA**.

LOBELIA INFLATA.

Common name—Indian Tobacco, Puke-Weed, Eyebright (not to be confused with Euphrasia), &c.

Lobelia Inflata is a common herb, growing plentifully in pastures, stubble fields, by the roadsides, and on the banks of streams, in almost every part of the United States. It is a *biennial* plant, growing from ten to eighteen inches high, much branched. The flowers are palish blue, succeeded by pods, or seed-vessels, which contain a multitude of brownish and very minute seeds. It blooms about the middle of July, at which time the herb should be gathered for tincture; but the seed should not be gathered until the month of September, or October.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Lobelia, when first taken into the mouth, is nearly insipid, but soon produces a burning, acrid sensation upon the back part of the tongue and palate, attended with a flow of saliva. The Plant Yields readily its medical qualities to water and alcohol, and may be preserved and used in a fluid state.

Lobelia is the most powerful, certain, and harmless relaxant that has ever been discovered; and as relaxation is an important indication in the cure of the majority of the various forms of disease, this article is almost indispensable in the Thomsonian Materia Medica.

“The true therapeutic action of lobelia,” says Dr. Curtis, “I think is not generally understood. Most persons are under the impression that it is the principal agent in producing the action which we call vomiting. But this must certainly be incorrect. All practitioners, regular and irregular, who habitually use it, agree that its effect is antispasmodic, as it instantly relieves cramps, spasms, fits, lock-jaw, &c., and relaxes contracted sinews. It is also agreed that vomiting is produced by muscular contraction, either of the chest, abdomen, or stomach, or all combined. If this were the effect of the irritation produced by lobelia, that article should not be, as it certainly is, a sovereign remedy for spasms. Where there is no disease, that is, debility of the organs, the lobelia has not the power to relax the system much, and hence there is no room for any remarkable degree of reaction, and of course there is little or no vomiting. ‘But,’ says one,

‘are you sure that lobelia possesses no other control over the living body, than simply to relax its several organs ?’ I answer, not quite sure; but am perfectly convinced that, if it have fifty other influences, this one of relaxation so far predominates over them all, as to throw them entirely into the shade. ‘But is not lobelia a sudorific ?’ Yes; but its mode of producing this effect is by relaxing, through nervous action, the contracted mouths of the emunctories or pores of the skin, and letting off the portion of the blood called perspiration. It also promotes the secretion of the bile and urine, by relaxing vessels whose unnatural constriction is the cause of the retention of these fluids.”
“*Lobelia is to be considered,, at all times, and under all circumstances, and wherever applied, not only a pure relaxant, but the most powerful and innocent yet known.* This fact puts to flight from obstetrics the use of instruments, and even manual force, in every case except perhaps the few patients whose pelves are known to be remarkably deformed by rickets or some other unfortunate circumstance.”

Some have been led to suppose, in consequence of what appeared to them the alarming effects of lobelia, in cases where there is but little vitality, or it is improperly administered, that it is a poison, the administration of which is very dangerous. But nothing can be farther from the truth.

In proof that lobelia is not a poison, we shall adduce the testimony of some of the most enlightened professors and practitioners of medicine of the present age.

Says Prof. Tully, of Yale College, New Haven, in a letter to Dr. Lee, “I have been in the habit of employing lobelia inflata for twenty-seven years, and of witnessing its employment by others for the same length of time, and in large quantities, and for a long period, without the least trace of any narcotic effect. I have used the very best officinal tincture in the quantity of three fluid ounces in twenty-four hours, and for seven days in succession; and I have likewise given three large table-spoonfuls of it within half an hour, without the least indication of any narcotic operation. I have likewise given it in substance, and in other forms, and still without any degree of this operation.

* * * *

I am confident (the old women’s stories to the contrary notwithstanding,) that lobelia inflata is a valuable, a safe, and a sufficiently gentle article of medicine.”

Here is the testimony of a celebrated professor of Yale College, who had ample opportunity of judging, from experience and observation, whether lobelia was a poison or not.

Says Prof. Waterhouse, of Harvard University, Cambridge, “The efficacy and safety of lobelia inflata, I have had ample and repeated

proofs of, in a number of cases, and on my own person, and have reason to value it equal with any article in our Materia Medica.”



Lobelia inflata
"Indian Tobacco"

Says Dr. Thomas Hersey, surgeon in the United States army in the last war, practicing physician and surgeon at Columbus, Ohio, "The lobelia inflata has been denounced as a deadly poison. The imposition intended to be practiced by such an assertion, is too notorious to merit a serious reply. I have administered lobelia successfully to the child of thirty minutes, and to the hoary adult of eighty years of age, and never knew any danger result from its use."

We could bring forward the testimony of thousands of others, who have used lobelia for five, ten, twenty, and some forty years, in proof that it is perfectly innocent, acting in harmony with the laws of life and motion. Those who have asserted that lobelia is poison, have, in nine cases out of ten, without any doubt, been such persons as never used it, or saw it used, and therefore their testimony is not to be depended on.

"But lobelia," says Dr. Peckham, "is sometimes given when the vitality of the system is so nearly extinguished by disease, that little or no effect is obtained from it. Nature is exhausted, though the spark of life be not quite extinct. Death will take place, and the lobelia may be retained, and a like result would have followed if so much warm water had been taken. If nature be wanting, the best remedial process will be exhibited in vain. She may be assisted to a certain extent to save life; but she has her bounds, and she declares that thus far shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy remedial waves be stayed. But because lobelia cannot go beyond these bounds, and save life where nature, in her omnipotence, has declared that life should no longer be, such deaths are laid at the door of this herb, and it is made answerable for a wrongly imputed sin."

The different modes of preparing and administering lobelia, will be given under the head of compounds and course of medicine.

CRAWLEY, OR FEVER ROOT.

(*Corallorhiza odontorhiza*, *C. maculata* and others: Coral Root)

This plant occupies high, sandy banks, in sandy woods. The leaves spring forth all around the bottom of the stem, at the top of the root. The stock rises from six to eight inches high, bearing yellow blossoms. The upper side exhibits a smooth, dark green surface; underneath they have a silvery appearance. The roots are of a dark brown or blackish color, are tender, and easily broken, resembling the claw of the dunghill fowl. It grows plentifully in almost all the United States.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The pulverized root of this plant composes the fever powder, so often recommended in Dr. Elisha

Smith's botanical work. It is not commonly known among botanical practitioners, and as we have not sufficiently tested it ourself, shall depend on the testimony of Dr. Smith, of New York. "It is," says he, "a powerful febrifuge, and an agreeable anodyne. I have found it a sure and quick medicine to excite perspiration, without increasing the heat of the body. This root is effectual in all remittent, typhus, nervous, and inflammatory fevers, and will relieve cramps, constrictions, and all pains caused by colds, &c. It produces a general relaxation of the system, equalizes the circulation, and brings a moisture on the surface. It is an excellent medicine in pleurisy, inflammation of the chest and brain, and is a pure remedy in erysipelatous inflammation."

"Pulverize the root fine, sift it, and put it in bottles well stopped from the air. After proper evacuation of the stomach and bowels, a small teaspoonful of this powder may be given every twenty minutes, in a little pennyroyal or other herb tea, till a gentle breathing moisture appears on the skin, or till from four to six are taken, which has never failed in my practice of answering the purpose."

BONESET.—*the Leaves and Flowers.*
(*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)

This plant is also called thoroughwort, Indian sage, feverwort, sweating plant, &c. It grows plentifully in almost every part of the United States, and may be found in meadows and in low, moist land. It grows from two to five feet high, branched at the top. The leaves are the broadest where they are connected with the stock, and taper off each way to a point. It remains in bloom from August to October. The flowers are of a dullish-white color, and are found on the top of the stem and branches. It should be collected when in bloom, and carefully dried.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The warm infusion of boneset, in large doses, operates as an emetic; in small doses it produces perspiration, and promotes all the secretions. The decoction, administered cold, is both laxative and tonic. It acts as a gentle laxative without irritating the bowels. Many families use the boneset alone in the cure of every form of disease, and are seldom disappointed in the result. There is no article in the *Materia Medica* more general in its application than boneset, either the infusion or decoction; it being a relaxant, sudorific, antiseptic, stimulant, diuretic, and tonic.

DOSE.—To produce vomiting, take two ounces steeped in a quart of water, but not boil; drink a cupful every fifteen minutes until it operates. For sweating, take the same in small doses, often repeated; for a tonic and laxative, drink a cupful of the decoction once in two hours.



THOROUGHWORT.

Eupatorium perfoliatum
Boneset

STIMULANTS.

Stimulants are substances capable of increasing the action or energy of the living body. Pure, diffusible stimulants act in harmony with the laws of life, and therefore assist nature in her efforts to overcome disease; while acrid and narcotic stimulants produce local irritation, exhausting the powers of nature. The most pure and healthy stimulant is Cayenne.

CAYENNE. *Capsicum*.—*The Pods and Seed-Vessels*.

The Cayenne most commonly used by Thomsonians is imported from Africa and the West Indies, being more permanent and gently stimulating than the American Cayenne. It is somewhat difficult to get a pure article, such is the propensity to defraud for gain. The African Cayenne is frequently mixed with a cheaper kind, called Bombay, or chilly peppers. Even those who profess to be friends of the Thomsonian system, have been known to mix India meal, ginger, red lead, logwood, &c., with pure Cayenne, when grinding it, and color it with dye-stuffs and red saunders.

Capsicum annuum, (Cayenne) says Hooper, "is one of the strongest and purest stimulants known. This pepper has been successfully employed in a species of the *cynanche maligna*, (putrid sore throat,) which proved very fatal in the West Indies, resisting the use of the Peruvian bark, wine, and other remedies commonly employed. In ophthalmia from relaxation, the diluted juice is found to be a valuable remedy."

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Cayenne is the purest and undoubtedly the most powerful stimulant known, and as stimulation is all important indication to be accomplished in nearly every form of disease, this invaluable article is among the indispensables. Taken into the mouth, it produces a pungent, biting sensation; and if taken in large quantities into an empty stomach, it will frequently occasion considerable distress, so as to be alarming to those unacquainted with it. This is attended with no danger, as it will soon pass away. It should always be given in small doses at first, increasing the quantity according to the emergency of the case. The burning sensation produced by Cayenne may be relieved by taking or applying a small quantity of milk or cream. Cayenne may be used with advantage in all cases of coldness, debility, indigestion, costiveness, and in combination with other medicines in nearly every form of disease to which mankind are subject.

DOSE.—From one fourth to a whole teaspoonful in hot water, if designed to produce perspiration; if for costiveness, one half teaspoonful in cold water or molasses three or four times a day.

GINGER.—*The Root.*

Ginger is obtained from the East and West Indies. It is a perennial shrub, growing about three feet high. Care should be observed in purchasing it, as it is generally mixed with other articles. For medicine, it is better to purchase the root unpulverized.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Ginger is warming and moderately aromatic, and may be used in mild cases as a substitute for cayenne. It is used principally in combination with other articles, and externally for poultices.

DOSE.—From a half to a whole teaspoonful in warm water, sweetened.

PRICKLY ASH.—*The Bark and Seed Vessels.*

(Zanthoxylum americanum and others)

This shrub is found in the Southern, Middle, and Western States, growing in rich and commonly wettish soil, to the height of from ten to fifteen feet. The bark is of an ash color, leaves somewhat similar to those of the elder. The branches are usually prickly, from which it derives its most popular name. The seed-vessels are greenish red; in the autumn they assume a brownish color.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The seed-vessels have a warm, pungent taste, and are an excellent stimulant; the bark of the stem and root are also pungent, but in an inferior degree. It is a valuable remedy in all cases where stimulants are required, as rheumatism, cold hands and feet, ague and fever, &c. The bark is sometimes chewed for the tooth ache.

PENNYROYAL.—*The Herb.*
(*Hedeoma pulegioides*)

This plant, which the God of nature has scattered over almost every part of this country, is one of the most valuable of the Thomsonian Materia Medica. Its qualities are a strong and hardy aromatic but pleasant smell, a warm and pungent taste. The medical principle resides in an essential oil, possessing the same smell and taste of the herb. Its medical properties are carminative, (having power to remove wind from the stomach and bowels,) stimulant, (possessing the property of exciting increased action in the system,) diaphoretic, (promoting moderate perspiration.) It also relieves spasms, hysterics, promotes expectoration in consumptive coughs, and is a good medicine in the whooping cough. It is good also to take away marks and bruises in the face, being bruised in vinegar, and applied in fomentations.

A tea of this plant is perhaps the best drink that can be given, together with the composition powder, Cayenne, &c., to warm the stomach, and assist an emetic in its operations. The tea should be made and given warm, freely and frequently. A person upon taking a "bad cold," (by the way, he never has a good one,) by taking freely of this tea may throw it off, and of course prevent fever, it being caused by cold. This is a popular remedy all over the country for female complaints; but still few persons are aware of its extensive medicinal properties.

The best time for gathering this herb is about the month of August. It should be tied up in bundles, and hung in a warm, dry, and shady place until dry; then wrapped in paper, as the best means of excluding the air, by which, if exposed, it will lose a large part of its strength and virtue. This plant, simple as it is, will do more in the curing of the sick than all the poisonous preparations invented since the age of Paracelsus; bleeding and blistering into the bargain. No family should let the season for gathering it pass without securing a good supply.

CANADA SNAKEROOT.—*The Root.*
(*Asarum canadensis*—Wild Ginger)

This plant is found in almost every part of the United States, particularly in the Northern and Eastern States, in the woods, and dry, shady places. The root only is used.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—This is a pleasant, warming stimulant and nervine. It is very useful in all affections of the lungs, as colds,

asthma, croup, consumption, &c. The ordinary dose is a moderate teaspoonful, which may be taken in warm water sweetened. A decoction with saffron is excellent to give children when attacked with any eruptive form of disease.

Black pepper, cinnamon, tansy, red pepper, bayberry, yarrow, &c., may also be given where stimulants are required.

ASTRINGENTS.

Astringents are those substances that, when taken internally or applied externally, contract the muscular tissue, or make it more dense and firm. They depend for their astringency on tannin, a substance well known as being used in the tanning of leather.

BAYBERRY.

(Myrica cerifera)

This shrub grows most plentifully in towns bordering on the sea, although it is found in the interior, in neglected fields, and on the side of stony hills. It grows in the New England States from three to five feet high, and bears small berries, of which candles are sometimes manufactured, combined with tallow.

The bark of the root is the only part used for medicinal purposes, and should be gathered in the spring before the bush vegetates, or in the autumn before it has shed its foliage, as the sap is then in the bark, and consequently possesses a greater degree of medical virtues. The roots should be dug and thoroughly cleansed from dirt, and while green the rind may be easily separated from the trunk by pounding it with a wooden mallet; after which, dry the bark well, and pulverize it to the consistency of ordinary flour, and it is then ready for use.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Bayberry is both astringent and stimulant, producing a pungent sensation upon the glands; it is therefore an invaluable medicine for canker, whether located in the mouth, throat, stomach, or bowels. It is an excellent article for bowel complaints, and if given freely in the commencement, will generally cure. It makes an excellent tooth-powder to cleanse the mouth and gums. There are many other articles useful for canker, but bayberry is decidedly the best.

DOSE.—It may be used either in the powder, about a teaspoonful at a dose, by mixing a little sugar and warm water to it, or making an infusion, and drinking freely of the tea



BAYBERRY.

Myrica cerifera

BETHROOT.—*The Root.*
(*Trillium spp.* — *Wake Robin*)

The bethroot is found in damp, rocky woods, delighting in a rich soil, and grows from one to two feet high, surmounted at the top with three leaves. It blooms in the month of May, bearing a white flower.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The bethroot being an astringent, is useful in all kinds of hemorrhage, immoderate menstruation, diarrhea, dysentery, fluor albus, flooding, &c.

DOSE.—The pulverized root may be taken in teaspoonful doses, or it may be steeped, one ounce to the pint, and given in gill doses.

SUMACH.—*The Bark, Leaves, and Berries.*
(*Rhus glabra*—*Smooth Sumach*)

The common upland sumach rises to the height of from five to ten feet, producing many long compound leaves, which turn red in autumn. The berries are also red when ripe, and are of an agreeable, but very sharp, acid taste. The bark, leaves, and berries are astringents, tonics, and diuretics; either of which may be used in strong decoction in all cases in which medicines of this class are needed.

WHITE POND LILY.—*The Root.*
(*Nyphaea odorata*)

This herb grows in low wet grounds, and ponds and pools of water, as indicated by its name.

The leaves are large, round, and cleft from the edge to the stem in the centre, each lobe or portion of the leaf ending in a short, acute point; the upper surface being smooth, glassy, and without veins, and the lower surface reddish, with branching nerves.

The flowers are large and white, giving out a very delicious, sweet odor; opening to the sun in the morning, and closing at night with the setting of the sun.

The root, which is the part used as medicine, is perennial, very long, somewhat hairy, blackish, knotty, and nearly as large as a man's wrist. It is a valuable article, used internally or externally. Internally, it is a mild astringent tonic, very useful in dysentery, diarrhea, &c. Externally, it is used in poultices for biles, tumors, inflammations, &c. The powdered root given in teaspoonful doses in warm water sweetened, is almost a sure remedy for bowel complaints in children, if given in the first stages.

It is said that the fresh juice of the root, mixed with the juice of the lemon, will remove freckles, pimples, blotches, &c. from the skin. An infusion of the root is good for sore or inflamed eyes.

RED RASPBERRY.—*The Leaves.*
(*Rubus strigosus* and others)

The red raspberry is so well known that it needs no description. The leaves are a valuable astringent, useful in bowel complaints, and for external applications to moisten poultices for burns, &c., and for washing sore nipples. A strong tea is an excellent article, says Dr. Thomson, to regulate the labor pains of women in travail.

WITCH HAZEL.—*The Leaves.*
(*Hamamelis virginiana*)

This shrub grows on high lands and the stony banks of streams, from New England to Carolina and Ohio, from eight to ten feet high.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Astringent, stimulant, and slightly bitter. This is the best article in our Materia Medica, says Dr. Curtis, for stopping hemorrhage. We have used it in hemorrhage from the lungs, stomach, and other parts of the system, and have not yet seen a failure. A strong decoction, drunk and used by injection "per vagina," is the best article we have ever used for profuse menstruation, fluor albus, or uterine hemorrhage.

HEMLOCK .—*The Bark.*
(*Tsuga canadensis*)

This is a well-known astringent, being commonly employed in tanning leather. A decoction of the bark is useful given by injection for bowel complaints, and for the piles. Applied to sore nipples it is a never-failing remedy. The oil combined with other articles makes a valuable article for bathing in rheumatism, &c.

Black birch, red and white oak bark, evan root, marsh rosemary, hardhack, and yarrow, are also able astringents.

TONICS.

Tonics are those substances, that when applied to the living body, increase the strength by rendering the muscular tissue firmer and

more compact. They should usually be combined with stimulants, unless they possess a stimulant property.

GOLDEN SEAL.—*The Root.*

Golden seal grows in great abundance in Ohio and the Western and Southern States, but is seldom found in the Northern and Eastern. It is sometimes called Ohio kucuma, yellow puccoon, &c. The root is one or two inches long, and rough or knotted, giving off a number of yellow fibres. It grows from one to two feet high in rich, shady moist lands.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Bitter, stimulant and tonic. It is useful in all cases of debility, indigestion, &c. Combined with one part Cayenne and one fourth part saleratus, it will aid digestion, and prevent pain in the stomach after eating. A strong decoction is excellent to wash sore eyes and all old sores.

POPLAR.—*The Bark.*

(Populus alba)

This noble tree, which is found throughout the United States, is so well known that it needs no description. It is the common white poplar of Maine and New Hampshire. Its qualities are, bitter, diuretic, and astringent—it is also a tonic, and somewhat stimulant. It is a first-rate article for indigestion, canker in the stomach, consumption, liver complaints; also in diarrheal affections and other complaints, occasioned by debility—acting as a universal tonic; restoring the tone of the organs, and producing a healthy action of the liver; creating an appetite, and giving strength and vigor to the whole system. Poplar bark is perhaps the most universally applicable tonic of Dr. Thomson's *Materia Medica*. It possesses valuable febrifuge qualities, and on account of its diuretic qualities, it is a good article in gravel and dropsy. Dr. J. Young says, "I have prescribed the poplar bark in a variety of cases of intermittent fever, and can declare from experience that it is equally efficacious with the Peruvian bark, if properly administered. There is not," says he, "in all the *Materia Medica*, a more certain, speedy and effectual remedy in hysterics than the poplar bark." This, let it be remembered, is "regular" testimony. This article should be used in combination with other articles forming "bitters," after the system is cleansed with courses of medicine, and all morbid matter expelled—the system is then ready to receive medicines of a strengthening character. The mode of procuring the bark is to strip it from the tree, any time when the sap prevents it from adhering to the wood. The outer bark should be shaved off; the inner cut into strips

and dried in the shade. The mode of administering it is to infuse it in water—an ounce of the bark to a pint of water, and give freely.



SNAKEHEAD,

Chelone glabra
Turtlehead, Balmomy

BALMONY.—*The Herb.*
(*Chelone Glabra*—Turtlehead)

This herb is found in low, damp places and rich, shaded soils in all parts of the United States. It is called bitter herb, snake head &c. The flowers are reddish white, and grow in clusters, and do not bloom until late in autumn.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—This herb is an excellent bitter tonic and laxative, and is useful in costiveness, dyspepsia, loss of appetite, &c. It is an important ingredient in the Spiced Bitters. It may be given in a tea—drank freely for worms in children, or jaundice, yellowness of the skin, &c.

UNICORN.—*The Root.*
(*Chamaelirium*.—*Helonias*, and variously as both
“True” Unicorn Root and “False” Unicorn Root?!)

The unicorn grows abundantly in Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut, and may be found in meadows and woodlands. It is known by the name of blazing star, devil’s bit, &c. It grows about a foot in height, and terminates in a long, graceful spike of flowers, of a whitish color. It blooms in June. It has a tapering fibrous root, which is an inch and a quarter long, and not quite as thick as the little finger.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—It is a very excellent bitter tonic and stimulant, and has been found very useful in cases of suppressed menstruation, and whenever a tonic and stimulant are required.

WINTERGREEN.—*The Root and Leaves.*
(*Gaultheria procumbens*)

This evergreen is found on pine plains and in light shaded soils, in all parts of the United States. It blossoms in midsummer. It is called pipsissiway, pyrola, white leaf, &c.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The whole plant has a pungent and bitter sweet taste. It is diuretic, sudorific, and tonic. It is useful in all eruptive forms of disease, and in cancerous or scrofulous habits. It is frequently used in combination with other articles in the form of Syrups. (See *Compounds*.)



Gaultheria procumbens
Wintergreen

GUM MYRRH.
(Commiphora spp.)

This gum exudes from the body of a small tree growing in Arabia Felix and Abyssinia. As the juice exudes, it hardens and adheres to the bark. There are two kinds of myrrh to be found in the market—the India and Turkey myrrh; the former imported from the East Indies, the latter from the Levant. There is a great difference in the quality of this article. The Turkey myrrh is usually the most free from impurities, and when of good quality it is reddish-yellow—of a strong, peculiar, and somewhat fragrant odor, and a bitter aromatic taste.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Myrrh is a tonic and stimulant, and possesses antiseptic properties in a high degree. It is therefore a useful article in all cases of putrescency or tendency to mortification, for chronic diarrhea, and general debility. For a dose, take half a teaspoonful pulverized, in half a cup of warm water, sweetened, and taken before it settles. It constitutes the most essential ingredient in the Rheumatic Drops. In the form of tincture, combined with the tincture of lobelia, it is useful applied to fresh wounds, eruptions, old sores, bruises, &c.

BARBERRY.—*The Bark.*

(Berberis vulgaris)

This shrub grows plentifully in the New England States, and is found usually in rocky or stony fields, rising to the height of eight or ten feet. The berries are oblong, of a scarlet color, and a sharp acid taste.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The bark of barberry possesses qualities similar to the goldenseal, and is frequently used as a substitute. It is a bitter tonic, improving the appetite, and removing the yellow tinge from the skin and eyes, and a valuable article to take in the spring of the year for the jaundice.

Camomile, archangel, elecampane, wormwood and tansey, are also good tonics.

LAXATIVES.

Laxatives are those medicines that increase the peristaltic motion of the bowels, without purging or producing a fluid discharge.

BITTER ROOT.—*Bark of the Root.*

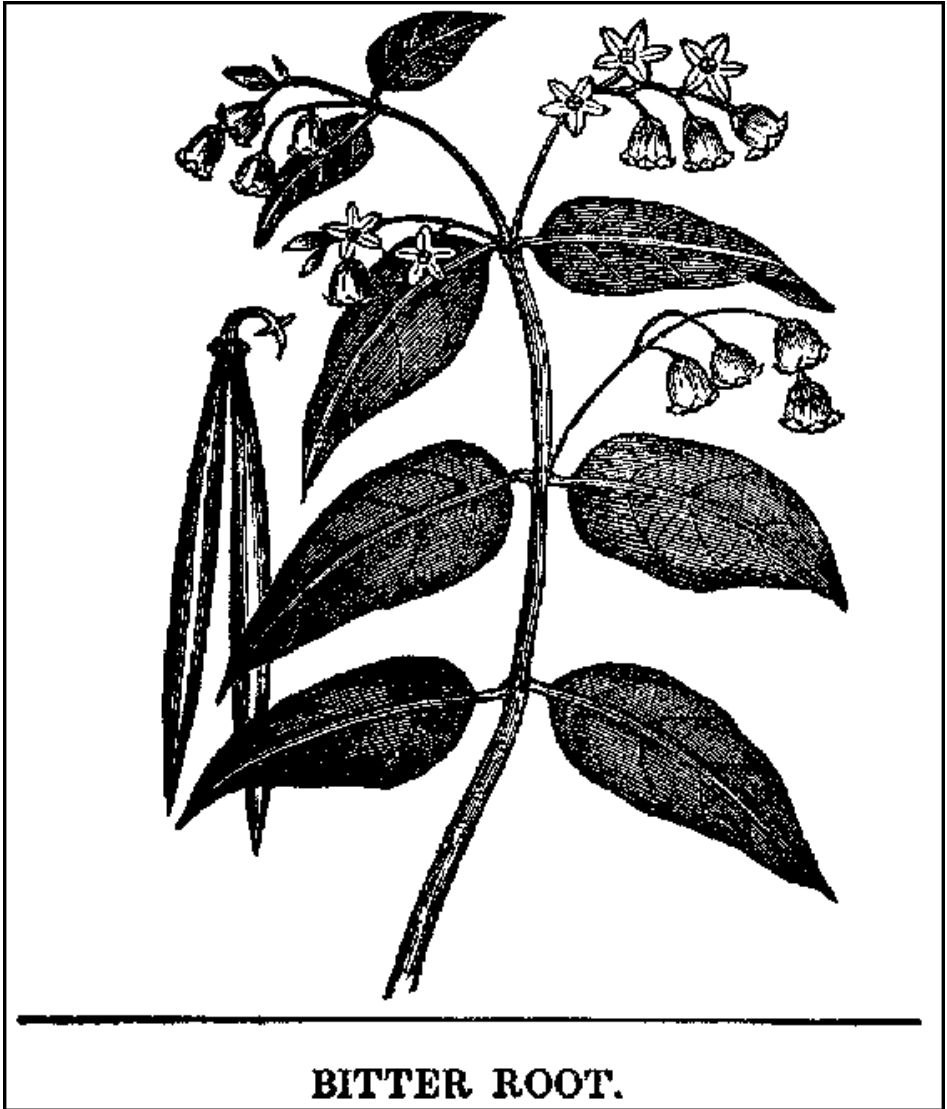
(Apocynum androsaemifolium—Dogbane, Canadian or Indian Hemp)

Bitter root is found in all parts of the United States where the soil is light and sandy. The root is perennial, from a third to half an inch in diameter, very long and intensely bitter. It grows from two to three feet high, with bell-shaped white flowers.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Dr. Thomson says in one of the earlier editions of his work, “Bitter root is one of the best correctors of the bile with which I am acquainted, and is an excellent medicine to remove costiveness, as it will cause the bowels to move in a natural

manner. A strong decoction of the root, made by steeping it in hot - water, will operate as a cathartic if taken freely, and sometimes as an emetic, and is almost sure to throw off a fever in its first stages.”

It is a tonic, anti-spasmodic, secernent, and stimulant. Dr. Curtis says he has found it an excellent article in all cases of torpidity of the lower viscera, particularly of the liver and kidneys. This article alone has cured cases of dropsy that had baffled all the skill of the regular practice. It will be found an important auxiliary to the general treatment in removing obstructions peculiar to females



BITTER ROOT.
Apocynum cannabinum
Dogbane, Canadian Hemp

BUTTERNUT.—*The Inner Bark.*
(*Juglans cinerea*)

This tree is too well known to need any description, being found in rich, moist, rocky soils, near streams, in almost all parts of the country. The inner bark of the butternut tree, says Howard, and especially of the root, “is a mild and efficacious purge, leaving the bowels in a better condition perhaps than almost any other in use. In diarrhea, dysentery, and worms, it is the best cathartic we have ever employed. It may be prepared in extract, pills, syrup, or cordial. For making the cordial, take any quantity of the fresh bark, split it into slips, of half an inch wide, beat it with a hammer, so as to reduce it to a soft, stringy state; then put it into an earthen vessel, packing it close, and pour on it boiling water sufficient to cover the bruised bark; set the vessel on coals near the fire, having it closely covered, and allow it to stand and simmer one or two hours. Then strain off the liquor, and add sugar or molasses sufficient to make a syrup,—when it may be bottled, and one quarter of the quantity of proof spirits added to preserve it. Dose for a child, from half to two great-spoonfuls, repeated at intervals of half or a whole hour, until it operates. For grown persons the dose must be much larger. This preparation is mild, but highly efficacious for the bowel complaints of children or adults, and will cure without giving enough to operate as physic; but for dysentery and worms, enough should be administered to operate freely on the bowels. It may be given in all ordinary diseases of children with the happiest effect, being a most valuable family medicine.

“The syrup is made in a similar manner, only it is boiled down so as to make it much stronger and more actively purgative.”

DANDELION.—*The Leaves and Roots.*
(*Taraxacum officinale and others*)

This plant is too common to need description, growing almost everywhere, on improved lands that are not plowed, as pastures, meadows, yards, &c.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The dandelion is diuretic, stimulant, tonic, antispasmodic, aperient, and alterative. It is therefore useful in all cases of urinary obstructions, jaundice, costiveness, consumption, nervous debility, biliary obstructions, &c. It should be used freely and perseveringly, as its effects are gradual but sure upon the system. It may be used in the form of extract made into pills, combined with Cayenne and lobelia, or in syrup.

DIURETICS.

Diuretics are those medicines, that, when taken internally, increase the action of the urinary apparatus.

QUEEN OF THE MEADOW.—*The Root.*

(*Eupatorium purpureum* and *E. fistulosum*—*Gravel Root, Joe Pye Weed*)

Queen of the meadow, or gravel root, has long, fibrous roots white or brownish color. It grows from three to six feet high, with pale reddish blossoms. It is found in wet ground, or near streams, though sometimes on high land.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—This is a powerful diuretic, useful in all obstructions of the urinary organs. It is considered by those who have proved it, an unfailing remedy for the gravel. Used in strong decoction, freely.

COOLWORT.—*The Leaves.*

(*Pilea pumila*.—*Richweed*)

This herb is found in woods, on shady banks, and in rich cedar swamps, where the ground is not very wet. The leaves are heart-shaped, divided into lobes, and supported on footstalks eight or ten inches high. The flowers are white, and make their appearance in June. The green leaves have the taste and smell of a cucumber. They should be collected in July or first of August, and dried without exposure to a damp atmosphere, and preserved in sealed papers, or covered boxes.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Coolwort is beneficial in all cases of suppression of the urine or gravelly complaints. The dried leaves may be steeped and drank freely.

JUNIPER.—*The Fruit*

(*Juniperus communis*)

This shrub is so well known as to need no description. The berries, the only part used, are ripe in August. It grows in abundance in all the New England States bordering on the sea.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—The berries possess powerful diuretic properties, and are useful in all cases of strangury, dropsy, gravel, and all urinary obstructions.

Cleavers, poplar, fir balsam, sumach, strawberry leaves, elder bark and blows, burdock root, and spearmint, are also valuable diuretics; but are so well known as to need no description.

EXPECTORANTS.

Expectorants are medicines that promote the discharge of matter from the lungs, whether it be mucus, pus, or any other morbid accumulation. The best expectorant known is lobelia.

SKUNK CABBAGE.—*The Root.*

(Symplocarpus foetidus.—Dracontium)

This plant is found plentifully in the Northern and Middle States. It grows in wetlands, having many fibrous roots, sending up many large, bright green leaves, but without any stem or stalk. Its smell resembles the peculiar odor of the skunk, from which it derives its name.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—It is expectorant, anti-spasmodic, and nervine; useful in asthma, consumption, cough, hysterics, and all spasmodic affections. One third of a teaspoonful of the pulverized root is enough for a dose, combined with Cayenne and slippery elm. An over-dose produces vomiting, head-ache, vertigo, and temporary blindness.

PLEURISY ROOT.—*The Root.*

(Asclepias tuberosa.—Butterfly Milkweed)

This plant is sometimes called butterfly weed, flux root, white root, &c. It is a beautiful perennial plant, flourishing best in a light sandy soil by the wayside, under fences, and near old stumps in rye fields. There are sometimes fifteen or twenty stalks the size of a pipe stem, proceeding from one root, rising from one to two feet in height, and spreading to a considerable extent. The flowers are of a bright orange color, and appear in July and August. These are succeeded by long slender pods, containing the seeds. It has a carrot-shaped root, of a light brownish color.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—This root is diaphoretic, expectorant, and antispasmodic, and is therefore useful in cough, pleurisy, colic, flatulence, and to promote perspiration. It may be given in decoction,

or in powder, a teaspoonful at a dose, in some warming herb tea, until relief is obtained.



PLEURISY ROOT.

Asclepias tuberosa
Pleurisy Root, Butterfly Weed

NERVINES.

Nervines are those medicines that have a soothing influence, and quiet the nerves without destroying their sensibility. They are beneficial in all cases of extreme irritability, restlessness, and inability to sleep.



LADIES' SLIPPER.

Cypripedium calceolus, etc.
Lady's Slipper Orchid

LADY'S SLIPPER.—*The Root*
(*Cypripedium calceolus and others*)

This valuable plant has various names—(American) valerian, nerve root, yellow umbil, &c. “There are three or four species of lady’s slipper, as the white, red, and yellow, from the color of their flowers, but the qualities are the same. It grows from one to two feet high, and sometimes has leaves all the way up the stock; but more frequently they lie on the ground;—the stock has one flower on it, in the form of a purse or round bag, with a small entrance near where it joins the stalk, and is something like a moccasin slipper, from which resemblance it probably derived the name of lady’s slipper.” The roots are fibrous, and thickly matted together. It is found in all parts of the United States (*not THESE days!—editor.*) The roots have a bitter, mucilaginous taste and a peculiar smell, somewhat nauseous. Its properties are sedative, nervine, and anti-spasmodic. It is good in all nervous diseases and hysterical affections, allaying pain, quieting the nerves, and producing sleep. It is used in nervous head-aches, tremors, nervous fevers, &c. It is far preferable to opium, having no baneful nor narcotic effects. It has produced sleep when opium has failed. The dose is a teaspoonful of the powdered root to a cup of pennyroyal tea, or an ounce of the root may be infused in a pint of water, and drunk freely in nervous disorders. In giving courses of medicine in all cases where the patient is nervous, it should be given with the other medicine, say a tea-spoonful to each cup of the emetic. The root should be dug late in autumn, or early in the spring, and dried in the sun; it should then be pounded and sifted through a fine sieve, and bottled for use.

SCULLCAP.—*The Herb.*
(*Scutellaria latiflora*)

This plant grows in damp places, and by the side of streams. It has a small fibrous root, stem four cornered, and from ten inches to two feet high. The flowers are blue, making their appearance in July, and the seed-vessels of a light green color, each one containing four seeds.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—” Scullcap has a prominently bitter taste,” says Mattson, “and is the best nervine I ever employed; it is also tonic and anti-spasmodic. It is particularly useful in delirium tremens, St. vitus’ dance, convulsions, lockjaw, tremors, ague and fever, tic douloureux, and all nervous affections. It may be given with advantage

to children, when health is impaired from the effects of teething.”

“The warm infusion may be drunk freely through the day, or a heaped teaspoonful of the powdered leaves, with rather more than an equal quantity of sugar, steeped in a teacupful of boiling water, may be taken at a dose, and repeated as often as the symptoms require.”

DEMULCENTS.

Demulcents are those medicines that possess soothing mucilaginous properties, shielding the surface or membrane from the contact of any irritating substance.

SLIPPERY ELM.—*The Bark.*

This tree, which grows in the Northern and Eastern States, attains to the height of about thirty feet, trunk slender, dividing in numerous branches, furnished with a rough and light-colored bark, and oblong leaves. The bark may be cut into small pieces and put into water, either hot or cold, and it will give out much of its mucilage; but the best way is to take the bark and dry it thoroughly, then reduce it to a fine powder. It is useful in cough, bowel complaints, strangury, sore throat, inflammation of the lungs and stomach, eruptions, &c. As an external application, in the form of poultice, it is a valuable remedy far exceeding any known production, for ulcers, tumors, swellings, chilblains, burns, sore mouth, thrush, and as a wash.

The surgeons in the revolutionary army experienced the most happy effects from its application to gunshot wounds, which were soon brought to a suppuration, and a disposition to heal. When a tendency to mortification was evident, this bark bruised and boiled in water produced the most surprising good effects. The infusion of the bark is highly esteemed as a diet drink in pleurisy and catarrh, and also in diarrhea and dysentery. It is very nutritious, and much used as food for the sick.

COMFREY.—the Root.

(*Symphytum officinale*)

This plant is cultivated in gardens, and may be found growing spontaneously by road sides. It grows from three to four feet high, with yellowish flowers.

PROPERTIES AND USES.—Comfrey is mucilaginous, and is

therefore useful in coughs, dysentery, soreness of the bowels, and for poultices. It may be used in powder, half a teaspoonful in two thirds of a cupful of hot water.

Irish moss, buckthorn brake, hollyhock blossoms, flaxseed, marshmallows, &c., are also mucilaginous, and may be used in all cases of irritation, internally or externally.

Synopsis of the medical properties of Plants used occasionally.

CAMOMILE. (*Matricaria camomila*)—An infusion drank warm is useful in pulmonary complaints, and in all cases of debility; applied as a fomentation in glandular swellings.

MAYWEED. (*Matricaria cotula*)—The infusion may be given to promote perspiration, and used externally in fomentions for white swellings, rheumatism, &c.

BLACK COHOSH. (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)—A syrup of this plant is useful in coughs; and a poultice made by thickening the decoction with slippery elm is useful in all kinds of inflammation.

INDIAN HEMP. (*Apocynum cannabinum*)—This root has been used with success in dropsy, by steeping an ounce in a quart of water, and taking half a glass three or four times a day.

SPIKENARD. (*Aralia racemosa*)—The root of this plant has a warm, aromatic, balsamic, fragrant taste, and is useful in all pulmonary complaints, taken in infusion, decoction, or syrup.

SOLOMON'S SEAL. (*Polygonatum biflorum*)—An Infusion of the roots is useful in all cases of *fluor albus*, (whites,) and in immoderate flowing of the menses, arising from female weakness.

SAFFRON. (*Crocus or Carthamus?*)—This plant is an excellent article to promote perspiration, a tea of which is very valuable in all eruptive forms of disease, as canker rash, measles, &c.

CRANE'S BILL (*Geranium maculatum*) is a good astringent, useful in bleeding, internally or externally, or in hemorrhage from the lungs, -bowels, or womb.

YELLOW-DOCK. (*Rumex crispus*)—A syrup made of this root, with equal parts of wintergreen and sarsaparilla, is excellent to

eradicate scrofulous and other taints of the system.

EVAN ROOT. (*Geum spp.*)—This plant grows in low, marshy land, and is sometimes called chocolate root. It possesses slightly astringent and tonic properties, and may be used with benefit in diarrhea, dysentery, and bowel complaints in general.

HOPS. (*Humulus lupulus*)—Hop tea may be used with benefit as a means of quieting nervous agitation, and promoting sleep. It is useful in cases of delirium tremens. The yellow powder which may be very readily obtained from hops by rubbing and sifting them, contains the active principle of hops. This powder, (called lupulin;) by being rubbed up in a warm mortar, will form a paste, which may be made into pills, and taken for the purposes above mentioned.

MEADOW FERN. (*Comptonia [Myrica] peregrina*)—A strong decoction of the leaves and burs of the meadow fern have been found very useful in erysipelas, taken freely, and bathing the part affected. It is also a valuable external application for all eruptions and troublesome humors.

HORSEMINT. (*Mentha arvensis*...probably)—A strong tea affords relief in gravel and suppression of the urine.

UVA URSI. (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)—A tea drank freely is useful in ulceration of the kidneys and bladder, and all uneasy obstructions.

HIGH CRANBERRY. (*Viburnum opulus*)—A strong tea drank freely (says Smith) is very effectual in relaxing spasms and cramps of all kinds.

GUM ARABIC (*Acacia spp.*) makes a fine mucilage for strangury and scalding of the urine.

OX GALL, made into pills, combined with golden seal and Cayenne, says Dr. Osgood, is of inestimable value in those cases of dyspepsia accompanied with flatulency, sour eructation, and obstinate constipation of the bowels. For the method of preparing it for use, see Compounds.

Directions for gathering and preparing Medicines.

The remedies used for the cure of disease should be gathered with much care, and by persons who have a sufficient knowledge of the roots and plants they wish to gather, to be a guarantee against any mistake being made. The season of the year in which they are gathered is to be regarded, without which the medicine cannot be depended on. Every practitioner should gather as much of his own medicine as possible.

Herbs and leaves should be gathered while in blossom. If left till they have gone to seed, the strength is much diminished. They should be dried and carefully kept from the air. Herb tea, to do any good, should be made very strong.

Barks and roots should be collected in the spring or autumn. They should not be pulverized a long time before they are required for use, as they lose their strength.

Flowers should be gathered when in perfection, and in dry weather, dried in the shade, and kept from the air.

Seeds should be gathered when they are fully ripe, separated from chaff and dirt, and kept in bottles or jars for use.