

THE
BRITISH HERBAL
AND
FAMILY PHYSICIAN,
FOR THE CURE OF DISEASES INCIDENT
TO THE HUMAN FRAME.

BY NICHOLAS CULPEPER,
Student in Physic and Astrology.

*"Herbs and Plants are Medical Jewels gracing the Woods,
Fields, and Lanes, which few Eyes see, and few minds under-
stand. Through this want of observation and knowledge the
world suffers in immense Loss."—Linnaeus.*

LONDON:
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AND ALBION WORKS, WAKEFIELD.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE study of Botany is a delightful one. The exercise in collecting plants invigorates the health, and the examination of them, and the discrimination of their kinds, improves the intellectual qualities. Botany also is extensively applied to useful purposes. From the vegetable kingdom man derives a large share of his sustenance, and from the same source he derives agents for the cure of his complaints.

By a knowledge of Botany, the physician is enabled to make improvements in the *materia medica*, and by an acquaintance with the affinities of plants, he is prepared to investigate with advantage, the properties and uses of the native productions of any part of the globe, and to use and apply them as remediable means for the relief of mankind.

There have always been medical men who have gained a knowledge of Botany. But the great mass of practitioners at the present day are as ignorant of the science of Botany as the horses on which they ride. No medical man should consider his education complete without a knowledge of Botany.

It is well observed by an eminent American physician,—“Botanical practice is destined to a continued course of improvement—going on from perfection to perfection, as long as new agents are found, or new developments of the powers of those agents are discovered by the careful practitioner, and the


intelligent chemist. The march of improvement results more and more in the rejection of dangerous minerals, and deleterious substances from among those articles resorted to for the cure of diseases ; and we are confidently looking forward to the period when the liberal influence of *eclectic* (choosing the best) principles, and the developments of an unbigoted, enlightened practice, shall make it manifest that *vegetable* remedies, and those alone, are necessary, proper, and sufficient, to control and obviate the disorders incident to the human frame."

Let Botany be studied by all, and they will be amply rewarded with new ideas, and agreeable and effectual remedies. For this purpose *Culpeper's Herbal*, and *Dr. Robinson's Herbal*, may be consulted with great advantage.

Gu



CULPEPER'S COMPLETE HERBAL.

 *Herbs are invaluable, on account of their healing and curative power. Culpeper had a good knowledge of the appearance and virtues of Herbs, and has always been deemed a popular writer. In this Edition some gross errors have been corrected. and the style a little amended.*

AMARA DULCIS

CONSIDERING different shires in this nation give divers names to the same herb, and that the name which it bears in one country is not known in another, I shall set down all the names that I know of each herb. Pardon me for setting that name first which is most common to myself. Besides Amara Dulcis, some call it Mortal, others Bitter-sweet; some Woody Night-shade, and others Felon-wort.

Description.—It grows up with woody stalks, even to a man's height, and sometimes higher. The leaves fall off at the approach of winter, and spring out of the same stalks in spring. The branch is compassed about with a whitish bark, and hath a pith in the middle of it: the main branch brancheth itself into many small ones with claspers, laying hold on what is next to them, as vines do. It bears many leaves: they grow in no regular order. The leaves are longish, though somewhat broad, and pointed at the ends: many of them have two little leaves growing at the end of their foot-stalks; some have but one, and some none. The leaves are of a pale green colour; the flowers are of a purple colour, or dark blue, like to violets, and they stand

many of them together in knots : the berries are green at first, but when they are ripe they are very red ; they taste like the crabs which we in Sussex call Bitter-sweets, viz. sweet at first, and bitter afterwards.

Place. — They grow commonly almost throughout England, in moist and shady places.

Time. — The leaves shoot out about the latter end of March, if the temperature of the air be ordinary ; it flowereth in July, and the seeds are ripe soon after, usually in the next month.

Government and Virtues. — It is under the planet Mercury, and a notable herb, if it be rightly gathered under his influence. It is effectual in preventing witchcraft both in men and beast, as also all sudden diseases. Being tied around about the neck, it is one of the remedies for the vertigo or dizziness in the head ; and that is the reason (as Tragus saith) the people in Germany commonly hang it about their cattle's neck, when they fear any such evil hath betided them : country people commonly use to take the berries of it, and having bruised them, they applied them to felons, and thereby soon rid their fingers of such troublesome guests.

Take notice, it is a Mercurial herb, and therefore of very subtle parts, as indeed all Mercurial plants are ; take a pound of the wood and leaves together, bruise the wood, then put into a pot, and put to it three pints of white wine, put on the pot-lid and shut it close ; let it infuse hot over a gentle fire twelve hours, then strain it, this makes a most excellent drink to open obstructions of the liver and spleen, to help difficulty of breath, bruises and falls, and congealed blood in any part of the body ; it relieves the yellow-jaundice, the dropsy and the black jaundice, and cleanses woman newly brought to bed. You may drink a quarter of a pint of the infusion every morning. It purgeth the body very gently.

ALL-HEAL.

It is called All-heal, Hercules' all-heal, and Hercules' wound-wort, because it is supposed that Hercules learned

the herb and its virtues from Chiron, when he learned physic of him. Some call it panay; others opphane-wort.

Description.—Its root is long, thick, and very full of juice, of a hot biting taste: the leaves are great and large, and winged almost like ash-tree leaves, but are something hairy, each leaf consisting of five or six pairs of such wings set one against the other upon foot-stalks, broad below but narrow towards the end; one of the leaves is a little deeper at the bottom than the other, of a fair, yellowish, fresh green colour; they are of a bitterish taste being chewed in the mouth. From among these ariseth up a stalk, green in colour, round in form, great and strong in magnitude, five or six feet high, with many joints and some leaves thereat; towards the top come forth umbles of small yellow flowers, and after these are passed away, you may find whitish, yellow, short flat seeds, bitter also in taste.

Place.—Having given you the description of the herb from the bottom to the top, there are other herbs called by this name; but because they are strangers in England, I give only the description of this, which is easily to be had in many gardens.

Time.—Although Gerard saith, That they flower from the beginning of May to the end of December, experience teacheth those who keep it in their gardens, that it flowers not till the latter end of the summer, and sheds its seed soon after.

Government and Virtues.—It is under the dominion of Mars, hot, biting, and cholerick; and remedies what evils Mars afflicts the body of a man with, by sympathy, as vipers' flesh attracts poison, and the loadstone iron. It kills worms, helps the gout, cramps, and convulsions; provokes urine, and helps all joint aches. It helps all cold griefs of the head, the vertigo, falling sickness, lethargy, winds, colick, obstructions of the liver and spleen, stone in the kidneys and bladder. It provokes the terms, expels the dead birth: it is excellent for the griefs of the sinews, itch, stone, and tooth-ache, the bite of mad dogs and venomous beasts, and purgeth choler very gently.

ALKANET.

BESIDES the common name, is called Orchanet, and Spanish Bugloss, and by apothecaries, Enchusa.

Description.—Of the many sorts of this herb, there is but one known to grow commonly in this nation ; of which one takes this description :—It hath a great and thick root, of a reddish colour ; long, narrow, hairy leaves, green like the leaves of Bugloss, which lie very thick upon the ground ; the stalks rise up compassed round about, thick with leaves, which are less and narrower than the former ; they are tender, and slender, the flowers are hollow, small, and of a reddish colour.

Place.—It grows in Kent, near Rochester, and in many places in the west country, both in Devonshire and Cornwall.

Time.—They flower in July and beginning of August, and the seed is ripe soon after, but the root is in its prime, as carrots and parsnips are, before the herb runs up to stalk.

Government and Virtues.—It is under the dominion of Venus, and one of her darlings, though hard to come by. It heals old ulcers, hot inflammations, burnings by fire and St. Anthony's fire ; for these uses make it into an ointment ; or make a vinegar of it, as you make vinegar of roses, it helps the morphy and leprosy ; It helps the yellow jaundice, spleen, and gravel in the kindneys. Dioscorides saith, it helps such as are bitten by venomous beasts, whether it be taken inwardly or applied to the wound ; nay, he saith further, if any that hath newly eaten it do but spit into the mouth of a serpent, the serpent instantly dies. Its stays the flux of the belly, kills worms, helps the fits of the mother. Its decoction made in wine, and drank, strengtheus the back, and easeth the pains thereof. It heals bruises and falls, and is a gallant remedy to drive out the small pox and measles, an ointment made of it is excellent for green wounds, pricks, or thrusts.

ADDER'S TONGUE, OR SERPENT'S TONGUE.

Description.—This herb hath but one leaf, which grows with the stalk a finger's length above the ground, being flat and of a fresh green colour; broad like Water Plantane, but less, without any rib in it; from the bottom of which leaf on the inside riseth up, ordinarily, one, sometimes two or three slender stalks, the upper part whereof is somewhat bigger, and dented with small dents of a yellowish green colour, like the tongue of an adder serpent, (only this is as useful as they are formidable). The roots continue all the year.

Place.—It grows in moist meadows, and in such like places.

Time.—It is to be found in May or April, for it quickly perisheth with a little heat.

Government and Virtues.—It is under the dominion of the Moon and Cancer, and therefore, if the weakness of the retentive faculty be caused by an evil influence of Saturn in any part of the body governed by the Moon, or under the dominion of Cancer, this herb cures it by sympathy. It cures these diseases after specified, in any part of the body under the influence of Saturn, by antipathy.

It is temperate in respect of heat, but dry in the second degree. The juice of the leaves drank with the distilled water of Horse-tail, is a singular remedy of all manner of wounds in the breast, bowels, or other parts of the body, and is given with good success unto those that are troubled with casting, vomiting, or bleeding at the mouth and nose, or otherwise downwards. The said juice given in the distilled water of oaken buds, is very good for women who have their usual courses, or the whites flowing down too abundantly. It helps sore eyes. Of the leaves infused or boiled in oil, omphacine, or unripe olives, set in the sun for certain days, or the green leaves sufficiently boiled in the said oil, is made an excellent green balsam, not only for green and fresh wounds, but also for old and inveterate ulcers, especially if a little fine clear turpentine be dissolved therein. It also stayeth and refresheth all inflammations that arise upon pains by hurts and wounds.

What parts of the body are under each planet and sign, and also what disease may be found in my astroligical judgment of diseases; and for the internal work of nature in the body of man, as vital, animal, natural and procreative spirits of man; the apprehension, judgment, memory; the external senses,—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling; the virtues attractive, retentive, digestive, &c.—such parts are benefited by such Herbs.

Lastly. To avoid wetting paper with one thing many times, and also to ease your purses in the price of the book, and withal to make you studious in physic, you have at the latter end of the book, the way of preserving all herbs either in juice, conserve, oil, ointment or plaster, electuary, pills or troches.

AGRIMONY.

Description.—This hath divers long leaves, some greater, some smaller, set upon a stalk, all of them dented about the edges, green above and greyish underneath, and a little hairy withal; among which riseth up usually but one strong, round, hairy, brown stalk, two or three feet high, with smaller leaves set here and there upon it. At the top hereof grow many small yellow flowers, one above another, in long spikes, after which come round heads of seed, hanging downwards, which will cleave to and stick upon garments, or any thing that shall rub against them. The knot is black, long, and somewhat woody, abiding many years, and shooting afresh every spring; which root, though small, hath a reasonable scent.

Place.—It groweth upon banks, near the sides of hedges.

Time.—It flowereth in July and August, the seed being ripe shortly after.

Government and Virtues.—It is an herb under Jupiter and the sign Cancer; and strengthens those parts under the planet and sign, and removes diseases in them by sympathy; and those under Saturn, Mars, and Mercury, by antipathy, if they happen in any part of the body governed by Jupiter, or under the signs Cancer, Sagittary, or Pisces, and therefore must needs be good for the gout, either used outwardly in oil or ointment, or inwardly in an electuary, or

syrrup, or concerted juice ; for which see the latter end of the work.

It is of a cleansing and cutting faculty, without any manifest heat, moderately drying and binding. It openeth and cleanseth the liver, helpeth the jaundice, and is very beneficial to the bowels, healing all inward wounds, bruises, hurts, and other distempers. The decoction of the herb made with wine, and drank, is good against the biting and stinging of serpents, and helps them that makes foul, troubled, or bloody water, and makes them urinate clear speedily ; it also helpeth the colick, cleanseth the breast, and rids away the cough. A draught of the decoction taken warm before the fit, first removes, and in time rids away the tertian, or quartan agues. The leaves and seeds taken in wine stays the bloody flux ; outwardly applied, being stamped with old swine's grease, it helpeth old sores, cancers, and inveterate ulcers, and draweth forth thorns and splinters of wood, nails, or any other such thing gotten into the flesh : it helpeth to strengthen the members that be out of joint ; and being bruised and applied, or the juice dropped in, it helpeth foul and impostsu'd ears.

The distilled water of the herb is good to all the said purposes, either inward or outward, but a great deal weaker.

It is a most admirable remedy for such whose lives are annoyed either by heat or cold. The liver is the former of blood, and blood the nourisher of the body, and Agrimony a strengthener of the liver.

WATER AGRIMONY.

It is called in some countries water hemp, bastard hemp, and bastard agrimony ; eupatorium and hepatorium, because it strengthens the liver.

Description.—The root continues a long time, having many long slender strings : the stalk grows up about two feet high, sometimes higher ; they are of a dark purple colour : the branches are many, growing at distances the one from the other, the one from the one side of the stalk, the other from the opposite point : the leaves are winged, and much indented at the edges : the flowers grow at the

top of the branches, of a brown yellow colour, spotted with black spots, having a substance within the midst of them like that of a daisy; if you rub them between your fingers they smell like rosin or cedar when it is burnt: the seeds are long, and easily stick to any woollen thing they touch.

Place.—They delight not in heat, and therefore they are not so frequently found in the southern parts of England as in the northern, where they grow frequently. You may look for them in cold grounds by the sides of ponds and ditches, as also by running waters; sometimes you may find them grow in the midst of the waters.

Time.—They all flower in July or August, and the seed is ripe presently after.

Government and Virtues.—It is a plant of Jupiter, as well as the other Agrimony, only this belongs to the celestial sign Cancer. It healeth and drieth, cutteth and cleanseth thick and tough humours of the breast, and for this I hold it inferior to few herbs that grow; it helps the cachexia or evil disposition of the body, the dropsy, and yellow jaundice; it opens the obstructions of the liver, mollifies the hardness of the spleen, being applied outwardly: it breaks imposthumes, taken inwardly: it is an excellent remedy for the third day ague: it provokes urine and the terms: it kills worms, and cleanseth the body of sharp humours, which are the cause of itch and scabs; the herb being burnt, the smoke thereof drives away flies, wasps, &c.: It strengthens the lungs exceedingly. Country people give it to their cattle when they are troubled with cough, or are broken winded.

ALEHOOF, OR GROUND-IVY.

SEVERAL counties give it different names, so that there is scarcely an herb growing of that size, that has got so many. It is called cat's-foot, ground-ivy, gill-go-by-ground, and gill-creep-by-ground, turn-hoof, hay-maids, and alehoof.

Description.—This well known herb lieth, spreadeth, and creepeth upon the ground, shooteth forth roots at the corners of tender jointed stalks, set with two round leaves at

every joint, somewhat hairy, crumbled, and unevenly dented about the edges with round dents; at the joints, likewise, with the leaves towards the end of the branches, come forth hollow long flowers, of a blueish purple colour, with small white spots upon the lips that hang down. The root is small, with strings.

Place.—It is commonly found under edges and on the sides of ditches, under houses, or in shadowed lanes and other waste lands in almost every part of the land.

Time.—They flower somewhat early, and abide a great while; the leaves continue green until winter, and sometimes abide, except the winter be very sharp and cold.

Government and Virtues.—It is under Venus, and therefore cures the diseases she causes by sympathy, and those of Mars by antipathy; you may easily find it all the year, except the year be extremely frosty; it is quick, sharp, and bitter in taste, and is thereby found to be hot and dry; a singular herb for all inward wounds, ulcerated lungs, or other parts, either by itself, or boiled with other like herbs; and being drank, in a short time it easeth all griping pains, windy and choleric humours in the stomach, spleen or belly; helps the yellow jaundice by opening the stoppings of the gall and liver, and melancholy, by opening the stoppings of the spleen; expelleth venom or poison, and also the plague: it provokes urine and women's courses. The decoction of it in wine drank for some time together, procureth ease in sciatica, or hip gout; as also the gout in the hands, knees or feet; if you put to the decoction some honey and a little burnt alum, it is excellent to gargle any sore mouth or throat, and to wash the sores and ulcers in man or woman; it speedily heals green wounds, being bruised and bound thereto. The juice of it boiled with a little honey and verdigrease, wonderfully cleanses fistulas, ulcers, and stayeth the spreading or eating of cancers and ulcers; it helpeth the itch, scabs, weals, and other breakings out in any part of the body. The juice of Celandine, field Daises, and Ground-Ivy clarified and a little fine sugar dissolved therein, and dropped into the eyes, is a sovereign remedy for all pains, redness and watering of them; as also for the pin and web, skins and films growing over the