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INTERESTING HISTORY

OF THE

PANAX,

(QUINQUEFOLIUM,)

OF LINNÆUS,

The Ginseng of the Chinese,

FROM THE

ARCHIVES OF HISTORY

AND

MEDICAL SCIENCE.

BOSTON:

WHITE & POTTER, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1852.

DR. CONINE'S

SYRUP OF

GINSENG AND MALVA.

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The recipe is from Dr. Conine, a gentleman who travelled for many years in China and the islands of that vicinity, where this compound is the potent and effectual remedy for the numerous diseases arising from a disordered or debilitated stomach, and

AFFECTIONS OF THE LUNGS.

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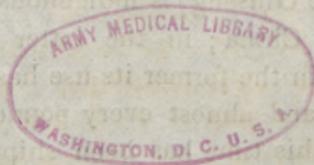
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PANAX, OR GINSENG.

The root of the Panax (**Quinquefolium**) is the **Ginseng** of the Chinese, which they regard as a universal restorative in all decays from age, intemperance, fatigue or disease. The plant is also found in North America, and **from thence** shipped to **China**. See *Encyclopædia Britannica, Botany, Vol. IV., article 1166, p. 282.*

Ginseng. A root found in China of extraordinary properties, spoken of in the highest terms as a remedy for maladies, &c. Volumes have been written in Chinese upon the virtues of this root. They affirm that it wards off fatigue, invigorates the enfeebled frame, restores exhausted animal powers, prolongs life, &c. The weight in gold has been given by the Chinese for this root, which we are told grows only in the remote and almost inaccessible parts of Chinese Tartary, where its collection is attended by dangers sufficient to appal the stoutest man. Its identification, however, is correct with the Panax (Quinquefolium) found in North America. **It is hardly to be supposed that the extraordinary faith in the energies of the plant can be destitute of foundation.** Nothing better deserves scientific investigation.—See *Penny Cyclopædia, London, Vol. XI., p. 223.*

Ginseng is the name of a root which constitutes one of the principal medicines of the Chinese and Tartars. It grows chiefly in Chinese Tartary, and also in several parts of North Ameri-

ca, from which it is sent to China. This trade to China was carried on by the French in 1750, and subsequently by the English; but since the Americans established their independence they have carried it direct to China. The American root seldom exceeds the size of the little finger. It is frequently forked, and is of a horny texture, and a yellowish white color. In the year 1709 the Emperor of China sent an army of 10,000 Tartars in search of this root, on condition that each soldier should give him two catties of the best, and sell the rest for its weight in silver. By this means the emperor gained 20,000 catties in one year.—See *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, Vol. X., p. 283.

Ainslie remarks: —“ The Chinese allege that it nourishes and strengthens the body, stops vomitings, clears the judgment, removes hypochondriasis, and all other nervous affections—in a word gives a vigorous tone to the human frame even in old age. The plant (Ginseng) is a native of Chinese Tartary, from whence it has been obtained from time immemorial. It is used by the **French** in Canada for **Asthmatic Complaints**, as a **Stomachic**, &c. The French writers say they have the authority of the Jesuit missionaries for its use; and by **Thunberg's** account, it is held to this day in high reputation amongst **the Japanese**.—See *Ainslie's Materia Indica*, London, Vol. I. p. 154.

The Chinese esteem the Ginseng as a general restorative and powerful **Aphrodisiac**. The aroma of the root preserved in the extract is pleasantly warm.—See *Parr's London Med. Dic.*, Vol. I., p. 701.

It has often been sold in China for several times its weight in silver, but has seldom been employed in Europe, more seldom, perhaps, than it ought to be.—See *Hendrick's Med. Dic. Edinburgh*, Vol. II.

Panax, (Quinquefolium) of Linnæus. The great value set upon the root by the Chinese has prevented its being exported from thence into other countries, and its discovery in North America is but of late date, so that among us it has hitherto been very rarely made use of, although from what can be judged, it is deserving of regard, especially as it is now procurable.—See *Lewis' Dis. Edinburgh, 1785. Part II., article Ginseng.*

It first became known in Europe through the missionaries. **Father Jartoux**, a missionary at **Pekin**, had an opportunity of witnessing the collection and use of the Ginseng in 1709, and made a drawing of the plant while among the mountains of Tartary. The Emperor of China employs his own servants in the collection of it. The collectors of the Ginseng carry with them neither tents nor beds, every one being sufficiently loaded with his provision, which is only parched millet, on which he is obliged to subsist during the whole journey. The mandarins send from time to time some pieces of beef, with such game as they happen to take, which they eat very greedily and almost raw. They are accustomed to sleep on the ground, and notwithstanding six months are passed in this manner, this army of **herbalists** continue in perfect health. The root is an ingredient in almost all the remedies which they give to their nobility, its price being too expensive for the populace.

The sick take it to recover health, and the healthy to make themselves stronger and more vigorous; they affirm that it removes all fatigues, either of body or mind, dissolves humors, cures **Pulmonary Diseases**, strengthens the stomach, increases the vital spirits, and prolongs life to extreme old age.

Linnæus has given to the genus of plants which includes the Ginseng the name of **Panax**, a Greek word intended to express the character of the Chinese panacea. The berries are kidney-shaped retuse at both ends, compressed, of a bright scar-

let color, crowned with the calx and styles, and containing two semi-circular seeds — the plants differ from all other vegetables in their berried fruit. It is somewhat remarkable that its name with the Chinese and North American Indians should signify the same thing in their respective languages, viz : a resemblance to the figure of a man. **Father Lafiteau**, a Jesuit missionary, discovered it in North America among the Iroquois, and sent it to France. In 1718 M. Sarasin published an account of it in the memoirs of the academy at Paris.—*Bigelow's Med. Bot. Vol. II., p. 82.*

Ginseng, in the *Materia Medica*, is one of the principal medicines of the Chinese and Tartars, and their most eminent physicians have written many volumes concerning its virtues.

It is known among them by divers other names, expressing only **Spirit, or Pure Spirit of the earth**. The plant that gives immortality, &c. It makes in effect the whole *materia medica* for the people of condition, but is too precious for the populace. All the writers of the Chinese affairs make mention of the Ginseng, as **Martinus** in his atlas, **F. Kircher** in his *China Illustrata*, **F. Tachard** in his voyages, and **F. Le Comte** in his memoirs.

As yet we know but very little of this plant, before **F. Jar-toux**, a Jesuit and missionary in China, who being employed by order of the emperor in making a map of Tartary in the year 1709, had an opportunity of seeing it growing in a village about four leagues from the kingdom of Corea, inhabited by Tartars called **Calca Tatze**.

That father took this opportunity to make a draught of the plant, and give an accurate description of it, with its virtues, and manner of preparing it. The Ginseng, according to his description and drawing, has a white root, somewhat knotty, about thrice the thickness of the stem, and which grows tapering to the end ; at a few inches from the head it frequently parts into

two branches, which give it the resemblance of a man, and hence it takes the denomination of Ginseng, which signifies a figure of a man.

The Tartars, with good reason, call it **Orhota**, that is, the first of plants. It grows to the height of about eighteen inches.

The plant dies away every year; the number of its years may be known by the number of stalks it has shot forth, of which there always remains some mark. Those who gather the Ginseng preserve only the root; they then dry it in the sun; when the roots are dried they must be kept close in some very dry place, otherwise they are in danger of corrupting or being eaten by worms.

As to the place where this root grows, it is between the thirty-ninth and forty-seventh degree of north latitude, and between the tenth and twentieth degree of east longitude, reckoning from the meridian of **Pekin**. Here is found a long tract of mountains, which thick forests, that cover and encompass them, render almost impassable. It is upon the declivities of these mountains, and in thick forests upon the banks of torrents, or about the roots of trees, and amidst a thousand other different sorts of plants, that the Ginseng is found; it is not to be met with in plains, valleys, marshes, the bottom of rivulets, or in places too much exposed and open.

If the forest takes fire and be consumed, this plant does not appear till two or three years after; it also lies hid from the sun as much as possible, which shows that heat is an enemy to it.

The places where the Ginseng grows are on every side separated from the province of **Quang Tong** by a barrier of wooden stakes which encompass this whole province, and about which guards continually patrol to hinder the Chinese from going out and looking after this root.

Yet, however vigilant they are, greediness after gain incites the Chinese to lurk privately about these deserts, sometimes to the number of two or three thousand, at the hazard of losing

their liberty and all the fruits of their labor, if they are taken, either as they go out of or come into the province.

The emperor, in order that the Tartars should reap all the advantage that is to be made of this plant, rather than the Chinese, gave orders in 1709 to **ten thousand Tartars** to go and gather all they could find of the Ginseng, upon condition that each person should give him two ounces of the best, and the rest should be paid, weight for weight, in pure silver. It was computed, by this means, the emperor would get this year about twenty thousand Chinese pounds of it, which would not cost him one-fourth part of its value.

We met by chance, says **F. Jartoux**, with some of these Tartars in the midst of those frightful deserts; and their mandarins, who were not far out of the way, came, one after another, and offered us oxen for our subsistence, according to the commands they had received from the emperor.

This army of **herbalists** observed the following order: after they had divided a certain tract of land among their several companies, each company, to the number of a hundred persons, spread itself out in a right line, to a certain fixed place, every ten of them keeping at a distance from the rest.

They then searched carefully for the plant, going on leisurely in the same order; and in this manner, in a certain number of days, they run over the whole space of ground appointed them.

When the time was expired, the mandarins, who were encamped in their tents in such places as were proper for the subsistence of their horses, sent to view each troop, to give them fresh orders, and to inform themselves if their number was complete.

If any one of them was wanting, as it often happened, either by wandering out of the way, or being attacked by wild beasts, they always looked for him a day or two, and then returned again to their labor as before.

Ginseng was formerly supposed to grow only in Chinese Tar-

tary, affecting mountainous situations, shaded by close woods; but it has now been long known that this plant is also a native of North America, whence **M. Sarrasin** transmitted specimens of it to Paris in the year 1704; and the Ginseng since discovered in Canada, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, by **Lafiteau, Kalm, Bartram**, and others, has been found to correspond exactly with the Tartarian species, and its roots are now regularly purchased by the Chinese, who consider them to be the same with those of eastern growth, which are known to undergo a certain preparation by which they assume a somewhat different appearance. This plant was first introduced into England in 1740 by that industrious naturalist, **Peter Collinson**. The dried root of Ginseng, as it is imported here, is scarcely as thick as the little finger, about three or four inches long, frequently forked, transversely wrinkled, of a horny texture, and both externally and internally of a yellowish white color. To the taste, says Lewis, (*mat. med.*) it discovers a mucilaginous sweetness, approaching to that of liquorice, and a slight aromatic warmth, with little smell. It is far sweeter, and of a more grateful smell than the roots of fennel, to which it has by some been supposed similar, and differs likewise remarkably from those roots in the nature and pharmaceutic properties of its active principles; the sweet matter of the Ginseng being procured entire in the watery as well as the spirituous extracts, whereas that of fennel roots is destroyed or dissipated in the inspissation of the watery tincture. The aromatic impregnation of the Ginseng is likewise in good measure retained in the watery extract, and perfectly in the spirituous.

The Ginseng, as we have observed, is an ingredient in most of the medicines which the Chinese physicians prescribe to the better sort of patients. They affirm that it is a sovereign remedy for all weaknesses occasioned by **excessive fatigues** either of body or mind; that it attenuates and carries off pituitous humors; cures **weakness of the lungs** and **pleurisy**; stops vomitings, strengthens the stomach, and helps the **appe-**

tite; disperses fumes or vapors; fortifies the breast; is a remedy for short and weak breathing; strengthens the **vital spirits**, and is good against dizziness of the head and dimness of sight; and that it prolongs life to extreme old age. **Nobody can imagine that the Chinese and Tartars would set so high a value upon this root if it did not constantly produce a good effect.** Those that are in health often make use of it to render themselves more vigorous and strong. And I am persuaded, adds Father **Jartoux** above mentioned, it would prove an excellent medicine in any country.

It is certain that it subtilizes, increases the motion of, and **warms the blood**; that it helps digestion, and **invigorates** in a very sensible manner. After I had designed the root, (he goes on,) I observed the state of my pulse, and then took half of a root raw as it was and unprepared; in an hour after I found my pulse much fuller and quicker. I had an **appetite**, and perceived myself much more vigorous, and could bear labor better and easier than before. Four days after, finding myself so fatigued and weary that I could scarcely sit on horseback, a mandarin who was in company with us perceiving it, gave me one of these roots; I took half of it immediately, and in an hour after I was not in the least sensible of any weariness. I have often made use of it since, and always with the same success. I have observed also that the green leaves, and especially the fibrous parts of them, chewed, would produce nearly the same effect. The Tartars often bring people the leaves of Ginseng instead of tea, and I always find myself so well afterwards, that I should readily prefer them before the best tea; their decoction is of a grateful color, and when one has taken it twice or thrice, its taste and smell become very agreeable.

The Chinese, when they give it to sick persons, seldom give more than the fifth part of an ounce of the dried root, or the same proportionate strength of the liquid.—*Reese's Cyclopædia*, vol. 17, first edition, adapted to this country.

MALVA.

Formerly the Malva was admitted among the common articles of diet. To this purpose it is referred to by **Horace**.

The Chinese are said to eat the leaves of Malva either raw as salad, or boiled as spinach.

Horace also speaks of **Leves Malvæ**, apparently meaning light of digestion. There are many varieties. Linnæus refers to twenty-six in the 14th edition of his *Systema Vegetabilium*.—See *Reese's Cyclopadia*, vol. 23.

The species of which the present Syrup of Ginseng and Malva is compounded, is the particular kind employed by a gentleman in Maryland in three cases of obstinate whooping cough, attended previously to its application with fits and excessive strangulation. He remarks:

“These three cases occurred in the winter of 1840, and commenced at different periods within a month or two. Near the 1st of March, the eldest, a boy of about five years of age, (in other respects a remarkably healthy child), was discovered to be strangling or choking with phlegm about four o'clock in the morning. He was at once taken up, and after a frightful spasm of four or five minutes, seemed to lose all power for breathing, became livid in the face, relaxed in all his muscles, and was finally laid upon the bed as a dead child—so considered by both my wife and myself; in a minute or two more, again showing signs of breathing, he was joyfully taken up and revived. The other two children, a girl and an infant boy, were also very severe cases, one of them also accompanied with spasms.

“At that period one of my family was engaged in purchasing

and repacking Ginseng for shipment to China, and I had been much in the habit of chewing it: pleased with its flavor, and aromatic warmth, I decided to follow the directions of Dr. Co-nine, and accordingly gave it to all the children in a syrup, combined with a certain kind of Malva root; the effect was wonderful—immediate relief following—no more spasms—the phlegm dissipated—nothing more than a slight cough for a week or so, when all anxiety subsided—the children apparently had all recovered together.

“A recent case, however, has greatly increased my confidence in it as a remedy for coughs and affections of the lungs.

“In October last, a young lady in my family not quite of age, was prostrated with so severe a cough as to be attended with bleeding of the lungs; and when I returned from a journey westward in November, I found her unable to rise and nearly speechless. Resort was then had to the Ginseng and Malva syrup as soon as it could be procured. The result in this case was equally astonishing—an immediate revival of spirits—the lungs healing—strength returning—the cough subsiding—and very soon no appearance of a cough remaining. She has since been and continues as well as ever.

“It appears to me that the Ginseng and Malva syrup, as used in these cases, possesses a great dissolvent power of singular efficacy in affections of the lungs; or cases attended with phlegm in the throat or stomach, peculiar, probably, to no other remedy. I gave it three times a day, and in some instances rather more than half of a wine-glass-full at a time. I shall probably never again be without the remedy.”

The above is from Mr. W. CARROLL, of Maryland, whose statements will find ample warrant in this community for their accuracy.

In the first introduction, therefore, of this remedy to the public, it will be seen that far less was promised than ancient testimony and other circumstances warranted; and there now appears scarcely a shadow of doubt of future results proving fully the beneficial experience of the past.

REMARKS.

It is strange indeed that a remedy of this character, with such a mass of able testimony in its favor, should have been for so great a length of time scattered or neglected; though probably never destined by its Creator to go into ultimate oblivion. Long alienated, however, from among the crowd of its more forward, and doubtless in many instances less worthy competitors, it has been coldly driven an exile from its native soil, and only by strangers cherished. Sleeping in its own land the deep sleep which follows an unkind reception and long neglect, while for so long a period "unhonored and unsung,"—yet from the fulness and vitality of the power graciously bestowed upon it by the hand that first gave it being; destined still to perform its wide work of mercy among earth's many happy and many suffering children, to the end of all compounding time.



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