

LAFITAU'S MEMOIR ON GINSENG.*

BY EDWARD KREMERS.

In 1918 it will be two hundred years that this, possibly the first printed contribution to American materia medica, was dedicated to the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, by the Jesuit missionary who had been stationed at Sault Saint Louis, near Montreal, where he had discovered what the Indians called *garentongen* or man-root. The discovery was not accidental but based on diligent search suggested by Father Jartoux, who had recently described the Chinese plant, the collection of which, by the Emperor's root hunters, he had witnessed in Tartary.

Lafitau's original is rare and even a reprint published in 1858 by Verreau is scarce. Hence, though the therapeutic merits of the ginseng are no longer held in the esteem shown it by the Jesuit missionary, the historic significance of the drug is such as warrants a republication of Lafitau's Memoir, together with that of the older literature of Jartoux and other missionaries and naturalists. Moreover, its historic significance in this country is not restricted to its supposed therapeutic merits, believed in by missionary as well as Indians, but is one of great economic imports to the colonies and the early United States. Suffice it to point out in this connection that the first vessel that left an American port for China after peace with the mother country had been established, was laden with a cargo of ginseng, which enabled the early citizens of the newly established United States to secure tea and silk without money, but for a root that grew wild in their forests and that was to be had in quantity for the mere collecting. Somewhat later, ginseng was one of two articles which were of sufficient value to pay wagon freight from Kentucky over the Alleghanies to the Atlantic seaports.

The republication of Lafitau's Memoir, together with other original literature on the subject, has been made possible by the Hollister Pharmaceutical Library Fund of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

THE CHICAGO VETERAN DRUGGISTS' ASSOCIATION.*

BY WILHELM BODEMANN.

Dear friends: Do not get frightened—I shall be brief! Miracles never cease! Constitutional limitations prohibit a surgeon to operate on a patient without the patient's consent, yet, on opening the A. PH. A. JOURNAL for August, I am down for a paper on "Chicago Veteran Druggists' Association," without my consent or knowledge, or even warning. When such men as E. G. Eberle, Hugh Craig, W. B. Day, J. H. Beal, J. P. Remington, H. M. Whelpley—all valiant A. Ph. A. warriors and C. V. D. A. members—are on the field, certainly the C. V. D. A. is well represented at your historical conclave. All of these members are far superior pen slingers—certainly write more legibly and intelligently—than the writer can say for himself. But—let me say this to the A. Ph. A. Historical Section: I am disappointed, with all the appeals I have made to the A. Ph. A. Historical Section, that no city has so far followed the beacon light held out by

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Chicago. The N. A. R. D. fights for the Retail Drug Trade; the A. Ph. A. fights for the allied branches and furnishes munition to all of them. We of the C. V. D. A. stand for only one thing—"Gemuethlichkeit"—"Brotherly Love," "Reminiscences" and, by our deeds and records, have shown to the world that there is something besides commerce and besides theory and practice, and that is the practice of "Love your neighbor and friend." We prohibit from discussion politics, business and religion. Aside from that we prohibit nothing, not even pure water; we don't delete other beverages, and allow everybody to do anything he wants to promote cheer and good-will.

There is not a city in the world that would not be benefited by a Veteran Association. Think for a minute what a wealth of interesting pharmaceutical lore the home cities of a Joseph Lemberger, John Patton, Joe Remington, L. E. Sayre, H. M. Whelpley, John Uri Lloyd, L. C. Hopp, McElhenie and McIntire and scores of others could draw on. Why not add the missing link—the Veteran Association—to the fame of these men? Why don't they go to it and start something? Will it pay these men? Well—let me cite my experience, if I may be permitted to do so.

My friends: I have had in my fifty years of United States pharmacy life all sorts of ups and downs, victories and defeats (and I am undecided which I enjoyed the most). I am willing to call all of that off—but leave me the C. V. D. A. To have been Recording Secretary of this most democratic as well as aristocratic body is the one thing in my career I don't care to have wiped out. We gather historical data. Our members must furnish the Archives with a photo and an autobiography—a thing which they can do far better before than after the funeral. We gather weekly at a *Tavola Rotunda*. Our Corresponding Secretary, John Blocki, decorates every member for his birthday at the weekly Roundtable. In this way we remind some men that they are born, which some claim they have forgotten. We deposit our red carnation on the bier of our departed friends—just *one*—answering the purpose better than a wash-basketful because it represents Love, Reverence, and a last "Auf Wiedersehen." Call on the officers of the C. V. D. A. for further details—if you are ready to start something in your city. Meantime, whenever you are in Chicago on a Thursday, come to our Roundtable and see. It's a case of *Veni, Vidi, Vici*. There you will see the Venerable Center of the Table, our Honorary President, dear Oliver Franklin Fuller, an inspiration and a benediction; to his left, the Chairman and the Corresponding Secretary, genial John Blocki; to his right, I confess almost in tears of joy, it has been the pride and the joy of the writer to sit for fifteen years, an inheritance I wouldn't swap for all of John D.'s best-paying oil trusts.

HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE A. PH. A.

A circular letter signed by L. E. Sayre, chairman and Hugo Kantrowitz, secretary of the Historical Section of the American Pharmaceutical Association, has been addressed to members of the Association, stating that the committee is very anxious to have this section well supported and requesting articles relating to historical pharmacy. The committee has thus far been greatly encouraged by some volunteers in helping along in this work and desires further contributions. These should be sent to Secretary Hugo Kantrowitz, 104 John St., New York City.
