

desire to know the part which pharmacy has taken and is taking in the conquest of disease. The formation of the national collection has been essentially a matter of teamwork between pharmacists and the Museum. What has been done here should be done elsewhere, until there are more and better pharmacy collections distributed throughout the United States.

---

### A NOTE ON AN ANCIENT POISONOUS PLANT OF ASIA MINOR.\*

BY L. E. WARREN.<sup>1</sup>

Plutarch relates<sup>2</sup> that when Antony was retreating from his fruitless invasion of Media his soldiers were threatened with famine. They were constantly harassed by the Parthians in superior numbers, so that they could not make extended foraging expeditions. In part the account reads:

"And when they tried vegetables and roots, they found such as are commonly eaten very scarce, so that they were constrained to venture upon any they could get, and, among others, they chanced upon an herb that was mortal, first taking away all sense and understanding. He that had eaten of it remembered nothing in the world, and employed himself only in moving great stones from one place to another, which he did with as much earnestness and industry as if it had been a business of the greatest consequence. Through all the camp there was nothing to be seen but men grubbing upon the ground at stones, which they carried from place to place. But in the end they threw up bile and died, as wine, moreover, which was the one antidote failed."

Not being familiar with any plant having such peculiar pharmacologic properties as those described by the historian and being curious to know its identity, I consulted several works on poisonous plants. I assumed that Plutarch's description was accurate and that the plant must long since have been identified or, at least, conjectures as to its identity must have been made by students in toxicology. So far as the literature on poisonous plants was available I found no reference whatever to the plant mentioned by Plutarch.

In the hope of obtaining some enlightenment on the subject I brought the matter to the attention of several well-known authorities on vegetable drugs and poisonous plants, particularly to those that had made a study of ancient drugs. None of these were able to offer more than conjectures on the problem. One suggested that the plant might have been cannabis; others henbane; I wondered whether it might not have been one of the mandragoras. However, a comparison of the symptoms known to be caused by these several named poisons with the illness recorded by Plutarch shows clearly that none of them can have been the plant under discussion. Two theories are possible to account for the failure of moderns to identify the Medean plant—(1) the plant may have become extinct since Roman times; (2) the symptoms may not have been described completely or accurately by Plutarch. Having no more than a passing interest in subjects of this nature I leave the matter to the Historical Section for further study if it be deemed worth while.

---

\* Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. PH. A., Baltimore meeting, 1930.

<sup>1</sup> Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration, Washington, D. C.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch: "Life of Antony."

It is rather curious to note the amount of attention that has been given by modern scientific writers to Xenophon's account<sup>1</sup> of the poisoning of the retreating Greeks by eating poisonous honey, while no one apparently has paid any attention to Plutarch's story. The omission in the latter case is all the more remarkable because the loss of life in Antony's army was considerable while none of the Greeks in the army of Cyrus succumbed.

---

FLUECKIGERIANA.

BY EDWARD KREMERS.

V. Flueckiger letters to Power.\*

Strassburg, 25th March, 1884.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

The translation (1) as mentioned in yours of the 8th inst., came duly to hand and gave me great satisfaction indeed. The translator as well as the publishers (2) may accept my best thanks. I have a little perused your work to-day and think you have pretty well succeeded. And the paper and types and binding are so very much superior to the original; I am sorry to think, that the publishers may perhaps not meet with the commercial success they are so greatly meriting. And as to yourself, let me hope that your labour will be duly appreciated in the pharmaceutical world, both in America and England (3).

I am happy to learn that you are greatly satisfied with your new position (4); your own new home (5) certainly contributes very much to your comfort. I always think, after all, that if one succeeds well in the family life and a little in science that is the best what can be expected on the earth. So I am happy, although things, as you know, at Strassburg are far from answering to my wishes (6).

Dr. Meyer (7) is still with me; he has published a good number of excellent papers (8)—yet without any real progress as to his position. There is no chair vacant which would suit him, so he must patiently wait and wait (9).

I am about to leave (10) for the Mediterranean shores, to pay a visit of 2-3 weeks to Mr. Thomas Hanbury (11), the brother of my late friend Daniel Hanbury (12). The former is the owner of a splendid villa, where I shall be, with my wife, very much delighted with the southern sun and brilliant vegetation.

With kindest regards to you and Mrs. Power (in which my wife cordially unites), I remain

Yours very truly,

F. A. FLUECKIGER.

The above letter was accompanied by a memorandum of corrections:

Corrigenda  
in the "Cinchona Barks"

Page 11. Footnote: read how very little improbable.

Page 53. Line 4/5 from bottom read Koerner for Kerner (the former is the chemist of the manufactory of Milan, the latter of that of Frankfurt; the former is the only intended in this place).

---

(1) That of "The Cinchona Barks."

(2) The English translation was published by P. Blakiston, Son & Co., in 1884.

(3) Reviews of the book will be found in the following journals: *Am. J. Pharm.*, 58, 300. (Presumably by J. M. Maisch.) *Pharm. Rundschau*, 2, 94 (Fr. H.).

(4) Dr. Power had accepted the Professorship of Pharmacy and Materia Medica at Wisconsin in the summer of 1883, after the Department of Pharmacy had been established by act of the Legislature earlier in the same year.

(5) Having come to Madison in August 1883, Dr. Power was married to Miss Louise Meigs of New York State. Hence Professor Flueckiger's reference to "your own new home."

---

<sup>1</sup> Anabasis, Bk. 4, C8, 20. L. F. Kebler: "Poisonous Honey." *Proc. A. Ph. A.*, 44 (1896), 167.

\* Continued from page 882.