Menyanthes trifoliata.

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MENYANTHES TRIFOLIATA. WATER TREFOIL, OR BUCKBEAN.

SYNONYMA. TRIFOLIUM PALUDOSUM, *Pharm. Lond. & Edin.* MENYANTHES PALUSTRE TRIPHILLUM, *Tourn. Boerh. Ray.* TRIFOLIUM FIBRINUM, *Off. Germ.* ACOPA, *Dioscor. Hist. Oxon.*

Class Pentandria. *Order* Monogynia. L. *Gen. Plant.* 202.

Ess. Gen. Char. *Cor.* hirsuta. *Stigma* 2-fidum. *Caps.* 1-locularis.

Spec. Char. M. fol. ternatis.

THIS plant is common in every part of England; it grows in marshes and ponds, producing its flowers in an open terminal spike about the latter end of June. The scapus, or stalk, rises from six to twelve inches in height. The petals are sometimes entirely white, but more commonly rose-coloured on the outside, and within they are finely fringed, so as to have a hairy or fibrous appearance, hence named Trifolium Fibrinum: the root is perennial, creeping, and jointed, sending forth many long slender filaments. The trifoliata is easily distinguished from the other species of Menyanthes by its ternate leaves, which have been thought to resemble those of the common garden bean, and have given it the English name, Buckbean.

The whole plant is so extremely bitter, that in some countries it is used as a substitute for hops in the preparation of malt liquor[a]; yet Linnæus observes, that the poorer people in Lapland make a bread of the powdered roots mixed with meal, but at the same time he acknowledges it is a very unpalatable food[b].

[a] Flor. Lappon. p. 50. [b] Ibid.

Menyanthes trifoliata

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MENYANTHES TRIFOLIATA. WATER TREFOIL, OR BUCKBEAN.

SYNONYMA. TRIFOLIUM PALUDOSUM, *Pharm. Lond. & Edin.* MENYANTHES PALUSTRE TRIPHILLUM, *Tourn. Boerh. Ray.* TRIFOLIUM FIBRINUM, *Off. Germ.* ACOPA, *Dioſcor. Hiſt. Oxon.*

Claſs Pentandria. *Order* Monogynia. L. *Gen. Plant.* 202.

Eſſ. Gen. Char. Cor. hirſuta. *Stigma* 2-fidum. *Caps.* 1-locularis.

Spec. Char. M. fol. ternatis.

THIS plant is common in every part of England; it grows in marſhes and ponds, producing its flowers in an open terminal ſpike about the latter end of June. The ſcapus, or ſtalk, riſes from ſix to twelve inches in height. The petals are ſometimes entirely white, but more commonly roſe-coloured on the outſide, and within they are finely fringed, ſo as to have a hairy or fibrous appearance, hence named Trifolium Fibrinum: the root is perennial, creeping, and jointed, ſending forth many long ſlender filaments. The trifoliata is eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the other ſpecies of Menyanthes by its ternate leaves, which have been thought to reſemble thoſe of the common garden bean, and have given it the Engliſh name, Buckbean.

The whole plant is ſo extremely bitter, that in ſome countries it is uſed as a ſubſtitute for hops in the preparation of malt liquor[a]; yet Linnæus obſerves, that the poorer people in Lapland make a bread of the powdered roots mixed with meal, but at the ſame time he acknowledges it is a very unpalatable food[b].

[a] Flor. Lappon. p. 50. [b] Ibid.

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The blacknefs manifefted by adding a folution of green vitriol to the juice, or to a ftrong infufion of the leaves of Buckbean, is a fufficient teft of its aftringency; while a dram of the powdered leaves feldom fails to open the body, or produce vomiting; fo that in common with the tonic properties of a bitter, it feems farther to poffefs a confiderable fhare of medicinal activity: we can therefore more eafily credit the reports of its fuccefs in a great number of chronic difeafes mentioned by various authors[c], as fcurvy, dropfy, jaundice, afthma, periodical headachs, intermittents, hypochondriafis, cachexia, obftructio menfium, rheumatifm, fcrophula, worms, gout. Dr. Boerhaave was relieved in the laft mentioned complaint by drinking the juice mixed with whey[d]; and Dr. Alfton tells us, that " this plant had remarkable effects in the gout, in keeping off " the paroxyfms;" but adds, " though not to the patient's advantage."[e]

In confirmation of the good effects of Water Trefoil in dropfies, we are told that fheep, when forced to eat it, are [f] cured of the rot; (oves tabidæ) yet as we have but few and imperfect proofs of its diuretic powers, this fact will be confidered of little weight.

Bergius confines the ufes of this plant to fcorbutus, leucophlegmatia, arthritis, rheumatifmus, cacoethes[g], and this fpecification is ftill farther contracted by later writers on the Materia Medica. In Lewis's Mat. Med. (*by Mr. Aikin*) it is faid, that the leaves of buckbean " have of late years come into common ufe as an al- " terative and aperient, in impurities of the humours, and fome " hydropic and rheumatic cafes;" and as an active and eccoprotic bitter, we fhould fuppofe them not ill adapted to fupply the want of bile in the *primæ viæ*, and thus infer their ufe in protracted

[c] Trifolii Fibrini Hiftoria, felectis obfervationibus et perfpicuis exemplis, illuftrata a Jo. Franco, anno 1701.

Recte obfervavit D. Tancredus Robinfon herbam hanc Germanis, aliifque gentibus feptentrionalibus nunc dierum unicè charam et in magno pretio effe, et affiduo ufu frequentari in omnibus fere morbis, ut certiffimam panaceam, ad quam etiam in deploratis affectibus, velut ad facram anchoram, confugiunt (Raii Hiftor. Plant. p. 1099.) See alfo Willius Act. Hafn. vol. 3. Sim. Pauli, Quadrip. Bot. p. 173. et feq. Tilling Mifc. N. curios. Dec. 2. Gulbrand Diff. de Sanguifluxu Uterino. Du Clos Anc. Mem. p. 329. Schulz Mat. Med. p. 445.

[d] Eph. Nat. Cur. Dec. I. ann. III. Obf. 123. (this anfwers Dr. Alfton's query, who afks, " Where is this related?" Alfton. Mat. Med. vol. 2. p. 240.

[e] l. c. [f] Dr. T. Robinfon. [g] Mat. Med. vol. 1. p. 91.

jaundice,

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jaundice, and other biliary obſtructions. Dr. Cullen has " had ſe-
" veral inſtances of their good effects in ſome cutaneous diſeaſes of
" the herpatic and ſeemingly cancerous kind [h]."

The leaves may be given in powder from ℈i to ℈ij for a doſe two or three times a day, but a ſtrong infuſion of them is perhaps preferable, and with delicate ſtomachs it may be neceſſary to conjoin a grateful aromatick: they impart their properties both to watery and ſpiritous menſtrua, and an extract is ordered to be prepared from them in the Ph. Dan. p. 171. Efficax et frequentis commodique uſus. *Murray.*

[h] Mat. Med. vol. 2. p. 75.

LEONTODON TARAXACUM. COMMON DANDELION.

SYNONYMA. TARAXACUM, *Pharm. Lond. & Edin.* DENS LEONIS, *Auctorum.*

Claſs Syngeneſia. *Order* Polygamia Æqualis. L. *Gen. Plant.* 912.
* *Semifloſculoſi Tourn. corollis ligulatis omnibus.*

Eſſ. Gen. Char. *Recept.* nudum. *Cal.* imbricatus, ſquamis laxiuſculis. *Pappus* plumoſus.

Spec. Char. L. T. calyce ſquamis inferne reflexis, foliis runcinatis denticulatis lævibus.

DANDELION is ſo very common, that a plot of ground can ſcarcely be ſeen where it does not preſent its yellow flowers*. It is eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the hawkweeds and other ligulated

* It has been obſerved that theſe flowers poſſeſs a certain degree of ſenſibility, for when under the powerful influence of the ſun in a ſummer's morning, an evident motion of the flowerets may be diſcovered. MS Lect. of the late Dr. Hope.

plants,