OXALIS ACETOSELLA. WOOD-SORREL.

SYNONYMA. LUJULA. *Pharm. Lond.* OXALIS ACETOSELLA, ſcapis unifloris, fol. ternatis: foliolis obcordatis piloſis. *Thunb. Diſſ. de Oxal.* n. 5. *Curtis Flor. Lond. Withering's Bot. Arrang.* p. 470. *Relhan's Flor. Cant.* p. 176. Oxys ſcapo unifloro, foliis ternatis, radice ſquamoſo-articulata. *Hal. Stirp. Helv.* n. 928. Oxys ſive Trifolium acidum, flore albo & purpuraſcente. *J. Bauh.* II. 387. Trifolium acetoſum vulgare. *Bauh. Pin.* 330. *Parkinſon & Theat.* 746. Oxys Alba. *Gerard. Herb.* 1201. *Raii Synop.* p. 281. WOOD-SORREL. *Hiſt. Plant.* 1098. ACETOSELLA, et ALLELUJA, *Quorundam.*

Claſs Decandria. *Ord.* Pentagynia. *L. Gen. Plant.* 582.

Eſſ. Gen. Ch. Cal. 5-phyllus. *Petala* unguibus connexa. *Caps.* angulis dehiſcens, 5-gona.

Sp. Ch. O. ſcapo unifloro, foliis ternatis obcordatis, radice dentata. *L. Syſt. ed.* 13.

THIS delicate little plant is excellently deſcribed by Mr. Curtis, (Flor. Lon.) we ſhall therefore adopt his deſcription, as far as it coincides with our plan. The root is perennial, horizontal, ſcaly, and of a bright red colour; the leaves grow three together, inverſely heart-ſhaped, of a yellowiſh green colour, frequently purple underneath, and beſet with a few hairs; the leaf ſtalks are about three inches long, nearly upright, tender, proceeding from little bulbs, which form a kind of ſheath, at the bottom theſe ſtalks are red and round, but towards the top grooved on one ſide: the flowers are white or fleſh-coloured, and elegantly ſtreaked with red veins. The flower-ſtalk is ſomewhat longer than the leaf-ſtalk, and

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Oxalis Acetosella

Published by R. Vandrille April 1. 1790.

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Published by Dr Woodville April 1. 1790.

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and furnished near the top with two oval pointed bracteæ, which partly surround it; the calyx is divided into five segments; these are short, permanent, bluntish, membraneous at the edges, and often spotted with purple; the petals are five, affixed to the receptacle by the claws, which bend a little inward just above where the claws adhere together, they are blunt, slightly crenated, and tinged at the bottom with yellow; the stamina are ten, upright, white, the five exterior the shortest; the antheræ are yellow and bilocular; the germen is quadrangular and green; the styles are five, very slender, a little longer than the stamina, and the stigma is blunt; the capsule is ovalish, pentagonal, spotted, divided into five cavities, each containing three seeds, which are heart-shaped, longitudinally grooved, convex on both sides, of a bright reddish brown colour, and inclosed within a shining white elastic arillus, by the bursting of which the seeds are thrown out‡. This plant is a native of England, it flowers about April and May, and is commonly found in woods, or in shaded situations.[a]

The Acetosella is totally inodorous, but has a grateful acid taste,[b] which is more agreeable than the common sorrel, (Rumex Acetosa) and approaches nearly to that of the juice of lemons, or the acid of tartar, with which it also corresponds in a great measure in its medical effects, being esteemed refrigerant, antiscorbutic, and diuretic. It is recommended by Bergius in inflammatory, bilious, and putrid fevers, and from the cases adduced by Francus,[c] he concludes, "Acetossellam appetitum restaurare, vomitum consopire, alvum stringere, sitim sedare, oris amaritiem tollere, cordis vires reparare, anginamque abigere."[d] The principal use however of the Acetosella is to allay inordinate heat, and to quench thirst; for this purpose, a pleasant whey may be formed by boiling the plant in milk, which under certain circumstances may be preferable to the conserve directed by the London

‡ As a distinguishing part of the generic character, Ray says, "Quod per maturitatem levi tactu dissiliens cum impetu semina ejaculantur, (hist. 1098).

[a] Mr. Curtis observes, that this plant continues to produce seeds during the greatest part of the summer, without any appearance of expanded blossoms.

[b] This makes it useful in sallads, in some measure supplying the place of vinegar.

[c] De vera herba Antiquorum Acetosella, &c. [d] Mat. Med. p. 379.

College,

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College, though an extremely grateful and uſeful medicine. Many have employed the root of Lujula, probably on account of its beautiful red colour rather than for its ſuperior efficacy. An eſſential ſalt is prepared from this plant, known by the name of Eſſential Salt of Lemons, and commonly uſed for taking ink-ſtains out of linen.*

* This ſalt is made from the expreſſed juice. Vide Boerh. Chem. vol. 2. proc 7. & Savary, Diſſ. de Sale Eſſent. Acetoſellæ. p. 9. Thunberg found that the Oxalis cernua of the Cape of Good Hope, yields the ſalt in greater quantity than the Acetoſella. — This ſalt, when genuine, which is ſeldom to be procured ſo,‖ is compoſed of the vegetable alkali and a peculiar acid, which ſeems more allied to the acid of ſugar than that of tartar. Vide Bergman Act. Up. Nov. vol. 2. p. 215. where the manner of ſeparating this acid is alſo given, and related by Murray. Ap. Med. vol. 3. p. 497.

‖ Vide Scheele in Görwells *nya tidningar*, 1775. n. 30. p. 237. & Savary, l. c. What is ſold under the name of *Eſſential Salt of Lemons* in this country, appears ſometimes to conſiſt of C. Tart. with the addition of a ſmall quantity of vitriolic acid. MS. Lectures on Chemiſtry by Dr. Hamilton.

CONVOLVULUS JALAPA.

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