Spartium scoparium

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employed in various cutaneous diſeaſes; when taken in pretty large doſes it proves diuretic and laxative, eſpecially the juice, which may be mixed with whey, and uſed as a common drink. Dr. Cullen claſſes this plant among the tonics; he ſays, " it is omitted in the London diſpenſatory, but retained in ours, and in every other that I know of. I have found it uſeful in many caſes in which bitters are preſcribed; but its remarkable virtues are thoſe of clearing the ſkin of many diſorders. For this it has been much commended; and I have myſelf experienced its good effects in many inſtances of cutaneous affections, which I would call Lepra. I have commonly uſed it by expreſſing the juice, and giving that to two ounces twice a day: but I find the virtues remain in the dried plant, ſo that they may be extracted by infuſion or decoction in water; and the foreign diſpenſatories have prepared an extract of it, to which they aſcribe all the virtues of the freſh plant."

[d] *M. M. vol. ii. p.* 77.

SPARTIUM SCOPARIUM. COMMON BROOM.

SYNONYMA. Geniſta. *Pharm. Lond. & Edinb. Gerard. Emac. p.* 1311. Geniſta anguloſa & ſcoparia. *Bauh. Pin. p.* 395. Geniſta vulgaris & ſcoparia. *Park. Theat. p.* 228. Geniſta anguloſa trifolia. *J. Bauh. Hiſt. vol. i. p.* 388. *Ray Hiſt. p.* 1723. *Synop. p.* 474. Spartium foliis inferioribus ternatis hirſutis ſuperioribus ſimplicibus. *Hall. Stirp. Helv. n.* 354. Spartium ſcoparium. *Hudſon. Flor. Ang. p.* 310. *Withering. Bot. Arrang. p.* 756. *Flor. Dan. p.* 313.

Claſs Diadelphia. *Ord.* Decandria. *Lin. Gen. Plant.* 858.

Eſſ. Gen. Ch. *Stigma* longitudinale, ſupra villoſum. *Filamenta* germini adhærentia. *Cal.* deorſum productus.

Sp. Ch. S. foliis ternatis ſolitariiſque, ramis inermibus angulatis.

THE root is woody, tough, and extends to a conſiderable length: the ſtalk is ſhrubby, branched, and covered with light brown bark: it uſually riſes from four to ſix feet in height, and ſends forth a great number of ſlender angular green ſhoots: the leaves are ſmall, downy, divided into three oval leafits, and ſtanding upon footſtalks of different lengths: the flowers are large, numerous, of the papilionaceous ſhape, and of a bright yellow colour: the calyx is tubular, divided tranſverſely at the margin into two lips, of theſe the uppermoſt is entire, the undermoſt ſlightly notched: the corolla is compoſed of five petals: the ſuperior, or ſtandard petal is inverſely heart-ſhaped, and bent backwards: the two lateral petals, or wings, are oblong, convex, leſs than the ſtandard, and united to the filaments: the keel is compoſed of the two undermoſt petals, which are connected together by ſoft hairs at the margin, ſo as to appear keel-ſhaped: the filaments are ten, nine of which are united at the baſe, of unequal length, curled inwards, and furniſhed with oblong antheræ: the germen is flat, oblong, hairy, and ſupports a ſlender ſtyle, with an oblong ſtigma: the ſeeds are round, or ſomewhat kidney-ſhaped, and contained in a long cylindrical pod, like that of the garden pea. It is common in dry ſandy paſtures, and flowers in April and May.

Linnæus, Bergius,[a] and ſeveral other writers ſeem to have confounded the medicinal qualities of this plant with thoſe of Geniſta tinctoria: the officinal Geniſta is however by the Britiſh Pharmacopœias conſidered to be the common Broom, of which the tops and ſeeds are directed for uſe. The tops and leaves of Broom have a nauſeous bitter taſte, which they impart by infuſion both to water and ſpirit. They are commended for their purgative and diuretic qualities, and have therefore been ſucceſsfully employed in hydropic caſes, of which particular inſtances are related by Mead[b] and others, to which we may add the following from Dr. Cullen: "Geniſta, though very little in uſe, I have inſerted in my catalogue (of

[a] They both ſay of G. tinctoria, "VIRTUS: pellens, purgans, USUS: Hydrops;" while the common broom is paſſed unnoticed. See *M. M. Lin. p.* 170. *Berg. p.* 598.

[b] *Mon. & Præc. p.* 138. where we are told that a patient by taking half a pint of a decoction of green Broom tops, with a ſpoonful of whole muſtard ſeed, every morning and evening, was cured, after being tapped three times, and trying the uſual remedies given in dropſies. See alſo *Möhring Act. N. C. vol. v. p.* 32.

cathartics)

cathartics) from my own experience of it. I found it firſt in uſe among our common people; but I have ſince preſcribed it to ſome of my patients in the manner following: I order half an ounce of freſh Broom tops to be boiled in a pound of water till one half of this is conſumed, and of this decoction I give two table-ſpoonfuls every hour till it operates by ſtool, or till the whole is taken. It ſeldom fails to operate both by ſtool and urine, and by repeating this exhibition every day, or every ſecond day, ſome dropſies have been cured."[c] The aſhes of Broom have alſo been much uſed in dropſies, and principally on the authority of Sydenham,[d] whoſe account of their good effects has been ſince confirmed by the teſtimony of Dr. Monro,[e] and other writers.[f] We may obſerve however that the efficacy of this medicine muſt depend entirely upon the alkaline ſalt, and not in the leaſt upon the vegetable from which it is obtained. The ſeeds and flowers of Broom are ſaid to be emetic and cathartic; but the evidence upon which this aſſertion reſts is not wholly to be relied upon, as the former when roaſted have been uſed as a ſubſtitute for coffee, and the latter employed as a pickle.[g]

[c] *Mat. Med. vol. ii. p.* 534. [d] *Opera, p.* 497.

[e] He gave a dram divided into three doſes every day. *On Dropſy, p.* 64.

[f] See Odhelius in *Vet. Acad. Handl.* 1762. *p.* 82.

[g] Purgat geniſtæ ſemen non minùs potenter fere quàm Spartium aut Helleborus, &c. Idem confirmat Lobelius, ſemine Geniſtæ ſcopariæ vomitum non ſecus ac Spartio Dioſc. ſæpius ℥ii decocto propinato citra magnam contentionem ſe moviſſe ſcribens. Verùm flores recèns decerptos ſæpiſſimè quamplurimos & per ſe acetariis inditos vorat, (inquit) plebecula Arverna and Aquitaniæ maximâ copiâ innocuos non modò ſed etiam admodum guſtui ſuaves; nec quicquam vomitionis nauſeæve, aut commotionis movere ſolent. Quin apud Brabantos, & Anglos non minùs, gemmantes dum adhuc virides ſunt condiuntur ſale & aceto flores, meniſque inferuntur, Capparum Olearumve pari commendatione. *Ray l. c.* Ray alſo informs us, that from the MS. of Dr. Hulſe, he learned that the flor. geniſt. given in the form of electuary, with honey of roſes, were found of great efficacy in ſcrophulous affections.

ORCHIS MASCULA.

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