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CANELLA ALBA. LAUREL-LEAVED CANELLA.

SYNONYMA. Canella alba. *Pharm. Lond. & Edinb.* Winterania Canella. *Lin. Supp. p.* 247. Arbor baccifera laurifolia aromatica, fructu viridi calyculato racemoſo. *Sloane's Jamaica, vol. ii. p.* 87. *t.* 191. *f.* 2. *Cateſby's Carolina, vol. ii. p.* 50. *t.* 50. Canella foliis oblongis obtuſis nitidis, racemis terminalibus. *Browne's Jamaica, p.* 275. *t.* 27. *f.* 3. Caſſia lignea Jamaicenſis Laureolæ foliis ſubcinereis cortice piperis modo acri. *Pluckenet Almag. p.* 89. *t.* 81. *f.* 1. *Lin. Spec. Plant. p.* 636. *Conf. Swartz. Botanical Hiſtory of the Canella Alba. Linnean Tranſactions. p.* 96.

Claſs Dodecandria. *Ord.* Monogynia. *Lin. Gen. Winterania. p.* 598.

Eſſ. Gen. Ch. Cal. 3-lobus. *Pet.* 5. *Antheræ* 16, adnatæ nectario urceolato. *Bacca* 3-locularis. *Sem.* 2.

THE ſtem of this tree riſes very ſtraight, from ten to fifty feet in height, and branched only at the top; it is covered with a whitiſh bark, by which it is eaſily diſtinguiſhed at a diſtance from other trees in the woods where it grows: the leaves are placed upon ſhort footſtalks, and ſtand alternately: they are oblong, obtuſe, entire, of a dark ſhining

Canilla alba

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ſhining green hue, and thick like thoſe of the laurel: the flowers are ſmall, ſeldom opening, of a violet colour, and grow in cluſters at the tops of the branches upon divided footſtalks: the calyx is monophyllus, divided nearly to its baſe into three lobes, which are roundiſh, concave, incumbent, green, ſmooth, membranous, and perſiſtent: the corolla is compoſed of five petals, which are much longer than the calyx, ſeſſile, oblong, concave, erect, and two of them are ſomewhat narrower than the other three: the nectary is pitcher-ſhaped, of the length of the petals, and ſupports the antheræ inſtead of filaments, which are wanting: the antheræ are twenty-one, linear, parallel, diſtinct, ſingle valved, and fixed longitudinally to the nectary: the germen is ovate, placed above the inſertion of the corolla, and ſupports a cylindrical ſtyle, furniſhed with two obtuſe rough convex ſtigmata: the fruit is an oblong berry, containing four kidney-ſhaped ſeeds of unequal ſize.*

It appears a little ſurpriſing, that the Canella, which is a native of the Weſt Indies, and of which figures have been given by Plukenet, Sloane, Cateſby, Browne,[a] and others, ſhould have been generally confounded with the tree which produces the cortex winteranus: even the younger Linnæus, who deſcribes this tree under the genus Winterania, from a ſpecimen in the herbarium of Montin, has acknowledged that he could not diſcover how far it differed from the Drimys, or Wintera of Murray.[b] The preſent figure, which is given on the authority of Dr. Swartz, who preſented it to the Linnean Society, accompanied with a botanical hiſtory of the tree,‖ will, we hope, re-

* "The whole tree (according to Dr. Swartz) is very aromatic, and when in bloſſom perfumes the whole neighbourhood. The flowers dried, and ſoftened again in warm water, have a fragrant odour, nearly approaching to that of muſk. The leaves have a ſtrong ſmell of laurel. The berries, after having been ſome time green, turn blue, and become at laſt of a black gloſſy colour, and have a faint aromatic taſte and ſmell. They are, when ripe, as well as the fruit of ſeveral kinds of laurel, very agreeable to the *White-bellied and Bald-pate Pigeons*, (*Columba Jamaicenſis & leucocephala*) which feeding greedily upon them acquire that peculiar flavour ſo much admired in the places where they are found." l. c.

[a] Swartz obſerves, that the only tolerable figure among theſe is that of Browne, l. c.

[b] "Quantum differat a genere Drimys nondum bene ſcio." *Supp. p.* 247.

[c] *Vide l. c.*.

‖ Read before the Linnean in December 1788.

move every doubt concerning the true characters of Canella alba; and by comparing the annexed plate with that publiſhed of the Winterana aromatica, in the fifth volume of Medical Obſervations and Inquiries by Drs. Fothergill and Solander,‖ it may be obſerved how far the tree, which produces the cortex winteranus, differs from that of our plant, the bark of which is the officinal Canella alba. The latter appears from Cluſius to have been firſt introduced into Britain about the year 1600;† the former was known in England twenty years before, and took its name from William Winter, captain of one of the ſhips which accompanied Sir Francis Drake to the Straits of Magellan, from whence he brought this bark to Europe in 1579. John Bauhin appears to be the firſt [d] who confounded the names of theſe barks, by ſtyling the cortex winteranus Canella alba; and as Sir Hans Sloane, who has given a ſeparate deſcription of both trees, and was ſenſible of a difference in the taſte of their barks, ſeems to inſinuate that this might depend upon the place of growth, his remarks did not wholly remove the error.[e]

Profeſſor Murray, in his 14th edition of the Syſtema Vegetabilium, was the firſt who made a diſtinct genus of Canella, and thus corrected the miſtake of Linnæus,‡ who, diſregarding the evidence of the old botaniſts,* combined two genera under the name of Laurus Winterana;[f] but he afterwards made it a ſeparate genus, and called it Winterania,[g] a name by which it has been long univerſally, though improperly diſtinguiſhed. Mr. Aiton, who has followed Murray in conſidering the Canella, as differing generically from the tree named after Winter, informs us, that it was cultivated by Mr. Phillip Miller, at Chelſea, in 1739.[h]

‖ "*Some Account of the Cortex Winteranus, or Magellanicus, by Dr. John Fothergill, with a Botanical Deſcription by Dr. Solander, and ſome Experiments by Dr. Morris.*" *p.* 41.

† He ſays, "Ante paucos annos (1605) cœpit exoticus cortex inferri, cui nomen Canellæ albæ indiderunt." *Exot. lib. iv. cap.* 4.

[d] *Hiſt. vol. i. p.* 460. [e] *Phil. Tranſ. No.* 192. *p.* 462.

‡ *P.* 443. Though Murray has here ſaid, "Cortex hujus eſt Canella alba officinarum," yet the London College has not availed itſelf of this authority, no botanical reference being given to Canella alba in the new pharmacopœia.

* Among theſe we may notice Plukenet, who, ſpeaking of theſe two trees, ſays, "Varie inter ſe plurimum diverſæ plantæ per illarum ignorationem plane confunduntur." *Almag. Mant. p.* 40.

[f] *Sp. Plant. ed.* 1. *p.* 371. [g] See his *Hort. Cliff.* 448. and *Mat. Med.*

[h] *Hort. Kew. vol. ii. p.* 125.

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The officinal Canella alba is the bark of the branches of this tree, freed from its outward covering, and dried in the ſhade. It is brought to Europe in long quills, which are about three quarters of an inch in diameter, ſomewhat thicker than cinnamon, and both externally and internally of a whitiſh or light brown colour, with a yellowiſh hue, and commonly intermixed with thicker pieces, which are probably obtained from the trunk of the tree. This bark in taſte is moderately warm, aromatic, and bitteriſh; its ſmell is agreeable, and reſembles that of cloves. Its virtues are extracted moſt perfectly by proof ſpirit. " In diſtillation with water it yields an eſſential oil of a dark yellowiſh colour, of a thick tenacious conſiſtence, difficultly ſeparable from the aqueous fluid, in ſmell ſufficiently grateful, though rather leſs ſo than the bark itſelf: the remaining decoction, inſpiſſated, leaves an extract of great bitterneſs, in conſiſtence not uniform, ſeemingly compoſed of a reſinous and gummy matter, imperfectly mixed. On inſpiſſating the ſpirituous tincture, the ſpirit which diſtils has no great ſmell or taſte of the Canella, but is ſo far impregnated with its more volatile oil as to turn milky on the admixture of water: the remaining extract retains the bitterneſs of the bark, but has little more of its warmth or flavour than the extract made with water."[1]

The uſe of Canella alba now ſuperſedes that of the old bark of Winter, on the authority of both the London and Edinburgh pharmacopœias. It has been ſuppoſed to poſſeſs a conſiderable ſhare of medicinal power, and is ſaid to be an uſeful medicine in the ſcurvy, and ſome other complaints; but it is now conſidered merely in the character of an aromatic, and like many of the ſpices is chiefly employed for the purpoſe of correcting and rendering leſs diſagreeable the more powerful and nauſeous drugs. It is therefore an ingredient in the pulv. aloet. Pharm. Lond. and in the tinctura amara, vinum amarum, vinum rhei, &c. of the Pharm. Edinb. Swartz tells us that " this bark, together with the fruit of Capſicum, was formerly a common ingredient in the food and drink of the Caribs, the ancient natives of the Antilles; and even at preſent it makes a neceſſary addition to the meagre pot of the negroes." l. c.

[1] Lewis, *M. M. p.* 186.

SCILLA MARITIMA.

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