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An historical account of inventions and discoveries in those arts and sciences, which are of utility or ornament to man, lend assistance to human comfort, a polish to life, and render the civilized ...

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Hungary water.

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that indicates they had been common before that time. From him it appears necessary there should be along with the commander-in-chief, or, as the moderns express themselves, the staff, a field surgeon in chief, a doctor, who had the inspection of the field surgeons, the barbers, and their servants, whose duty was to drag the wounded from the heaps of slain, and to convey them to the former. He was obliged to keep by him instruments and medicines, and at each muster to examine the instruments and apparatus of the field surgeons; he decided also, in disputed cases, how much the soldiers, whose wounds had been cured, ought to pay the field surgeons. During marches he was bound to remain with the commander-in-chief. This author also adds, there ought to be with the artillery in the field, a surgeon to that branch of the service; and with each company a particular field surgeon, not a paltry beard-scraper, (*bartscherer*,) but a regularly instructed, experienced, and well-practised man, who was to accompany the ensign with able servants, and for which he received double pay.

HUNGARY WATER.

Hungary water is an aqueous spirit distilled from rosemary, which only contains the oily and strongly scented essence of the plant. To be really good, the spirit of wine wherewith it is made ought to be very strong, and the rosemary very fresh, and it should be made when the plant is in flower; provided it be so, and quite fresh, the leaves may be used as well as the flowers, which, according to the prescription, should be only employed. It is likewise necessary that the spirit of wine should be distilled several times upon the rosemary. But that process is too troublesome and expensive for that made for sale, which is generally prepared from common brandy, mixed with the essence of rosemary, in the simplest manner. In general it is only mixed with a few drops of the oil. This article is usually brought from France, where it is manufactured, particularly at Beaucaille, Montpellier, and other places in Languedoc, in which that plant grows in great abundance.

Its name, *l'eau de la Reine d'Hongrie*, seems to imply that this water, so celebrated for medicinal virtues, is an Hungarian production. The story of its original, although preserved in several books, common on the continent, appears so much in the character of romance, or legendary narrative, that it will scarcely bear repetition. It is reported that it

was given to a Queen of Hungary, by a hermit or youth, or, as has been said, by an angel, who appeared to her in a garden, all entrance to which, she says, was shut. Some call this Queen St. Isabella;¹ but those who pretend to know the circumstance better, say that Elizabeth, wife of Charles Robert, King of Hungary, who was the daughter of Uladislau II. King of Poland, and who died 1380 or 1381, was the inventress, and who, by often washing with this spirit of rosemary, when in her seventieth year, was cured of the gout and a general lameness; so that she not only lived to see above eighty, but withal became so lively and cheerful, and even beautiful, that she was courted at that age by a Polish king, then a widower, who wished to make her his second wife.

John George Hoyer² says, that a receipt for preparing this water, written by the Queen's own hand, in golden characters, is still preserved in the Imperial library at Vienna; but others have observed, that Hoyer is mistaken in the account he has given of this receipt. It is to be found, as we have been informed, in a small book of John Prevot, which, after his death in 1631, was published by his sons at Frankfort, in 1659.³ Prevot, in those writings betrays a

¹ *Traité de la Chémie*, par N. le Febure. Leyde, 1669, 2 vol. 12mo. i. p. 474.

² In his notes to *Blumentrosts Haus-und-reise-apotheke*. Leipzig, 1716, 8vo. cap. 16, p. 47.

³ *Selectiora remedia multiplici usu comprobata, quæ inter secreta medica jure recensentur*. Auctore *Joanne Prævotio*, Rauraco, in Patav. gymnasio olim medicinæ practicæ professore, et horti medici præfecto. Libellus posthumus a *Joan. Bapt. et Theob. auctoris fil.* in lucem editus, 12mo. In the sixth page is the following passage. "For the gout in hands or feet. As the wonderful virtue of the remedy below has been confirmed by many, I shall relate by what good fortune I happened to meet with it. In 1606, I saw among the books of Francis Podacather, a noble Cyprian family, my intimate friend, a very old breviary, which he highly venerated, because it had been presented to his ancestors by St. Elizabeth, the Queen of Hungary, in testimony of friendship. In the beginning of the book is the following recipe, in the Queen's own hand, with this memorandum.

"I, Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, being very infirm and much troubled with the gout, in the seventy-second year of my age, used for a year this receipt, given to me by an ancient hermit, whom I never saw before nor since. It not only cured me of my complaint, but restored my strength, and I appeared to all so beautiful, that the King of Poland asked me in marriage, he being a widower and I a widow. I, however, refused him for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, from one of whose angels, I believe, I received the remedy as follows:

"R. Take of aqua vitæ, four times distilled. three parts, and of the tops and flowers of rosemary, two parts; put these together in a close vessel; let them stand in a gentle heat fifty hours, and then distil them. Take one dram of this in the morning once every week, either in your food or drink, and let your face and the diseased limb be washed with it every morning."

In a postscript then is added: "It renovates the strength, brightens the spirits, purifies the marrow and nerves, restores and preserves the sight, and prolongs life." Thus far the breviary. Then comes a confirmation which Prevot furnishes from his own experience.

bias to credulity and superstition; therefore what he says may not be entitled to much credit: but he gives a recipe against the gout in the feet and hands, much the same as that of the Hungarian Queen, and says he found it at the beginning of a breviary, which had belonged to St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, in her own hand-writing. This breviary was in the possession of Francis Podacather, a nobleman from Cyprus, to whose ancestors it had been given as a memorial by the Queen herself.

It is easily seen that Prevot mistook this St. Elizabeth for Elizabeth, the daughter of King Andrew II. who was never Queen of Hungary, but died wife of a landgrave of Thuringia, in 1235. As Hungarian writers inform us, that the wife of King Charles Robert possessed two breviaries, which she disposed of by will, one to her daughter-in-law, and the other to one Clara von Pukur; and after her death, to be the property of a certain monastery at Buda; it is, therefore, not very questionable, but one of these books might have come into the hands of Podacather's family.

It has been rationally conjectured, that this Princess was extremely vain, as well as extremely foolish, to believe herself, and wish to impress posterity with the same weakness, that she, when beyond the grand climacteric, became so sprightly, young, and beautiful, that a royal widower was enamoured of her: this king and widower has been sought for, but in vain. The proposal for a matrimonial union must have occurred about 1370. But Casimir III. brother of the Hungarian Elizabeth, reigned in Poland till that year, and was succeeded by her son Louis, who died in 1382; after which the throne remained vacant for three years.⁴

It must also appear strange, that the name of *aqua vita*, and the practice of distillation from aromatic herbs, should be so well known in Hungary, as in the early part of the fourteenth century: though the contrary cannot be proved, the known ignorance of the most enlightened countries strongly militates against it. Besides, it is singular that Hungary water should not have been noticed by botanists, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, whilst speaking of the properties of this herb and other simples. It, however, must be confessed, that as early as in the sixteenth century, Zapata, an Italian physician, taught the method of preparing spirit of rosemary,⁵ and he says it was imperfectly

⁴ Hubner's Genealogische tabellen, i. p. 95.

⁵ Recipe igitur mustum bonum, scilicet lixivium sponte defluens, antequam calcentur uvæ; cui vasi commisso, adde statim cymatum et foliorum rorismarini

known to *Arnoldus de Villa Nova*. But does not say, it was an Hungarian invention; being silent upon that circumstance.

HYDROMETERS.

The Hydrometer is an instrument for admeasuring liquids; its Greek name is ὑδροσκοπιον, *hydroscoπιum*, also called *hygroscopium*, *hygrobaroscoπιum*, *areometrum*, and *baryllion*. It is an instrument by which the strength or specific gravity of different fluids is discovered, by the depth to which it sinks in them. It has been chiefly used for discovering the contents of different salt water, without analysis: and is now chiefly used by those whose concerns are in the spirit trade, to discover the different degrees of strength, and what alloy they will bear; hence its utility to the manufacturer and to the excise officer, is apparent.

The laws respecting the comparative weight of different fluids, as well as of solid bodies immersed in them, was, we may recollect, first discovered by that great geometrician *Archimedes*, (the occasion being before recounted in a previous article, it shall not be here repeated.) It may be far from improbable that *Archimedes* constructed this instrument himself; in case he did, it must have been invented some few years before his death, which happened 212 years before the Christian era.

The most ancient mention of this instrument, by its specific name, occurs in the fifth century of our era, upon the following occasion. The anecdote is very singular and affecting, and also evinces the incapacity of humanity to act consistent and as it ought, when we suffer ourselves to be directed by passions unworthy of the human character.

It is first discovered in those letters of *Synesius* to the philosophic and beautiful *Hypatia*; we trust we may be excused the liberty we propose to take in detailing this circumstance, it not being generally known; and as its

partem decimam, et sicut cum aliis fieri solet vinis, scutella perforata tegatur, ut effervescat et rorismarini virtutes extrahat. Si vero lubet, postquam aliquid musti et rorismarini in cucurbita vitrea, cujus beneficio alias quinta essentia est distillanda, simul ebullierit, quintam essentiam inde elicere; id fieri poterit; et postquam distillata fuerit, in vas mustum alterum cum roremarino, jam continens, post hujus fermentationem, est infundenda. Addita enim tam modica quintæ essentiæ hac quantitate, mustum eo fragrantius et efficacius reddetur. *Joh. Bapt. Zapate, Medici Romani, Mirabilia seu secreta Medico-Chirurgica - - per Davidem Splissium. Ulmiæ, 1696.*