

Found object

Home remedy

Going through some old papers in the attic of our family farm near Dundalk, Ont., I came across this handwritten recipe among other, less puzzling, instructions for making apple dumplings, buttermilk cake and dandelion wine. It dates, I would guess, from the first or second decade of the 20th century.

For the kidneys

1 pt. good gin
2 oz. sweet nitre
1 oz. oil of juniper
1/2 oz. turpentine
1 good stick of horseradish grated fine.

Shake them up well. Take a wineglass 3/4 parts full 3 times a day.

The 1946 edition of *Stedman's Medical Dictionary* gives the following definitions:

Sweet nitre. *Spiritus aetheris nitrosi*: an alcoholic solution of ethyl nitrate, aldehyde and other substances. A sedative, diuretic and diaphoretic in doses of 20–30 min. [A minum is 1/60th of a fluid drachm: practically speaking, a drop.]

Oil of juniper berries. A volatile oil distilled from the fruit of *Juniperus communis*. A carminative, diuretic and stimulant in doses of 5–15 min.

There is no entry for turpentine.

Aileen E. Coates
Retired psychotherapist
Oakville, Ont.