

1562. himself strictly as long as he takes this remedy. It is even said to be very injurious in inveterate diseases, or when the patient is very weak. Some, before taking this remedy, purge themselves thoroughly, and this is the safest; but others merely make this decoction their ordinary drink, mixing it with a little wine, and do not first employ a purgative.

Sassafras has certainly always been regarded an excellent remedy for diseases of the stomach and chest, and generally for all arising from cold. Francis Ximenez says that being in great want of water, in the bay of Ponce de Leon, he thought of cutting sassafras in small bits, and steeping it in water almost as salt as the sea; after eight days he drank this water, and found it quite sweet.¹

Simples. Among the shrubs of this country, the most remarkable is the cassine or apalachine, of which I have spoken elsewhere; and among the simples, none is more boasted of than the apoyomatsi or patzisiranda, which Francis Ximenez describes thus: Its leaves are like those of the leek, but longer and thinner. The stalk is a kind of rush, full of pulp, knotty, and a cubit and a half high. The flower is small and narrow; the root thin, long, full of knots or bosses, round and velvety. The Spaniards call them beads of St. Helen, and the French, patenotes. These balls, cut and exposed to the sun, become very hard, black without and white within. They have an aromatic odor, like galanga. They are dry and hot to the third degree, slightly astringent and resinous; yet are found only in moist and wet places.²

The Indians, after bruising the leaves of this plant between two stones, extract a juice with which they rub the whole body, after bathing, from a conviction that it strengthens the skin and gives it a pleasant odor. The Spaniards learned from them to reduce this simple to a powder, which they take in wine when they are attacked

¹ Ximenez.

² Ib.