
P R E F A C E
O F T H E
C O L L E G E.

ALMOST half a century has elapsed since our predecessors executed the same task we have now undertaken, no less to the praise of their judgement than their diligence. If Medicine, during that space, advanced not equally with other useful arts, it received many valuable improvements; as well from the industry and discoveries of others, as from those more particularly who have, of late, studied Chemistry with unusual zeal and penetration.

As, for that reason, it became our duty to examine anew the common instruments of the art of healing, we thought *that* duty required us to employ all the assistance which could be derived from modern chemistry;

and, from its collected light, render our work more clear and luminous. It was therefore our principal wish that every chemical matter, applicable to the practise of Physic, should be introduced by us, not only freed from error, but more perfect and neat, and more scientifically digested and arranged, than had been usual among us. All our care was not, however, so far wasted on this very difficult part of our work as to neglect other things, or only touch on them cursorily and by chance; as the composition of each medicine was separately and carefully weighed; in order that if any thing was found deficient it might be added, —if too much, or redundant, taken away. Nor have we made any scruple, in executing this duty, to cut off whole formulas when useless, and to insert others more useful, — in such a manner, however, that no new remedy has been fondly adopted, no one, in constant use and practice, rejected.

Great care has been taken that very few traces should remain of anile superstition; and, if any thing unnecessary, or of little use,

use, be scattered here and there, we have thought it better to leave our successors to correct or reject it than to oppose erroneous opinions too pertinaciously—whilst they are innocent. We have consulted simplicity wherever in our power, and been particularly careful that such things only should be compounded as commodiously unite together, and tend to one and the same design. Hence it happens that some prodigious and enormous *antidotes*, which have really neither bounds nor intention, and are made up of substances collected from all quarters, and opposite in their virtues, are now at last displaced ; — a manifest proof that neither the authority of antient custom, nor reverence of antiquity, has any longer too much dominion over us.

The antients were miserably occupied with the fear and the correction of poisons, of which, however, we are certain they were acquainted with very few. Far different in our time is the fortune of poisons ; for, medicine seems not now to be averse to them

as to inveterate enemies, but to have brought them over to its party, and to make use of them as allies and auxiliaries. A few of these (which we have ourselves tried) we have enrolled in our list, ready to adopt others, if faithful experiment, made in the cure of diseases, shall demonstrate their efficacy.—It would be too rash to adopt as known what has not been, as yet, sufficiently explored.

The great number of things to which we have given names, before unknown, and lately formed, may perhaps give to some an opportunity of finding fault; since there is scarcely any one who does not more willingly use names to which he has been accustomed than new ones. But the design of those changes is, first, that some vain and unmeaning words, derived from the fallacies of the old chemists, or otherwise, should fall into disuse (as much as possible) and into oblivion: 2dly, that each composition should by its title rather shew what it is, than for what intention it is designed,—and
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of what principles it consists, rather than in what cases it is useful, or to what parts of the body appropriated: and, lastly, that no remedy should be concealed under a title which does not belong to it. As to the names, those we have arbitrarily given to *three alkaline Salts* (of which one, indeed, had been long in use, and the other two are but little altered from their common appellation) have really so much convenience and brevity, that they may justly claim, at least, the excuse of Physicians. It is not, however, to be denied, that so many novelties must be disagreeable to those who deal in medicines; especially at first, and before they conceive them perfectly; but that disgust, however great it may be, will be got the better of easily, cease of itself, and give place to a custom, more proper, more pleasant, and more useful.

We are not ignorant how very great the difficulty is of forming a Dispensatory in every respect complete and perfect,—nor the little reason there is to expect it would please
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all mankind. We pretend not to undertake any such thing; and shall really congratulate ourselves, if the trouble, employed for the public health on *this*, answers in some measure the purpose of alleviating the evils of sickness, and rendering their cure more prompt and expeditious.

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THE Translator has followed the plan of Dr. Pemberton, as being that generally approved by the Apothecaries.— He hopes the translation is faithful, though it is perhaps more literal than was always necessary. As to the Remarks, though they may be to some superfluous, he is afraid there are too many for whom they are neither too explicit nor too numerous. He has been persuaded to mention the doses of medicines; and has, in some measure, complied, though not perfectly with his own approbation; as the same medicines are given in various doses, not only in different diseases, but in different circumstances of the same disease.

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