
P R E F A C E

OF THE

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 our principal wish that every chemical matter, applicable to the practice of Physic, should be introduced by us, not only freed from error, but more perfect and neat, as well as 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 of little use, 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;
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and, if any thing unnecessary, or of little 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

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 theſe 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

than for what intention it is designed,—and 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. With regard to the names 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,) they have in truth 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

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of the little reason there is for hoping it would please 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 work, answers in some degree the purpose of alleviating the evils of sickness, and rendering their cure more prompt and expeditious.

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