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# P R E F A C E.

**T**IS universally agreed, that an exact knowledge of the *Materia medica*, with the proper manner of preparing and compounding the *simples*, is absolutely requisite to the due exercise of the *Art of Physic*. Good Medicines properly administred give assurances of Health; whilst bad ones, or such as are ill compounded, prove either pregnant in mischief, or unserviceable to the Patient. If such be the power of Remedies, it must demand the principal study of the physician to have them justly directed and prepared. Hence the *Art of Pharmacy* has been every where so cultivated by Physicians of the greatest genius, that scarce a City but has its *Dispensatory*: In which particular, the *Royal College of Physicians of Edinburg* was not, even at its

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*first institution, deficient ; but directly published a small volume with the same view. But such is the fate of Pharmacy, as well as of all other things, that it cannot avoid the alterations of Time ; which, the great variety of medicines, with the progress and advancement of the Art, must render unavoidable. Consequently, it was impossible but, in the first Edinburg Dispensatory, there should be many things wanting, which Custom afterwards introduced ; and, tho' more compendious than almost any other, contain many obsolete prescriptions ; so as to prevent its continuing long a Rule to the Compounders. Lest, therefore, through the unskilfulness of Apothecaries, the life of the Patient should be endanger'd, or the hopes of the Physician frustrated ; our College, from a regard to the public welfare, and their own reputation, were willing to give this more correct and copious Edition of their Dispensatory ; which, serving as a Rule and Standard to all the Apothecaries of our City, in the composition of their medicines, might prove an acceptable labour both to the Patient and Physician.*

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*In preparing of this Edition we have, in general, follow'd the old one; and not departed from it, without an urgent necessity, or for the sake of some advantage; but this not without consulting the more celebrated Pharmacopœia's of different Nations; lest we should appear to depend too much upon our own, and too little upon the Performances of others.*

*In the Catalogue of Simples, we have had regard to brevity, and a commodious arrangement; the officinal Plants are sufficiently numerous, and described by their most accustomed and familiar names; so likewise are the medicinal substances of animals and minerals; care being all along taken to point out those parts thereof, which are employ'd in medicine. Some things are left out, as not differing from others in virtue; or as having been introduced by the superstition or credulity of antiquity: still leaving others perhaps to be expunged by posterity; for 'tis better to labour under a redundancy than a scarcity of materials.*

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*Several of the distill'd simple Waters are here rejected; and the number of the compound kind enlarged, by the addition of one or two, which are fitter for keeping, and better preserve the virtues of the plants; being particularly careful to commit nothing to distillation, but what shou'd communicate some virtue to the Water.*

*A great many Tinctures are added; simples admirably communicating their efficacy thereto, at the same time that they are generally render'd acceptable to the patient by the agreeable smallness of their dose.*

*In directing the Syrups, we have shewn which ought to be made by coction, which by infusion; and by what means the virtue of the Spices employ'd, which is commonly lost, may be preserved.*

*We have also enrich'd our Dispensatory with a variety of extemporaneous Compositions, drawn from the present Practice, to lessen the trouble of the Prescriber: and it were to be wish'd, that more of these could  
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have been added, with the unanimous consent of Physicians.

To the greater part of the Sections we have annex'd General Rules for the making up of Medicines; judging it not misbecoming us to shew a regard to the smallest matters: since very trifling errors in Pharmacy may produce the worst of mischiefs. In fine, that our apparatus of Medicines might neither be unwieldly nor too scanty, many things now in disuse, unserviceable, or incongruous, are drop'd therein; and some new ones, of considerable advantage, added. Our utmost pains and industry have been employ'd in improving the Compositions; striking out some that made little to the purpose, and adding others of greater efficacy. A few, however, which long custom has render'd familiar, and antiquity seems, as it were, to have made sacred, remain untouch'd; but the greatest part are shorten'd: and the utmost has been done, that those which are either left unalter'd, or added, if they do not excel, should at least equal those omitted. We have every where prefer'd the useful ones to the pompous; and studied to shorten the work of the Compounder;  
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*avoiding the laborious intricacies found in most of the Dispensatories of these times.*

*'Tis our joint and ardent Desire, that these our labours may redound to the public Good, the recovery of the Sick, and the advancement of Medicine.*

Edinburg, 1721.



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