

**THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND  
THE UNITED STATES PHARMACOPOEIA: A  
REPRINT OF THE PAMPHLETS OF DR. H.C.  
WOOD, MR. ALFRED B. TAYLOR, THE  
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY,  
AND THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PHARMACY  
WITH A REJOINDER**

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The American Medical Association and the United States Pharmacopoeia: A Reprint of the Pamphlets of Dr. H.C. Wood, Mr. Alfred B. Taylor, the Philadelphia County Medical Society, and the National College of Pharmacy with a Rejoinder by Edward R. Squibb

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**EDWARD R. SQUIBB**

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OF

DR. H. C. WOOD, MR. ALFRED B. TAYLOR, THE  
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY MEDICAL SO-  
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LEGE OF PHARMACY,

WITH

A REJOINDER

ADDRESSED TO THE

PROFESSIONS OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY  
OF THE UNITED STATES,

By EDWARD R. SQUIBB, M. D.,

OF BROOKLYN.



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THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
AND  
THE PHARMACOPŒIA.

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At the annual meeting of The American Medical Association held in Philadelphia, in June, 1876, after some preliminary action and discussion of the subject of the interest of The Association in the United States Pharmacopœia (see Transactions for 1876), the subject was made the special order of business for 10 o'clock on the second day of the annual meeting of 1877, with the understanding that the writer should then present the subject in a more definite and complete way; and no limitation of time was set for the subject. In view of the supposed importance of the subject, and the necessity for a full and fair discussion, and of careful thought and deliberation, the writer prepared a moderately full presentation of the subject, and proposed a plan of action. In order to awaken a general interest in the matter;—to afford abundant time for consideration;—to economize the time of The Association, and to bring out the opposition which was to be expected to any proposition for a change in the present plan of revising the Pharmacopœia,—the proposed presentation and plan were published in pamphlet form some months in advance of the meeting of 1877. At a cost of much time and labor, and of more than a thousand dollars in money, the writer distributed six thousand of these pamphlets to the medical and pharmaceutical professions of the country, with the effect of bringing out a vigorous opposition to any change, in pamphlets published by Dr. H. C. Wood, Mr. Alfred B. Taylor and The Philadelphia County Medical Society, of Philadelphia, and by the National College of Pharmacy, of Washington. The points raised by such writers were of course such as would need a careful reply if the whole subject was to be

fully discussed in the interests of the truth and justice involved. Accordingly, this writer prepared a rejoinder to the authors of these pamphlets, and took this to The American Medical Association to offer instead of the presentation and plan which had already been in the hands of the members for many months. The President of The Association had, also, by resolution, been recommended to consider the matter in his annual address. The President did discuss the subject in his address, read at the first session of the meeting in Chicago, and concluded with the recommendation that it be referred to a special committee. This recommendation, with others in the President's address, was referred to a committee of seven. Dr. H. C. Wood mentioned to The Association that the subject of the Pharmacopœia was to come up on the following day at 10 o'clock, and moved that, in order not to have "to make two bites at a cherry," the committee be directed to report upon this subject at that time, and his motion was carried. This action appeared as though Dr. Wood and The Association desired that the committee should make up its judgment upon the subject before hearing what might be said at the hour appointed for the hearing. Accordingly, at the hour appointed on the following day, the committee report—and not the paper appointed for the hour—was first called for, and the committee reported that it was inexpedient at the present time to take any action in the premises. Some time was occupied in remarks upon the report and in laying it upon the table, and then this writer was called upon to present his subject. He stated that when at the last meeting of The Association he was ordered to present the subject, at this time, no limit was given him as to the time at his disposal, and that only within a few days, on receiving the printed program of this meeting, did he know that he would be limited to an hour. And now some twenty minutes of that hour had been taken for other business. Very much had been published on the subject which seemed to need a rejoinder, and in making this up for The Association the manuscript had so grown that it could not be read in less than two hours. If the forty minutes now available was the measure of The Association's interest in the subject, it might be well to drop it altogether rather than hear a part of what could not be finished. The writer stated that he did not appear there by favor of The Association at all, but simply by its direction to do a specific thing, and was ready to do it or not as The Association might now re-direct, but would rather not undertake to half do it. He was, however, then directed to take the stand, and read from his manuscript for about forty minutes. It was then moved that he should go on and finish his paper, but this he asked permission not



to do, as a gentleman was ready to follow him on another subject, equally by order of The Association, and his hour had then arrived.

The Committee of Arrangement was then directed to appropriate a vacant hour of the following day to the subject of the Pharmacopœia, and it was suggested that, as the vacant hour was that next before adjournment, the time might be extended to an hour and a half if that should be necessary to finish the paper. The Committee of Arrangements soon after announced that on the next day, twenty minutes of the vacant hour would be allowed for finishing the paper, and that the remainder of the time would be given to the opposition. Twenty minutes before the appointed hour on the following day, the writer was called on to read in continuation of his subject, and at the end of twenty minutes he was, by a close vote, allowed twenty minutes more, and had then, by rapid reading, gone over about two-thirds of his paper. At the close of the reading he presented the conclusion of his paper where three courses of action were open to The Association. The first of them was to abandon the subject, and lay the whole matter on the table. He stated, for reasons given, that this course would be, personally, most agreeable to him, but doubted much whether the profession of medicine of this country could afford to take such a course as this upon such a subject. The third course suggested, was to refer the whole subject to a committee, and to the state medical societies for a year, by a definite plan submitted. That this suggestion was not unreasonable is rendered probable by the circumstance that it was in accord with the recommendation of the president in his address, and that without consultation between him and this writer. It was also a cautious and conservative course easy to carry out in a very definite way. The opposition was then called upon, and Dr. H. C. Wood, took the stand. His short address was rather pathetic and emotional than argumentative. He announced himself as the bearer of a message from his uncle, Dr. George B. Wood, to The Association, to the following purport: Tell the gentlemen not to do this thing, and bring discredit upon the life-work of a man who now, loaded with age and infirmity, is waiting to be relieved from this world's cares. One or two appeals to "the Great God," and one or two emphatic denials of injurious charges which had never been made, concluded this brief pathetic address, when Dr. N. S. Davis, chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, took the floor for a few moments, after a third proposition to refer the subject to a committee had been made.

The main points of Dr. Davis' brief address seemed to be that The Association should take up no subject like this which threatened to disturb the harmony of its action by the introduction of elements

of discord involving money values and entangling alliances. The Association was of a rather social character and met for the discussion of scientific subjects from year to year in a friendly, pleasant way that was incompatible with such subjects as this, except so far as to see that somebody else attended to them properly. He was so thoroughly convinced of the inappropriateness of this subject to this Association that he moved that it be indefinitely postponed, and his motion was carried by a large majority.

It is very unfortunate that the two brief addresses by which such a subject was so signally defeated were not put on record, but so it is, for not one of the reporters took them, and the medical profession of the United States, in the only representative body of that profession, has distinctly refused to consider the interests of the profession in the Pharmacopœia even to the extent of appointing a committee on the subject. The question is, What is the true underlying cause of this action? Is it a want of interest in the materia medica; or carelessness or ignorance of its true condition and of the issues involved? Or is it not rather that the wrong man happened to take up the subject and present it in some wrong or unwise way, and therefore that it is the man and his mistakes that are condemned and rejected and not the subject. But if this be so, he was invited to be heard on the subject and was then suppressed without being fully heard, and his subject was suppressed with him.

Under the circumstances above narrated, it seems but fair to the subject that it should suffer as little as possible from either the unfavorable presentation, or the unfavorable reception which it has met with at the hands of the only representative body of the profession at the last meeting, in contrast with the favorable reception at the meeting of 1876, and, therefore, the writer has thought it best to republish here what has been published in opposition to this movement for reform, and follow these by the rejoinder which the last meeting of The American Medical Association refused to hear or consider. Several societies took action in favor of the movement, and some articles appeared in the medical journals also favoring some change, if not favoring the plan proposed; but it is not necessary to reproduce these, as it is only the action in opposition to the movement to which the rejoinder was made.

This course will place the whole matter before those of the medical and pharmaceutical professions who may choose to read it, without any more cost than that of the time given to it; and will place the matter fairly on record for future reference, since time will doubtless show whether the recent action of The American Medical Association has been wise or not.

The first reprint is that of the writer's pamphlet embracing the proposed new plan. The next is the pamphlet of Dr. H. C. Wood, addressed to the members of The American Medical Association. Next, the pamphlet of Mr. Alfred B. Taylor, addressed to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. Next, a pamphlet issued by the Philadelphia County Medical Society. Next, an article from "The Medical News and Library," of Philadelphia, for May, 1877, p. 72; and finally a pamphlet of the "National College of Pharmacy," of Washington, D. C. These constitute the principal criticisms and reviews which have appeared in opposition to the writer's proposition for change and reform; and these will all have been read by those who are sufficiently interested in the subject. These are followed by the rejoinder, which their publication seemed to render necessary—a part of which rejoinder was read before The American Medical Association—and the whole of which is here published for the first time.

Then at the end of the rejoinder, it has seemed worth while to publish the opinion obtained from competent legal counsel upon the questions of property and copyright in full; because these questions have been made the subject of very harsh and erroneous assertions.

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In conclusion, it is necessary to offer a few words of personal explanation.

In the Convention of 1860 the writer was chosen for the Committee of Revision as the representative of The Medical Society of the State of New York, and of the Army and Navy. As a committeeman, and while doing a fair share of the work, he endeavored to introduce some changes and improvements in the Pharmacopœia, which seemed to be needed to keep it up to the progress of the times, but was emphatically defeated. Knowing the effect of criticism in weakening the influence of such a book as the Pharmacopœia, especially if the criticism be just, he took his punishment in silence, and upheld the work as well as he could for the ten years till 1870. In The Convention of that year he joined with others in renewed efforts for progress and reform in the direction which had then been taken by several European Pharmacopœias. A majority of The Convention was decidedly in favor of these measures of general progress; but in 1873 it was found that they were again defeated by the Committee of Revision: so that it is not fair to say that this writer and others did not try to introduce the needed reforms *within*