

**A GUIDE TO THE NEW PHARMACOPOEIA,
1885: COMPRISING AN EPITOME OF THE
CHANGES, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE NEW
PREPARATIONS, THEIR CHARACTERS, USES,
DOSES, AND MODES OF
ADMINISTRATION; TOGETHER WITH A
THERAPEUTICAL COMMENTARY**

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A Guide to the New Pharmacopoeia, 1885: Comprising an Epitome of the Changes, and an Account of the New Preparations, Their Characters, Uses, Doses, and Modes of Administration; Together with a Therapeutical Commentary by Prosser James

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PROSSER JAMES

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PREFACE.

THE publication of a new Pharmacopœia is an event of considerable importance to those engaged in prescribing or dispensing. Their daily and hourly occupations are necessarily affected by every alteration in the official standard. The announcement that the changes made may be counted by hundreds is, therefore, likely to evoke mixed feelings. Busy men, though fully appreciating the advantages of revision, and cheerfully submitting to the temporary inconvenience it creates, may well feel conscious that it adds to their present cares a certain uneasiness lest a momentary forgetfulness should be fraught with mischief or danger. Elder students may sigh over the hours they have spent on the older Pharmacopœia and the annoyance of having to get up the new. Freshmen may congratulate themselves that there is no likelihood of another edition until they have for some time been engaged in the responsibilities of practice.

The numerous changes now made in the B. P. are scattered throughout its pages, and of course no indication could be given of their relative importance. The careful reader meets with them at every turn. Botanical and

chemical descriptions have been carefully revised, names have been changed, a few things omitted and many added. It is true that many of the alterations are of minor importance and attended with no risk; but it is desirable not to delay becoming familiar with them, especially such as involve differences of quality or strength.

The additions, too, are rather numerous—no less than 114. No doubt many of these new official remedies have already been extensively used; but the very fact of their admission to the Pharmacopœia gives them a further claim to attention. Some are fairly well known to practitioners as among their most useful remedies, and their admission to the new B. P. was generally foreseen. About others, however, surprise at their promotion is likely to be felt.

In the following pages a guide is offered to the many changes made, and it is hoped that nothing of importance has been overlooked. The author has not hesitated to indicate his own opinion of the value of the remedies under notice, for he had no idea of confining himself to the construction of catalogues and tables, or the repetition of official statements. While, therefore, giving the Pharmacopœial processes, he has not hesitated to abbreviate the descriptions wherever he thought proper, or to append such remarks as he is willing to submit to his professional brethren.

Many of the minor changes are merely epitomised, but of all the newly admitted articles a full account is given—fuller in many cases than may be found of even official remedies in the ordinary text books of materia medica. The busy practitioner may not regret to find in a small compass information

which he may have to some extent acquired from his own experience, or from the reports of periodical literature.

I have, therefore, ventured in places on a rather lengthy therapeutical commentary, and have not hesitated occasionally to drop some criticism. The question of dosage, for instance, has been discussed in reference to several remedies, instead of merely repeating the necessarily bald statement of the official dose—which, however, is always quoted.

At the same time, the details necessary for students have not been forgotten. Anyone with ordinary humanity, to say nothing of the "milk of human kindness," will excuse a word on behalf of the over-burdened student, who is too often driven by a bad system to the cramming process which he nevertheless despises. Of late years students have learned, by bitter experience, that examiners have not considered themselves confined to the official *materia medica*, and murmurs, loud if not deep, are accordingly heard in the colleges. That the B. P. was rather out of date was an excuse which the new issue will destroy. But more than this is required. There are plenty of things in the B. P. with which the student has no concern, and yet he is constantly required to read up for the occasion details which he will at once forget. The cry for restricting the area of examinations is unheeded, and occasionally examiners pelt students with materials which they employ for no other purpose. Such highly developed boys have lost all respect for the opinion of frogs.

In conclusion, the author hopes his unpretending Guide

may prove useful to both practitioners and students. It is not only a supplement to the new E. P., but may be made to convert the old into the new. So, it is a natural supplement to the ordinary manuals of materia medica, a favourite copy of any of which may be made to retain its usefulness in the library by merely marking, at the proper places in the margin, references to the pages of this Guide where the new official remedies are described. Apart from this, it will enable the reader to rapidly master the numerous changes that have this month become compulsory.

PROSSER JAMES.

3, DEAN STREET, PARK LANE, W.
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