

THE PRESCRIBER'S COMPANION

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The Prescriber's Companion by Alfred Meadows

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ALFRED MEADOWS

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THE
PRESCRIBER'S
COMPANION.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

I HAVE had much pleasure in compiling this little work, in the hope that it may be useful to the busy practitioner. The publication of a new Pharmacopœia common to Great Britain, in which many new preparations are introduced, many old ones omitted, and the names and composition of others largely altered, renders it imperatively necessary, in the interests of the public, that all who are called upon to prescribe should make themselves acquainted with these several changes. And it was with the view of facilitating this study that I resolved on devoting a little time to what I hope may not prove unprofitable for those for whose benefit it has been undertaken.

I have thought, moreover, that the utility of this work might be still further increased if, in addition to the pharmacopœial preparations, others were included which experience has proved to be of value; so that the prescriber might have as wide a choice of remedies of any given class as was possible. This I have accordingly done, and to distinguish official from non-official preparations, the letters B.P. (British Pharmacopœia) are affixed to the former, while the latter are, in printer's parlance, *indented*, that is, set a little to the right.

Again, it seemed desirable, for the convenience of reference, that some arrangement of the remedies in question should be adopted; and none appeared to me so convenient as one based upon their physiological action, albeit this has some few objections: some remedies refusing almost to be ranged under any head; as pepsine, for instance, which, by the way, is not ordered in the Pharmacopœia. I have, therefore, accepted, with certain modifications for the purpose merely of simplifying it, the classification of Dr. Pereira, and I am not without the hope that some silent teaching may be conveyed in this arrangement.

There are consequently Six Parts. The First contains remedies for external application; the Second, medicines which act upon the blood, including the Chalybeates, Demulcents and Diluents, Refrigerants, and Liquefacients, the latter comprising alkalis, antimonials, iodines, mercurials, and plumbines. The Third Part comprises medicines which act upon the Nervous System: these are divided into—1, those whose action affects the Cerebro-spinal system, and includes Narcotics, Hypnotics, Anodynes, and Tonics; 2, those which affect the Ganglionic System—Stimulants and Sedatives. The Fourth Part contains medicines which affect the Secreting System—namely, Diaphoretics, Diuretics, Emetics, Expectorants, Galactagogues, and Purgatives; to which is added the class of Anthelmintics. In the Fifth Part are medicines which act upon the Generative System—Aphrodisiacs, Anaphrodisiacs, and Emmenagogues. Lastly, in the Sixth Part, I have given a List of Substances useful as Disinfectants, and a Table of

Poisons and their Antidotes from Dr. Pereira's work on "Materia Medica." The Weights and Measures now in use complete the work.

It is not contended that the arrangement here adopted is perfect, it is only hoped that it may be useful. The doses fitted for adults and for a child a year old are given; the latter, it is thought, may be useful as a guide to the doses applicable to other ages.

One other subject only needs here to be mentioned—namely, the alterations in the *weights* now ordered to be used, and the abolition of all *signs* or symbols. With the wisdom of this step I have nothing to do. It will be noted that in the doses ordered I have adopted the changes as regards weights; the drachm and scruple are not mentioned, nor are their signs used, but only the grain and the ounce: but, as regards measures for fluids, I have retained the signs of the drachm and ounce, only prefixing the letter *f*, signifying *fluid*. The manifest convenience of these symbols in place of the more clumsy fl.dr. or drs. and fl.oz. is such, that it is believed no order of Council abolishing these signs will ever find acceptance with the Profession at large. Perhaps the simplest way of indicating the changes now and hereafter to be adopted in prescribing is by giving an illustration, for which the following may suffice:

℞ Ammoniz Carbonas grs. 30.
 Spiritus Chloroformi ℥j.
 Aqua Camphoræ ℥viij.
 M. ft. mist.

The difference in the *numerals* used respectively for

solids and fluids is in accordance with the order of Council.

It must be remembered that my intention has not been in any way to give directions how to *make*, but only how to *use* these preparations, to state their composition, and to give briefly an outline of the process adopted in the manufacture of some of them.

If this little book prove as useful a *Companion* as I anticipate, I shall be abundantly repaid for the time expended upon it.

9, CAVENDISH PLACE,

CAVENDISH SQUARE.

March, 1864.