PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE unnecessary multiplication of books on the same subject may be said, with propriety, to be a great evil: and, therefore, in undertaking the compilation of the following Work, which in its arrangement and plan coincides very closely with the Edinburgh New Dispensatory, it has been my endeavour to render it essentially so different from that work, as to prevent it from being placed under this reproach. But the plan of that volume, which is nearly the same as was originally adopted by Dr. Lewis, with some little alterations, has become so familiar to the profession, and is so well adapted for the purposes of a Dispensatory, that I have thought it prudent not to deviate from it. I trust, however, that the alterations and the additions which I have introduced, particularly in the history of the different articles of the Materia Medica, will give a legitimate value to the London Dispensatory; and, without a wish to detract from the high character of its precursor, will enable it to excite a new interest in the branch of the science of medicine of which it treats; and especially to turn the attention of the student towards Medical Botany, which has been so unaccountably neglected, as to be almost regarded as unnecessary in the education of a physician. Indeed, although it has always been admitted that a correct knowledge of Materia Medica and Pharmacy can be obtained by those only who have a previous knowledge of Botany and Chemistry, yet neither the Dispensatories nor the systems of Materia Medica published in this country, have described plants in a scientific manner; or noticed, in their descriptions, those characteristics which botanists have fixed on as the

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only means by which a plant, that is not familiar to the reader of a description of it, can with certainty be known, when he wishes to possess it, or is in any doubt regarding it when it is obtained. From the want of this degree of accuracy in the descriptions of plants, many valuable remedies, used by the inhabitants of one part of the world, have been lost to those of another part, where they are, nevertheless, indigenous; or, instead of the proper plants, other species of the same genera, which possess little or no virtue, have been employed; and even plants, not in any respect medicinal, but highly deleterious, have been used as remedies, merely from their bearing names in common or in pharmaceutical language similar to those of some medicinal plants. To prevent this evil, therefore, I have added to the usual account of each vegetable substance the characters of the genus to which the plant belongs, as they are given by Willdenow in his excellent edition of the *Species Plantarum;* and have also given detailed descriptions of each in the language employed by modern botanical writers.

In the performance of the task of compilation, I have endeavoured to bring together as much useful information, regarding each of the substances treated of, as could be crowded into a small space; and to obtain it, have had recourse to every work of reputation to which I could gain access. For the liberality of Sir Joseph Banks, who, through the kind interference of Dr. Gartshore, opened to me the door of his princely collection, I have to return my most grateful thanks; as I obtained information there which I could not otherwise have procured, and some which has never before, I believe, been given to the public in an English garb. Of this nature, in particular, are the observations of Zea on the medicinal species of Cinchona, extracted from the *Anales de Historia Natural;* those of Humboldt on the same subject, and on some other South American plants, from his splendid work entitled *Plantæ Æquinoctiales;* and Willdenow's description of the Heracleum gummiferum, which I have translated from the *Hortus Berolinensis.* Information has also been

sought for, and obtained, from other sources besides books; and I have received from individuals engaged in the drug trade some notices regarding the forms in which drugs are imported, and the modes of selecting them; which I hope will prove useful.

The botanical descriptions of the plants have been selected chiefly from *Martyn's edition of Miller's Gardener's Dictionary*; the last edition of *Woodville's Medical Botany*; *Smith's Flora Britannica*; *Sowerby's English Botany*; the *Flora Peruviana*; *Rheede's Hortus Malabaricus*; and the *Flora Danica*; but in every instance when the living plants could be obtained,—which was the case with the greater number of the indigenous plants, and many exotics also,—the descriptions have been either drawn up from nature; or those adopted have been carefully compared with the plants themselves, and any errors corrected. For other information on this part of the subject, the excellent work of *Gærtner de Fructibus*; *Bergius' Materia Medica a Regno Vegetabili*; *Murray's Apparatus Medicaminum*; *Alston's Materia Medica*; and the *Linnean*, and the *Philosophical Transactions*, with the best books of travels, have been consulted.

For the chemical part I have principally consulted the last editions of the *System of Chemistry of Doctor Thomson*, and that of my very ingenious friend *Dr. Murray*; the *Annales de Chimie*; the *Journal de Physique*; the *Philosophical Transactions*; and the best chemical papers inserted in the periodical publications; nor have I refrained from taking advantage of the observations of Dr. Duncan contained in the *Edinburgh New Dispensatory*.[1] As this is undoubtedly the most import-

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[1] The following are the more important of the additional works, which have also been consulted in compiling the three former and the present edition:—

Flore, du Dictionnaire des Sciences Médicales, décrites par F. P. Chaumeton, Chamberet et Poiret, 8vo. Paris.

Histoire Nat. et Med. des Cases, &c.: L. T. Calloden de Geneve, M. D. 4to. Montpelier, 1816.

Materia Medica of Hindostan, &c. &c. By Whitelaw Ainslie, M. D. 4to. Madras, 1813.

A Treatise on the Medicinal Leech, &c. &c. By T. Johnson, M. D. 8vo. London.

Mem. de la Société Imperiale des Nat. de Moscow, 4to. Moscow, 1809.

Asiatic Researches, 4to. Calcutta.

ant part of the work, I have given it all the attention I am possessed of; and although it would be almost impossible, and altogether unnecessary, to prove by actual experiment the correctness of all the formulæ for the preparations and compositions ordered in the Pharmacopœias, yet the greater part of those ordered in the London Pharmacopœia, which I have chosen for my text-book, have been repeated, and an unrestrained opinion regarding them delivered. Those chemical theories only, however, which are fully established have been adopted; and I have studiously avoided ranking myself on either side, on the important questions now at issue, suggested by the late investigations of Mr. (now Sir H.) Davy.[1]

With regard to the reformed nomenclature of the Pharmacopœias, the entire principle of which has been strongly objected to by Dr. Bostock, in his *Remarks on the Nomenclature of the London Pharmacopœia*, I conceive it to be my duty to state here, that although I have not scrupled freely to criticize such names as appear to me to be improper in the work of the London College, and incompatible with the views of the subject which it professes to have taken, yet, that I do not

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Tableaux Chimiques du Règne Animal, &c. *par* Jean-Frédéric John, &c. *traduit de l'Allemand*, par Stéphane Robinet, 4to. Paris, 1818.
Annales de Chimie et de Physique, 8vo. Paris.
Henry's Elements of Experimental Chemistry, 7th edit. 8vo. London.
Elementi di Chimica Farmaceutica e d'Istoria Naturale, &c. 8vo. Torino.
Nouveaux Elémens de Therapeutique et de Matière Médicale, &c. *par* I. L. Alibert, 8vo. 4me edit. Paris, 1817.
Farmacopea Generale ossia Dizionario delle Preparazioni Farmaceutico-Mediche, &c. di L. V. Brugnatelli, 8vo. Pavia, 1814.
Traité des Poisons, &c. &c. par M. P. Orfila, 8vo. Paris.
Philips' Remarks on the Editio Altera of the Pharm. Lond. 8vo. London.
Journal de Pharmacie et des Sciences Accessoires, &c. 8vo. Paris.
Journal of Science and the Arts, 8vo. London.
The Annals of Philosophy, 8vo. London.
Medico-Chirurgical Transactions, 8vo. London.
The London Medical Repository, 8vo. London.
Bancroft's Philosophy of Permanent Colours, 2d edit. 8vo. London.
Lambert's Illustrations of the Genus Cinchona, 4to. Lond. 1821.
Burckhardt's Travels in Nubia, 4to. Lond. 1820.
Davy's Account of the Interior of Ceylon, 4to. Lond. 1821.
Humboldt's Personal Narrative, 8vo. Lond. 1821.
Opium Historice, Chemice atque Pharmacologice Investigatum, per C. A. Christen, 8vo. Vind. 1820.
Pharmacologia, &c. &c. ; 3d. edit. 8vo. Lond. 1820.
Pharmacopœa Batava et Notis, &c. Lipsiæ, 1824.

[1] The establishment of Sir H. Davy's theories has rendered the reserve implied in this sentence no longer necessary.

concur with that gentleman in thinking that the reform was unnecessary, or now, when it is accomplished, that it is not likely to be generally adopted. It is, indeed, deeply to be lamented, that a work issuing from so respectable and learned a body as the London College is acknowledged to be, is not more perfect in its execution: but, nevertheless, its nomenclature is much superior to that of its predecessor; and within the scope of my own observation, as well as from information which I have received from others, it is now coming into very general use. Many of the older physicians already write their prescriptions in the reformed language; and it is so congenial with the habits of thinking, and the ordinary language and mode of writing of the younger practitioners, that there is no doubt of its being readily adopted by them.[1]

The best authors have been consulted regarding the medicinal properties and uses of the various substances treated of; but I must confess that less attention has been given to this, as it is not intended that the practice of medicine should be taught by a Dispensatory: and surely little is to be expected from those who would attempt to acquire it from such a source. As memorandums, however, I have been anxious to make the medical notices as correct as possible; and have, in most instances, given references to the works from which the best information on this part of the subject may be obtained.

After all my efforts, however, to avoid errors, I am sensible that the work may, nevertheless, contain many; I have, therefore, determined to lend a willing ear to the remarks of candid criticism; and, in future editions, to take advantage of every suggestion that may tend to bring it nearer to that state of perfection, the attainment of which must afford more satisfaction to an author than all the indiscriminate praise which can be lavished upon his labours. I might, indeed, plead as an apology for its imperfections, that the work has not been prepared in the repose of retirement, and with an abundance of leisure; but on the contrary, that I have been

[1] The experience of ten years has fully confirmed these anticipations.

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able to bestow on it the few leisure hours only which I could snatch from full employment in a laborious branch of the profession, and during the wasting of the midnight oil, amidst inconvenience and anxieties; and with the perpetual annoyance of professional interruptions. I am sensible, however, of the futility of such an apology; and as the book is now in the hands of the profession, it must fall or rise according to it merits: I can only hope these will be justly appreciated by the Public, that tribunal, by which every production, whether of intellect or of labour, must be ultimately judged.

ANTHONY TODD THOMSON.

91. *Sloane Street,*
April, 1811.

Explanation of the Abbreviations employed in the Synonyma.

(*F.*) French.	(*San.*) Sanscrit.
(*G.*) German.	(*Tam.*) Tamool.
(*I.*) Italian.	(*A.*) Arabic.
(*S*). Spanish.	(*Pers.*) Persian.
(*Dutch*).	(*Beng.*) Bengalese.
(*Swed.*) Swedish.	(*Duk.*) Dukhanie.
(*Dan.*) Danish.	(*Malay.*)
(*Pol.*) Polish.	(*Cyng.*) Cynghalese.
(*Port.*) Portuguese.	(*Celebes.*)
(*Russian.*)	(*Jav.*) Javanese.
(*H.*) Hindoostanie.	(*Esqui.*) Esquimaux.

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