

The Physician's Dose and Symptom Book containing the doses and uses of all the principal articles of the Materia Medica, &c. By JOSEPH H. Wythes, A.M., M.D., eleventh edition; Philadelphia, Lindsay & Blackston, 1874; Montreal, Dawson Bros.

This little volume is, in its way, a gem, containing an immense amount of information, in a manner so terse and yet so comprehensive, that it will be found of great value to all who are busily engaged in practice. The fact that it has gone through ten editions is a good guarantee that the profession has not failed to appreciate its merits.

RIP VAN WINKLE, M. D.

By Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Boston, Massachusetts.

AN AFTER DINNER PRESCRIPTION TAKEN BY THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY, AT ONE OF THEIR RECENT MEETINGS.

CANTO FIRST.

Old Rip Van Winkle had a grandson, Rip,
Of the paternal block a genuine chip;
A lazy, sleepy, curious kind of chap;
He, like his grandsire, took a mighty nap,
Whereof the story I propose to tell
In two briefs cantos, if you listen well.

The times were hard when Rip to manhood grew;
They always will be when there's work to do;
He tried at farming—found it rather slow—
And then at teaching—what he didn't know;
Then took to hanging 'round the tavern bars;
To frequent toddies and long nine cigars,
Till Dame Van Winkle, out of patience, vexed
With preaching homilies, having for their text
A mop, a broomstick—ought that might avail
To point a moral or adorn a tale,
Exclaimed—"I have it! Now then, Mr. V.!
He's good for *something*—make him an M. D."!

The die was cast; the youngster was content;
They packed his shirts and stockings, and he went.
How hard he studied it were vain to tell—
He drowsed through Wistar, nodded over Bell,
Slept sound with Cooper, snored aloud with Good;
Heard heaps of lectures—doubtless understood—
A constant listener, for he did not fail
To carve his name on every bench and rail.

Months grew to years; at last he counted three,
And Rip Van Winkle found himself M. D.
Illustrious title! in a gilded frame
He set the sheepskin with his Latin name,
Ripum Van Winklum, quem we—scimus—know
Idoneum esse—to do so and so;
He hired an office; soon its walls displayed
His new diploma and his stock in trade,
A mighty arsenal to subdue disease

Of various names, whereof I mention these:
Lancets and bougies, great and little squirt,
Rhubarb and Seina, Snakeroot, Thoroughwort,
Ant. Tart, Vin. Colch. Pil Cochiae and Black Drop,
Tinctures of Opium, Gentian, Henbane, Hop,
Pulv. Ipecacuanhae, which for lack
Of breath to utter men call Ipecac,
Camphor and Kino. Turpentine, Tolu,
Cubebs, "Copeevy," Vitriol—white and blue,
Fennel and Flaxseed, Slippery Elm and Squill,
And roots of Sassafras and "Sassafrill,"
Brandy—for colics—Pinkroot, death on worms—
Valerian, calmer of hysteric squirms,
Musk, Assafoetida, the resinous gum
Named from its odor—well, it does smell some—
Jalap, that works not wisely but too well,
Ten pounds of bark and six of Calomel.

For outward griefs he had an ample store,
Some twenty jars and galipots, or more:
Ceratum simplex—housewives oft compile
The same at home, and call it "wax and ile,"
Unguentum Resinosum—change its name,
The "drawing salve" of many an ancient dame;
Argenti Nitras, also Spanish flies,
Whose virtue makes the water-bladders rise—
(Some say that spread upon a toper's skin
They draw no water, only rum or gin)—
Leeches, sweet vermin! don't they charm the sick?
And sticking-plaster—how it hates to stick!
Emplastrum Ferri—ditto *Picis*, Pitch;
Washes and Powders, Brimstone for the—which,
Scabies or *Psora*, is thy chosen name
Since Hahnemann's goosequill scratch'd thee into fame,
Proved thee the source of every nameless ill,
Whose sole specific is a moonshine pill,
Till saucy science, with a quiet grin,
Held up the *Acarus*, crawling on a pin?
Mountains have labored and have brought forth mice:
The Dutchman's theory hatched a brood of—twice
I've well nigh said them—words unfitting quite
For these fair precincts and for ears polite.

The surest foot may chance at last to slip,
And so at length it proved with Dr. Rip.
One full-sized bottle stood upon the shelf
Which held the medicine that he took himself;
Whate'er the reason, it must be confessed
He filled that bottle oftener than the rest:
What drug it held I don't presume to know—
The gilded label said "Elixir Pro."

One day the Doctor found the bottle full,
And, being thirsty, took a vigorous pull,
Put back the "Elixir" where 'twas always found,
And had old Dobbin saddled and brought 'round,
—You know those old-time rhubarb-colored nags
That carried Doctors and their saddle-bags;
Gracious beasts! they stopped at every place
Where blinds were shut—knew every patient's case—
Looked up and thought—the baby's in a fit—
That won't last long—he'll soon be through with it;
But shook their heads before the knocked door
Where some old lady told the story o'er