

monizing the three previous Pharmacopœias of London, Edinburgh and Dublin, a task which has been accomplished with great skill and judgment. The '67 edition is in many respects an improvement on that of '64. Notably it for the first time arranges all the materia medica and preparations in one alphabetical series, and it not only expresses the formulæ in English, which had been done in the '64 edition and in the Edinburgh Pharmacopœia even prior to that, but it has also adopted the Arabic numerals in expressing the quantities. The advantage, even the necessity, of simplicity of expression and arrangement in a Pharmacopœia is self-evident, and it will be observed all these changes are meant to attain this. By the way, although it may not be desirable nor practicable to write medical prescriptions in English, I have often thought it would be an advantage to express the quantities in the Arabic characters. Compare these with the Roman for such numbers as 8, 12, 18, 24, and so on, and it will be seen at once how much more easily expressed and less liable to be mistaken the former are. The doses of the different articles were also for the first time introduced in this edition, and the authoritative standard of doses which we have thus acquired has been a great boon to us. There is another standard which it is very desirable to have in the Pharmacopœia (I offer this suggestion on far higher authority than my own), viz., that of the quantity or accent of names of medicinal substances. A moment's reflection will bring to mind many words which are pronounced differently—and often very doubtfully as to the right way (I speak for myself). Let me instance Piperita, Conium, Ergota, Camphora, Cubeba and many more. Of course there is already a standard or rule for some of them, but for many, I believe the Pharmacopœia would have to determine the quantity, and it would be very satisfactory to find an authoritative standard for all of them.

Acetum Sci'æ contains an ounce and a half of proof spirit to the pint to prevent it spoiling. I have noticed it mentioned by several parties that this not only did not preserve it, but had the tendency to make it go wrong. Be this as it may, I can testify that it keeps perfectly without it.

My next remark has reference to what I have always looked on as a disregard of that simplicity which I have just alluded to as a characteristic of the Pharmacopœia. I refer to the formulæ for the three diluted acids, hydrochloric, nitric and sulphuric. Now, if great exactness were necessary in the strength of the diluted acids why not ascertain how much water was required to make up the measure, and specify it in the formula? But is such exactness necessary? The acids are used solely for medicinal purposes, where a little variation of strength, such as might arise from expansion or condensation, is of no moment. It can hardly be expected that all chemists will follow out these directions. Most of them will dilute the acid with the full quantity of water at once, in which case there is presented to them a rare facility for blundering.