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1877

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Philadelphia County Medical Society

IN REFERENCE TO THE

PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE MANAGEMENT

OF THE

U. S. PHARMACOPŒIA,

As presented by Dr. Squibb

TO THE

American Medical Association

FOR THEIR ACTION IN 1877.

PRINTED FOR THE USE OF THE DELEGATES BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

PHILADELPHIA .  
1877.





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PHILADELPHIA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

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SPECIAL MEETING.

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REPORTED BY FRANK WOODBURY, M. D.

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At a special meeting of the Society held May 9th, 1877, Prof. Henry H. Smith, President of the Society, in the chair, the President stated that the meeting had been specially called in order to take action upon a proposition that would be brought before the American Medical Association at its meeting in June, 1877, contemplating certain important changes in the time and manner of revising the United States Pharmacopœia, and in the publication of the work. In explaining the proposed alterations, he read extracts from a pamphlet published and distributed to the delegates to the American Medical Association and others, by its author, Dr. Squibb, of Brooklyn, who wished that the subject should be freely discussed. He also stated that the Society at its previous meeting, had invited certain gentlemen of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy to be present at this meeting and participate in the discussion. Of these he noticed the presence of Mr. A. B. Taylor, Profs. Maisch and Remington, and Messrs. Bullock and Wiegand.

By invitation of the chair, Mr. Alfred B. Taylor then read extracts from a paper he had printed in reply to Dr. Squibb's pamphlet, and also read portions of an unfinished paper he was preparing in continuation

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of the same subject. He stated that the change proposed by Dr. Squibb comprised two distinct topics, although apparently included in one; the first was to take away the ownership of the Pharmacopœia from the National Association; the *second* is the advocacy of certain alterations in the subject matter of the work, and the period of its publication; "these changes (if desirable) being entirely independent of the preceding, and if adopted could be performed by the National Pharmacopœial Convention just as well as by its hypothetical successor." The first topic is the one Mr. Taylor had selected for discussion in the pamphlet, which had been previously read before the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, who directed it to be published in the "Journal of Pharmacy," and of which 200 extra copies had been distributed. The second topic he discussed in the article now in preparation, which he expected would appear in the June number of the "American Journal of Pharmacy." His remarks were at some length, and were logical and conclusive. He denied that any change in the manner of publication of the Pharmacopœia was required, and especially the change proposed by Dr. Squibb, by which the American Medical Association should assume its ownership and control; and declared that for this purpose the American Medical Association was not a superior body to the National Pharmacopœial Convention, whose sole function is the revision of the Pharmacopœia. To thoroughly perform this duty, the cooperation of four classes of skilled workers is necessary—medical, botanical, chemical and pharmaceutical, which are all represented in the National Convention; whereas, the American Medical Association is composed only of delegates from medical societies. The National Pharmacopœial Convention being made up of men specially selected with reference to their qualifications for the performance of but one duty, will therefore be more likely to do the work well and thoroughly than the American Medical Association, even were such a change possible.

Mr. Taylor then declared that the copyright of the Pharmacopœia and the ownership of the book rested with the President of the National Pharmacopœial Convention, and denied the moral or legal right of any man or body of men to appropriate this property without the owner's consent.

In the second article he quoted freely to show that the paper of Dr.

Squibb was illogical and inconsistent, as well as unjust to the distinguished authors of the Dispensatory, and referred to Dr. Squibb's statement made in 1860, that "*the United States Pharmacopœia equals any Pharmacopœia in the world.*" In the National Convention the labor of revision is delegated to a committee of fifteen, who do the main work, while the Convention is engaged in discussing particular subjects. Dr. Squibb proposes that this work "shall be done by five persons, three of whom shall be a quorum," and who "should live in adjacent cities," and who are to "have the services of one expert." The fallacy of considering this as in any sense *national* must be evident to any unprejudiced mind. In any event, fifteen are more likely to do the work well than either five or three. The Committee of Revision have heretofore had no remuneration whatever, even for its actual traveling expenses, which are onerous to those living at a distance. The suggestion, therefore, that their traveling expenses should be guaranteed, might be entertained by the National Convention at its next meeting.

Mr. Charles Bullock exhibited the several thick folio manuscript volumes of contributions by the College of Pharmacy to all the decennial revisions since 1820, and stated that for several sessions the greatest amount of work presented to the Committee of Revision of the United States Pharmacopœia had come from the Philadelphia College of Physicians and the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy.

Prof. Remington believed that as the American Medical Association is now composed only of delegates from the State Medical Societies, no action of that body could relieve the other delegates to the National Convention from their duty of attending its next meeting, in 1880.

Mr. A. B. Taylor stated, on the authority of Dr. Horatio C. Wood, that out of the thirty-one bodies represented in the National Pharmacopœial Convention, only nine were represented in the American Medical Association.

Prof. Maisch had seen no reason to change his views already expressed before the College of Pharmacy. The plan proposed by Dr. Squibb would not give a National Association in any true sense of the word. The five men must live in contiguous cities, and could not be expected to be conversant with the wants of the entire country. The only true plan is the one heretofore pursued, but it is desirable to devise some means by which the various constituent bodies should be made to be alive to their work, and prepare their reports for the final

Convention. The information it is to act upon must be obtained directly from different sections of the country, which plan he considered as far superior to that proposed by Dr. Squibb.

Mr. Wiegand called attention to the fact that Dr. Squibb repeatedly avers in his article that two Pharmacopœias in the field would be infinitely worse than the one we now possess; whereas, the action he recommends would inevitably lead to this conclusion. He is therefore defeated by his own argument.

Dr. Geo. Hamilton thought that the change urged by Dr. Squibb was without good reason, as it was merely an experiment that, if tried, would be found to be a costly one. Any alteration or correction in the work itself, that was suggested, would undoubtedly meet due consideration, and could be performed just as well by the eminent men now in charge as by any others that could be selected.

Dr. Wm. T. Taylor, Vice-President of the Society, coincided with Dr. Hamilton's views, and doubted whether any good could be gained by the proposed change, even were it practicable.

The President then read the accompanying letter from Dr. W. S. W. Ruschenberger, Medical Director of the United States Navy, and a member of the last Committee of Revision of the Pharmacopœia, who was unavoidably absent.

1932 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, May 8, 1877.

DR. HENRY H. SMITH,

*President of the Philadelphia County Medical Society.*

MY DEAR DOCTOR—After deliberate consideration of the plan of preparing a United States Pharmacopœia proposed by Dr. Squibb, to be substituted for that of the National Convention through the agency of which the work has been heretofore published, my conviction is that it will prove in practice, if adopted, very generally if not universally unsatisfactory to the profession.

The National Convention for revising the Pharmacopœia includes in its organization representatives from all colleges of pharmacy, all medical schools and all incorporated medical societies which may choose to participate in the work. Each is invited to submit to the convention a revision of the Pharmacopœia, in such form and manner as it may determine. If each college and society presents a report, the views of the entire profession, both physicians and pharmacists, will be in possession of the convention. Unfortunately, however, only a small number of the many colleges and societies take sufficient interest in the subject to have proper reports prepared and submitted to the convention. At the last decennial meeting of the

convention only *six* reports were submitted, and from these the present Pharmacopœia was prepared by the Committee of Revision. Had every college and society performed its duty in the premises, it is conjectured that the work might have been more complete. It is self-evident, I think, that the failure of the numerous colleges and societies to perform their duties in this connection is not ascribable in any degree whatever to the plan of organization of the National Convention, nor to its methods of executing the trust confided to it. In my very humble opinion, no plan of organization can be devised which will entirely\* prevent such failure.

The existing plan of revising the Pharmacopœia is preferable, in my estimation, to that proposed by Dr. Squibb. It is well devised for gathering the fruits of the invention, literary research and experience of the pharmacists and medical practitioners of every district or county within the limits of the whole country, always provided that the colleges and incorporated societies discharge their duty in this connection. Dr. Squibb's plan delegates the entire work, in fact, to one paid expert, assisted in his labors by the literary researches of five members of a council appointed to manage and control the work, with a view to realize from it sufficient to compensate them properly for their time. It proposes what seems to be a kind of publishing company limited to the manufacture and publication of a Pharmacopœia, a Dispensatory and Annual of Materia Medica and the profits from the sale of these productions are to be expended in paying for the services of themselves and experts. Is not the National Convention as competent as the American Medical Association to create a monopoly of this kind, an effect of which may be the enhancement of the price of the book?

The first step of Dr. Squibb's proposed plan is that the American Medical Association shall "assume the ownership of the Pharmacopœia of the United States of America." The American Medical Association cannot assume the ownership of this book or of any other copyright work without incurring the penalties which enure to the infringement of the law of copyright. The copyright of the Pharmacopœia is held in the name of the President of the National Convention, and is beyond the honest grasp of the American Medical Association.

The second step is that the American Medical Association shall "relieve the National Convention for Revising the Pharmacopœia from any further acts of ownership, control or management of the Pharmacopœia." Inasmuch as the American Medical Association has no jurisdiction in the premises, no shadow of authority whatever, over the National Convention for Revising the Pharmacopœia, the proposition to relieve it from the ownership of its own work, be it ever so valueless, might possibly be regarded by many as improper and offensive, if not illegal.

The third step of Dr. Squibb's proposed plan is that the American Medical Association shall "relieve the officers of the National Convention from the duty of issuing a call for a convention in 1880, as provided in the last convention." This proposition is no more pertinent to the jurisdiction of the American Medical Association than the second, and is equally discourteous. As well might the National Convention assume authority to release the officers of the American Medical Association from the performance of their duties,

The perpetration of such acts seems to be essential to the realization of Dr Squibb's plan. It is hoped that the American Medical Association will not adopt any measure which it has no legal or moral right to enforce.

It is not presumable that the National Convention will tranquilly submit to be plundered first and then expunged by resolutions or assumptions of the American Medical Association; but it cannot be denied that the latter association has a right to publish a Pharmacopœia if it shall determine that it is desirable for the interests of the profession to compete with the National Association, and *place two Pharmacopœias in the field.*

I hope the Philadelphia County Medical Society may instruct its delegates to the American Medical Association not to favor Dr. Squibb's proposition, and that it will at an early day appoint a committee to revise the Pharmacopœia and report the result of its work to the National Convention in May, 1880.

You will perceive that, although I have very hastily written, I have said enough to indicate my opinion in the premises.

Very truly yours, W. S. W. RUSCHENBERGER.

Dr. Benjamin Lee asked Prof. Maisch what Dr. Squibb meant by his epithet of "skeleton" pharmacopœia, and desired to know how it compares with the European Pharmacopœia in its arrangement and fulness.

Prof. Maisch stated that the British Pharmacopœia in its first part gives, under the name of the subject, a brief description of the article, by means of which it might be recognized; in regard to the second part, it is about the same as our own. The French Codex is like the American in general plan, but is much more voluminous, still the directions are principally for the pharmacist rather than for the physician. The Prussian Pharmacopœia is now superseded by the German, whose directions are remarkably terse. The Belgian leans on the French Codex, but the Russian, the Swiss, the Danish, the Swedish the Italian, the Greek, all follow the example of the British in giving *brief* descriptions. Exactly what Dr. Squibb means by the epithet is would be difficult to decide, unless he criticises the Pharmacopœia for not being a Dispensatory.

Mr. Alfred B. Taylor stated that universal usage has determined the signification of the word Pharmacopœia, and sanctioned its use to describe a "dictionary of *Materia Medica* and the *preparation* of remedies." It is not its function to discuss questions of chemistry, botany or the action of drugs.

Dr. Andrew Nebinger regretted the want of interest heretofore displayed by physicians on the subject of the revision of the National Pharmacopœia, and argued at some length that this fact as well as the want of special education for the work would effectually disqualify any purely medical body from assuming entire control of the work. He was in favor of reform, but the change proposed was a *revolution*, and all revolutions were destructive. He stated that the American Medical Association had no authority over the National Convention whatever, nor any jurisdiction in the matter. He offered the following resolutions, which were adopted :

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of the Philadelphia County Medical Society the propositions of Dr. Squibb to modify the *period* of revision of the United States Pharmacopœia, and other proposed reforms, are deserving of careful consideration by the medical and pharmaceutical professions.

*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this Society such reforms and modifications of ancient plans can be more safely entrusted to the National Convention of the Pharmacopœia and its Committee of Revision, than to any new organization.

*Resolved*, That the action of this Society be officially transmitted to Dr. John C. Riley, President of the Pharmacopœial Convention at Washington, to Dr. Bowditch, President of the American Medical Association at Chicago, and to Dr. Squibb, of Brooklyn.

*Resolved*, That these Resolutions be also published in the *Druggists' Circular*, *Chicago Pharmacist*, *Medical News*, *Philadelphia Medical Times*, *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, *The American Journal of Pharmacy*, *New York Medical Record*, and *New Remedies*, as soon as possible.

Dr. Albert H. Smith presented the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That the Society does not recognize the legal or moral right of the American Medical Association to assume the work of issuing a Pharmacopœia as proposed, nor its fitness for the work, if such right existed.

*Resolved*, That its delegates to the American Medical Association be instructed to use every proper means, by their votes and influence, to prevent the consummation of the plan proposed by Dr. Squibb.

On motion of Dr. Albert Frické, the following resolutions were adopted :

*Resolved*, That a committee of five be appointed by the President of this Society, at his leisure, to suggest such alterations and additions to the U. S. Pharmacopœia as may in their judgment seem desirable, and report to this Society before the meeting of the State Medical Society in 1878.

*Resolved*, That the delegates to the State Medical Society in 1877 be requested

to invite its action in reference to a revision of the Pharmacopœia, and also to report to it the action of this Society on this subject.

Dr. Richard A. Cleemann moved that—

A transcript from the Proceedings of this meeting, which shall include the letter presented by Dr. W. S. W. Ruschenberger in opposition to the scheme of Dr. Squibb for supplanting the U. S. Pharmacopœia, and the substance of the essays of Mr. Alfred B. Taylor entitled the "Pharmacopœia of the United States and the American Medical Association," be printed and distributed among the delegates to the next meeting of the American Medical Association; the expense of such printing to be borne by this Society.

This was adopted, and 500 copies ordered to be distributed.

On motion adjourned.

FRANK WOODBURY, M.D., *Reporting Secretary.*



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