

LYMAN SPALDING, M.B., M.D.

Born at Cornish, N. H., June 5, 1775.

Died at Portsmouth, N. H., October 21, 1821.

The Originator of the United States Pharmacopoeia.

(January 6, 1817.)

“To medicine in all its branches he gave his life.”



Lyman Spalding

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DR. LYMAN SPALDING.—THE FIRST PHARMACOPOEIA OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Historical Introduction in U. S. P. IX begins with these lines (p. V): "In January, 1817, Dr. Lyman Spalding, of New York City, submitted to the Medical Society of the County of New York a project for the formation of a National Pharmacopoeia."

Through the courtesy of Dr. James Alfred Spalding, we are enabled to present the frontispiece of this issue, and some of the data of this writing are taken from a book on the Life of Dr. Lyman Spalding* by his grandson, named above, and published by W. M. Leonard, Boston, 1916.

Lyman Spalding was born June 5, 1775, in Cornish, N. H. His father was Dyer Spalding, born in Plainfield, Conn., November 14, 1732, and his mother, Elizabeth Cady Spalding (nee Parkhurst), born July 7, 1734. It is not the writer's purpose to go into the history of these families, therefore, suffice it to say that Dyer Spalding was a soldier and officer in the Colonial wars and served with General Israel Putnam.

The originator of the National Pharmacopoeia received his first medical instruction of, and for many years worked with, Dr. Nathan Smith, founder of the Medical Schools at Dartmouth, Yale and Bowdoin. After his academic education in Cornish, Lyman Spalding accompanied Dr. Smith in his practice, and in 1794 he entered Harvard Medical School where, in 1797, he was examined for his medical degree, the subject of his thesis being, "On Animal Heat." Dr. Spalding was always a student, and a reference to his further studies nor to his practice and investigations, that would do justice to the subject, cannot be attempted in this sketch. He was lecturer on chemistry and materia medica at the Dartmouth Medical School from 1797 to 1799; lecturer on anatomy and surgery, and president of the Fairfield Medical School from 1810 to 1812, and president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Western District of New York, 1813-1817.

It is of interest that vaccination was introduced during the period of Dr. Spalding's medical practice, and among the practitioners of his day he established a well-deserved reputation as a successful physician and teacher, and the profession profited by his research. He studied drugs and their therapeutic value, and this study made the American Pharmacopoeia possible. The author of the book referred to states, that Dr. Spalding first obtained the idea of a National Pharmacopoeia from Barton's "Collections for an Essay toward a Materia Medica for the United States," read before the Philadelphia Medical Society, February 21,

* Stanhope Press, F. M. Gilson Company, Boston. For the loan of the book we are indebted to W. D. Grace of Portsmouth, N. H., and the Portsmouth Athenæum.

1798. The author also further expresses his opinion that when his grandfather visited in Philadelphia, in 1809, and saw Dr. Barton daily, he conversed with him on the possible chances of ever composing a work so much needed by physicians.

The credit, however, for the U. S. Pharmacopoeia belongs to Dr. Lyman Spalding, for the first edition had its beginning when the needs of a National Pharmacopoeia were set forth by him in a paper read before the New York Medical Society, Monday, January 6, 1817. The committee appointed at that time afterward held meetings at the home of Dr. Spalding, and he unquestionably carried the larger burden and worries of the work, which was concluded when the first edition of the Pharmacopoeia of the United States appeared, December 15, 1820, printed by Wells and Lilly of Boston and copyrighted on the same date by Ewer and Bedlington, Cornhill, Number 51. The final galley proofs of this edition are now in the hands of Dr. James Alfred Spalding. The book has 274 pages and is about 10 by 6 inches in size. The work constitutes an era in the profession and this is the centennial year of its active beginning. It is of interest that the Surgeon General of the U. S. Army, Dr. Joseph Lovell, purchased 96 copies soon after the book was ready for delivery, thus giving his approval of the work.

Quoting the author, "The publication of the Pharmacopoeia was the culminating point in the career of Dr. Spalding, for about the time that the book was issued from the press he was walking along Pearl Street, New York, when he was hit on the head by a box of rubbish falling from a second story window;" from the effects of the injury sustained he never recovered. He left New York for his old home at Portsmouth, arriving there October 17, 1821, and four days later passed away.

A well-known contemporary, Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchell, in announcing his unfeigned regret soon after the death of Dr. Lyman Spalding, said of him: "His mild and amiable character, his ingenuous deportment, and his native zeal and assiduity to maintain the dignity of the profession, and improve its many branches, will cause many to lament the cessation of his labors; but his intimate friends, alone, knew how pure and disinterested were his motives. He was the Original Projector of our National Pharmacopoeia and aided with unremitting diligence in bringing the work to its present form," (1821). E. G. E.

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ACETA MEDICATA.

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ACETUM OPII.

R Opii libram dimidiam.
Aceti octantes tres.
Myrticæ costusæ unciam unam, cum semisse.
Croci unciam dimidiam.

Ad spissitudinem idoneam coque; dein adde

Sacchari uncias quatuor;
Cerevisiæ fermenti fluidunciam unam

Digere per septem hebdomadas: dein coelo aperto, donec fiat syrupus, expone. Deoique effunde, cola, et vasis vitreis pauxillo sacchari unicuique vasi addito include.

ACETUM SCILLÆ.

R Scillæ siccatæ uncias duas.
Aceti purificati octantes duos cum semisse.
Alcoholis fluiduncias tres.

Macerate scillam in aceto per decem dies, dein liquorem exprime, cui adde alcohol; et, cum feces subsederint, purum effunde liquorem.

MEDICATED VINEGARS.

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VINEGAR OF OPIUM.

COMMONLY CALLED BLACK DROP.

Take of Opium, half a pound.
Vinegar, three pints.
Nutmeg, bruised, one ounce and a half.
Saffron, half an ounce.

Boil them to a proper consistence, then add

Sugar, four ounces.
Yeast, one fluid ounce.

Digest for seven weeks, then place in the open air until it becomes a syrup; lastly, decant, filter, and bottle it up, adding a little sugar to each bottle.

VINEGAR OF SQUILL.

Take of Squill, dried, two ounces.
Purified vinegar, two pints and a half.
Alcohol, three fluid ounces.

Macerate the squill in the vinegar for ten days; then press out the liquor, to which add the alcohol; and when the dregs have subsided, pour off the clear liquor.