

PHARMACOPŒIAS AND FORMULARIES

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Its Relation to Medicine and Pharmacy in the Near East

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SINCE the beginning of this century the Arabian culture, which dominated the Near East for more than thirteen centuries, has been inevitably influenced by the French, British and, more recently, by the American cultures, and the growing influence of these varied foreign cultures makes the task of unifying the standards of medical and pharmaceutical practice a difficult one.

In Syria and Lebanon the dominating French influence was gradually replaced, in professional practice, by the American system particularly after the establishment of the American University at Beirut. Graduates of the schools of pharmacy and medicine of this University include citizens from all the countries of the Near East. On the other hand, the medical and pharmaceutical education in Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi Arabia and Palestine is closely connected with that in Egypt, which follows the British system. Other schools like the Italian, the German and the Swiss have their own groups and, everywhere in the Near East, one can find practitioners and pharmacists who advocate their own standards. Egypt, the most progressive of the Near East countries, has been in a state of uncertainty.

The varied standards adopted throughout the Near East necessitates a general dispensatory like the British Pharmaceutical Codex which, while written in English and thus meeting the demand of the graduates of the British school, still includes the principal material official in the French, the German and the United States Pharmacopœias. Moreover, it includes a considerable bulk of material concerning the crude drugs and their preparations which meet the demand of the graduates of the old school.

During the time when the British Pharmacopœia was the semi-official Pharmacopœia in Egypt, the British Pharmaceutical Codex was naturally the main reference book in pharmaceutical practice. It was one of the principal works of reference in the preparation of the first edition of the Egyptian Pharmacopœia which, according to the decision of the Second Arabian Pharmaceutical Congress will be the official Pharmacopœia of the Arabian East. There is every reason to believe that the new edition of the Codex will retain its position and become the first companion to the new Egyptian Pharmacopœia, especially as the bulk of the material in the Egyptian Pharmacopœia is a modified digest of the British Pharmacopœia, the French Codex and the United States Pharmacopœia, all of which are covered by the British Pharmaceutical Codex.

It is needless to emphasise the value of the Codex as a collection of standards; and undoubtedly, in the absence of any standards for pharmaceutical products in the Near East the Codex standards should be used. The new Codex will meet the present demand of general practitioners and pharmacists in the Near East during the transition period to the new era of unified standards to be established by the Egyptian Pharmacopœia. Until and after the publication of an International Pharmacopœia, such a cosmopolitan dispensatory as the British Pharmaceutical Codex will be of value specially in an area where more than one school of standards prevails. The new additions and modifications to the Formulary of the new Codex are welcomed in modern practice, while the sections of actions and uses should meet with great satisfaction.