

Preface to the Second Edition

A second edition of this work seemingly was called for well before the first one had actually gone out of print. Some months after the original edition went on sale, an enterprising American antiquarian bookseller purchased *en bloc* all of the copies remaining unsold, amounting to more than half of the edition, from its printer-publisher, who acted in the belief that the edition might not otherwise sell out; then the dealer proceeded to double the price of those copies he now owned. A chorus of protestations and complaints from outraged customers and would-be purchasers who felt they had been denied the opportunity of acquiring a copy at its original price quickly convinced the publisher that he had made a serious mistake. When calling the author to apprise him of this situation, the publisher informed him that, as a solution to this problem, he had contacted a friendly trade publisher who was willing to reissue the work in a moderately priced facsimile edition. However, because several related problems could not be overcome at the time, that attempt did not go forward and the possibility of a less expensive reissue remained only an unfulfilled hope for the next three decades. Ironically, the speculating antiquarian bookseller subsequently told the author that he had encountered no difficulty in selling out the edition at his inflated price and realized enough on its sales to underwrite a year's vacation on a river boat on the river Seine in Paris.

The author's recent success in reissuing several other of his earlier publications through the Oak Knoll Press finally convinced him that it was high time to also make additional copies of the Bigelow work available to bibliographers, historians of the book, and others who were unable to obtain it earlier. This would bring the book's message to a new generation and a wider audience of bibliographers and book historians, many who were for the most part unaware of Dr.

Bigelow's signal and unique contribution to color printing in early America. While fulfilling these desiderata, the publication of this second edition has also allowed the author to silently correct a number of minor typographical errors in the initial edition; to make a few minor stylistic improvements in it; to incorporate into its Chapter VI some newly uncovered evidence on the reception of Bigelow's *American Medical Botany* in colonial Philadelphia; and to add an index to this reissue, an action he that he has long regretted not having taken initially.

By good fortune, the author has been able to also incorporate into this reissue — as was done in the first edition — two original engraved plates, one hand-colored and one left uncolored, that Dr. Bigelow had originally planned to use to illustrate this work, but which he abandoned after he and his cohorts devised an innovative method of producing them in color mechanically. Finally, the two pages of acknowledgments that appeared in the initial edition have been dropped from this reissue in order to avoid redundancy and to retain the original paging for indexing purposes.