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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Sailor Advertising Card for "Compound Oxygen"



In the 1890s, Drs. Palen and Starkey of Philadelphia used the image of a sailor on the front of one of their advertising cards for the panacea "Compound Oxygen." (Sadly, on the card depicted above, both the banner inset from the back and the sailor image from the front have been damaged by a careless collector who had glued the card into a scrapbook.) Compound Oxygen was assailed by Dr. Samuel S. Wallian, who noted that, "the trash they [Palen and Starkey] send to their mail correspondents ... is a barefaced swindle and utterly worthless, being nothing more than a weak solution of nitrates of lead and ammonium, or of ammonium muriate and St. Croix rum." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

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