

CVS 417/97.111

1901

Maclean tells me he was in
Charlottesville.

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~~Osler was once called from Baltimore to see one of his~~
students ill with typhoid fever. He found his way to a planter's
house in Virginia. It was an old derelict shadow of its former
splendour, with broken shutters and gates off their hinges. The
grandfather (for the boy was an orphan) turned every convertible
thing into drink. After seeing the lad Osler had to wait all day
for the night train back to Baltimore. So he found his way to the
library and browsed around the shelves. Presently the granddaughter,
a charming intelligent girl of eighteen, came in and said: "If you're
interested in old books, we've got some much older than these in
the attics." There he found stuffed into barrels priceless first
editions including Byron, Shelley, and Keats (Endymion and Lamia
"in blue wrappers"). The volumes comprised practically the whole
early history of the house of John Murray. These were the yearly
consignments of books which wealthy planters were wont to order from
England. Osler told the girl of their great value. She, with tears
in her eyes, begged him to say nothing to the grandfather, as he
would sell them for drink. Eventually, through Osler's good offices,
Putnam's bought the books at so fair a price that the old home was
restored and the family fortunes comfortably re-established."

(Brit. Med. Jour., Jan. 10, 1920, p.66-67.)

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