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THE OSLER COLLECTION

McGill University is to become a center of interest to our members because it will house the books which were so lovingly collected by Sir William Osler.

The Library is unquestionably one of, if not the finest, collection of medical books extant, being particularly rich in the rare works of the earlier masters. It consists of over 7,800 volumes, many of which, however, contain a number of separate works, and the card index numbers over 8,250. The catalogue, which is now being completed at Oxford by an assistant from the Bodleian Library, includes an introduction and a memorandum on how to use the Library. This work will not be completed until the end of the present year, and the books will reach McGill next year. The ashes of the late Sir William are to accompany and rest with the Library.

The Library is divided into these groups of works:

I. Manuscripts.

II. Incunabula.

III. Bibliotheca Prima. Sir William's idea was to have in a comparatively small number of works the essential literature grouped about the men of the first rank arranged in chronological order. They illustrate the beginnings of medicine (Lucretius, Anthropology, Primitive Medicine; Medicine in Babylonia, Egypt, Persia, China, India, etc.). The Greeks, the Pre-Socratics. Then the work of the great Discoverers in Medicine up to the nineteenth century, as: Plato, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Celsus, Plinius, Galen, the Byzantines and Arabians; medieval (Roger Bacon and Leonardo da Vinci); the sixteenth century (Copernicus, Paracelsus, etc.); the seventeenth century (Boerhaave, Boyle, Malpighi, Newton, Sydenham, etc.); eighteenth century (Hunter, Jenner, Dalton, etc.); the nineteenth century (Claude Bernard, Davy, Helmholtz, Koch, Pasteur, Virchow, etc.). And lastly, the special Harvey Collection of works.

things, and many volumes that would otherwise go into the waste paper basket may be of inestimable value to our Library.

PRESENTATION OF THREE RARE MEDICAL BOOKS.

By C. W. G. ROHRER, M.D.¹

[These books are the gift of Dr. Harry G. Simpser, Chestertown, Md.]

It is not an unusual occurrence for one to present books to the library of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland. Indeed, the execution of so worthy a purpose has been no uncommon event, even from the very founding of the library in 1830, on down to the present time. But books, like men, vary in the recognition which should be shown them. Some books are especially valuable by reason of their incomparable utility; others, on account of the recognized superiority of their authorship; whilst to a third class, which is by far the largest of these three arbitrary groupings, may be assigned those innumerable tomes which have become priceless by reason of their great rarity. Several factors conspire to bring about this undesirable state of affairs. Chief among these might be mentioned the issuance of limited editions, and the too early demise of an author. Speaking specifically of medical books, it can be definitely stated that only the "favored few" outlive their authors.

THE THREE RARE BOOKS.

To the latter class, the rare and out-of-print books, each of which might be described as—

The small, rare volume, black with tarnished gold!

the books which I wish to present, belong. All three of them date back to the stirring times of the eighteenth century, when medical science was passing through its formative period. And within the pages of these books, yellow with age, three separate and distinct fields of medical endeavor are eloquently represented; namely: surgery, the dispensing of medicinal agents, and comparative anatomy.

Briefly stated, the titles of these three rare medical books, along with the names of their respective authors, so far as is known at present, are as follows:

1. *Observations on the Nature and Consequences of Those Injuries to Which the Head is Liable from External Violence.* By Percivall Pott, F.R.S., and Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The Second Edition. London, 1771.

¹ Read at the Baltimore City Medical Society meeting, December 17, 1920.