William Osler's bibliography, particularly as regards his textbook, is a minefield through which one must tread with delicacy and caution. There are over one hundred editions, states, printings, and translations of Osler's chef-d'oeuvre, The Principles and Practice of Medicine. Among the sixteen English-language editions, extending from 1892 to 1947, the convoluted history and intricacies of the fourth edition is particularly intriguing to Oslerians.

The fourth edition of The Principles and Practice of Medicine was published in 1901 by D. Appleton & Co. of New York, after the usual triennial revision. In Great Britain, the first three editions, under the legal copyright, were published by Young J. Pentland of Edinburgh and London. The Pentland editions were in reality Appleton editions with cancel titles and appropriate bindings. With the advent of the fourth edition, Appleton, through an egregious over-sight, neglected to secure the copyright in Great Britain; indeed, it was quite common on the other side of the Atlantic for American medical publishers to produce unauthorized editions of British textbooks which were unprotected by copyright. (It was not until 1891 that a law was enacted in the United States enabling non-resident foreign authors to secure copyright protection.) The Pentland edition, printed by Morrison and Gibb, Ltd., of Edinburgh, is essentially a line-for-line copy of the Appleton and Kimpton editions differing only in minor typographical variations, a cancel title, and a 31-page catalogue of Pentland publications dated November 1901, at the end. The title leaf lists Osler's honorary Edinburgh LL.D., (awarded in 1898) among his academic credits, not found in the Appleton and Pentland volumes. To add to the confusion it should be noted that there were also printings in 1901 of both the Appleton and Pentland third editions.

Omler was furious at Pentland's action and the following year a fifth edition of the textbook was published to rectify the copyright problem. In a letter of explanation to the Editors of The Lancet he wrote: "Sirs, May I ask the courtesy of your pages in explanation of the premature appearance of a new edition of my text-book? To justify the confidence that the profession has shown in the work I have tried to make each edition a faithful exponent of the medicine of the day. I had hoped to be able to follow the plan of a triennial issue, but, unfortunately the fourth edition was not copyrighted in Great Britain, and in December, 1901, shortly after its publication by Kimpton and Company an edition - more Americano - was published by Pentland. He was quite within his rights - quite as much so as the American publishers who, for many years, battled and fattened on the brains of English authors. That Mr. Pentland should have issued the edition so promptly - in six or eight weeks, I believe - and that he should have reduced the price from 24s. to 18s. showed that he had bettered the instructions of his teachers on this side of the water. To obtain copyright in Great Britain a new fifth edition has had to be issued. I had hoped to follow the normal process of triennial publication, but the circumstances justify what Rabelais calls 'the pretty perquisite of a superstition.'" I am, Sirs, your faithfully, Wm. Osler, Baltimore, March 21st, 1903. A similar statement appears in the Preface to the fifth edition (1902): "A word of explanation on the appearance so soon of a new edition, breaking the orderly triennial sequence of previous editions. Through an oversight, the fourth edition was not copyrighted in Great Britain, and an unauthorised edition, quite as much so as the American publisher, was published. A busy practising and publishing internist, Dr. Golden also pursues a difficult avocation as a bibliographic sleuth, hunting elusive editions and translations of the writings of Sir William Osler. Not content with having produced the monumental Sir William Osler: An Annotated Bibliography with Illustrations, he continues to unearth new and fascinating evidence of the tangled publication history of Osler's famous textbook. We are sure you will enjoy this account of his latest discoveries.
ized edition was promptly issued at a greatly reduced price, which has interfered with the legitimate sale of the book in Great Britain and Canada. In no other way than by the issue of this, a new edition, could copyright be obtained. I have taken the opportunity to make a number of additions and corrections. A great many changes have been made at the suggestions of friends and correspondents, to whom I am much indebted. W.O. Johns Hopkins Hosp.

It is intriguing that the Kimpton edition is not listed in the bibliographies of Blogg (14) or Abbott (24) nor in the Bibliotheca Osleriana, although the latter states Osler’s An Explanation, in the Lancet, (15) which would indicate knowledge of this edition by the editors. The statements that are occasionally seen that the Kimpton edition was pirated and that Osler did not know of its existence apparently reflect its earlier uncatalogued status, but are obviously without substance.

In Canada, an even more abstruse situation arose. Morang & Co. of Toronto, acting as agent for Appleton, controlled the sale of Osler’s textbook. George Nathaniel Morang, born in Eastport, Maine, came to Canada in his early twenties and became a naturalized British subject. He was the founder and president of the publishing house of George N. Morang & Co. whose field of operations covered the entire Dominion. The company later also served as agent for the Macmillan Company Morang Limited/1901”. The title page reads: “The Principles and Practice of Medicine, Diseases of the Kidneys and Diseases of the Muscles”. George M. (sic) Morang & Co., Toronto, 1901. Wecan find no record of this edition, thus indicating that Morang might have taken the copyright purposes only and have no copies on hand. As we were the exclusive selling agents for D. Appleton & Company of New York; we had demand of the sale in this country for many years of Dr. Osler’s book, which is now sold in Canada, direct, by the New York Publishers. Yours faithfully Thomas McCrae.” (31) W.W. Francis wrote in an annotation Dr. Malloch wrote: “Take away from England her authors. “ (34) Thus in 1901, as a result of Appleton’s failure to obtain a copyright in Britain, there were four distinct editions of the fourth edition of The Principles and Practice of Medicine: D. Appleton & Co., New York; Henry Kimpton, London; the pirated edition of Young J. Pentland, Edinburgh & London; and the partial edition of George N. Morang & Co., Ltd., Toronto.

In 1901, Morang & Co. reprinted a portion of The Principles and Practice of Medicine; solely for the purpose of obtaining the Canadian copyright. (22, 23, 24) Whether or not this was Appleton’s response to the interference which had occasioned the Pentland edition, or if it represented an independent, unauthorized action by Morang, is uncertain. This Canadian version reprinted only pages 848-899 and pages 1148-1150 of Osler’s textbook. The title page reads: “The Principles and Practice of Medicine: Diseases of the Kidneys and Diseases of the Muscles by William Osler, M.D. Fellow of the Royal Society [...]” Toronto: George N. Morang & Company Limited/1901”. The title page verso states: “Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year Nineteenth Hundred and One, by George N. Morang & Company, Limited, at the Department of Agriculture.” (25) The copyright was issued by the Copyright Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, on December 4, 1901, and is preserved in the National Archives of Canada. (26)

Considering the nature and purpose of the Morang edition it is a certainty that it was produced in an extremely limited edition which has escaped notice of bibliophiles and Oslerians. The only known copy of this bibliophilic desideratum is in the British Library. (27, 28) In 1902, Archibald Malloch, no doubt in his capacity as an editor of the Bibliotheca Osleriana, wrote from 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford to Morang and Co. for information, and received the following reply: “Toronto, Jan. 3rd, 1921. Dear Doctor McCrae Anwering your letter of January 20th in re-gard to The Principles and Practice of Medicine. I have no record whether your copy was on hand. As we were the exclusive selling agents for D. Appleton & Company of New York; we had demand of the sale in this country for many years of Dr. Osler’s book, which is now sold in Canada, direct, by the New York Publishers. Yours faithfully Thomas McCrae.” (31) W.W. Francis was not impressed with Osler’s book, which is now sold in Canada, direct, by the New York Publishers. Yours faithfully Thomas McCrae.” (31) W.W. Francis wrote in an annotation Dr. Malloch wrote: “Take away from England her authors. “ (34) Thus in 1901, as a result of Appleton’s failure to obtain a copyright in Britain, there were four distinct editions of the fourth edition of The Principles and Practice of Medicine: D. Appleton & Co., New York; Henry Kimpton, London; the pirated edition of Young J. Pentland, Edinburgh & London; and the partial edition of George N. Morang & Co., Ltd., Toronto.

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OSLER LIBRARY STUDENT FELLOW WINS PRESTIGIOUS ESSAY COMPETITION

David Fisman, a member of the Class of 1994 at the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Medicine, and our Osler Library Student Fellow in 1992, has won first prize in the 1993 Alpha Omega Alpha Student Essay Competition. His prize essay “Pisse-prophets and Puritans: Thomas Brian, Uroscopy and Seventeenth-Century English Medicine”, was based on research carried out during his student fellowship, under the direction of Dr. Don Bates. It has recently been published in The Pharos 1993 533, 6-11.

Fisman’s essay focuses on a pamphlet entitled The Pisse-Prophet, or Certain Pisse-Pot Lectures, by Thomas Brian, a physician from Colchester in Essex. The pamphlet was first published in 1637, but was frequently reprinted and translated thereafter. Its target is contemporary fraudulent medical practice, particularly the dishonest use of uroscopy. During this period, uroscopy was frequently conducted in the patient’s absence. A flask of urine would be brought to the patient by a servant, even resorting to plying the messenger with liquor! Brian’s essay exposed their cunning practices, and criticized their lack of proper medical education.

Mr Fisman’s essay touches on many other important aspects of Brian’s argument, especially its echoes of contemporary Puritanical ideas about the physician’s obligation – or rather lack thereof – to serve the poor. Newsletter readers will be particularly intrigued, however, by Mr. Fisman’s transcription of Osler’s manuscript notes in his own copy of Pisse-prophet, Bibl. Osl. 2125. Osler was evidently fascinated by the persistence of popular attachment to uroscopy for he records:

Jan 9 1917
I was consulted today by a man from York – chronic indigestion – who spoke of an attack a few years ago of which he had been cured by a water doctor. I thought at first he meant some hydrotherapeutist, but he said he had sent him samples of the urine, which he inspected, (& the man made the motion of holding up a glass). He took him one sample and saw the inspection made. He gave him some various herbs & cured him.

Also included in Bibl. Osl. 2125 is a clipping from the Journal of the American Medical Association for January 7, 1911, telling of how a “Modern Pisse-Prophet”, a patent medicine company in Michigan which “diagnosed” urine by mail after the specious manner the fashion of Brian’s fraudulent physicians, had been unmasked.

We extend our congratulations to David Fisman on his winning of this prestigious award, and on a very fine piece of medical history writing. The Library is proud to have had him as our visiting Student Fellow, and to have contributed to his achievement.
LEAVES FROM THE PHYSSIC GARDEN: HISTORIC HERBALS FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY ON DISPLAY

A new exhibition of rare and historic works from the Osler Library, the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the Library of Medicine, and the Blacker-Wood Library of Biology has been mounted in the lobby of McLennan/Redpath Library, the main social sciences and humanities library of McGill University. The exhibit features "herbals", that is, catalogues of plants considered useful for their medical properties.

Plants have been the basis of pharmacy since prehistoric times, and still constitute an important element in many modern drugs. In the ancient Mediterranean world, knowledge about plant pharmacy was craft knowledge, acquired in the field through apprenticeship training. Pharmacy was also a lucrative business, and oral transmission of expertise was a means for preserving a valuable monopoly. The earliest books about medicinal plants were compiled by physicians or philosopher-scientists of the Hellenistic period who wanted to systematize and above all demystify pharmacy. The "herbal", or catalogue of medicinal plants, took shape between the 2nd century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., but from the beginning there was an important debate about the form that such a book should take. Which was the more reliable vehicle for botanical information: a picture or a text? Our 20th century instincts would respond unhesitatingly: a picture. This was also the opinion of one prominent ancient medical botanist, Kratoeus, physician to King Mithridates of Pontus, who produced a famous illustrated herbal around 120 B.C. But in a world where every copy of a book had to be made by hand, illustrations invariably degenerated in quality as they were copied from manuscript to manuscript. Illustrated books were also luxury items that the average physician and student could not afford. For these reasons, Dioskurides' (ca. 60 A.D.) designed a purely textual catalogue. Dioskurides' herbal was acknowledged as the most authoritative and comprehensive work on materia medica produced in classical antiquity, but Kratoeus' illustrations continued to exert a strong attraction. In late Antiquity, the two forms fused together to produce the definitive herbal: an illustrated catalogue of medicinal plants, practical rather than scientific in focus, and oriented towards identification, preparation and administration.

The first part of this four-part exhibit is devoted to the Dioskurides tradition. Facsimiles of late antique manuscripts show how Dioskurides' text was reorganized and integrated with illustration material. The basic formula for the herbal was elaborated at this time. Each entry comprised the name or names of the plant; description of its form and habitat; indications of the parts useful for pharmacy when they should be harvested and how prepared; and finally the pharmacological qualities of the plant. These qualities were later elaborated under the influence of Galen (2nd c. A.D.) into a doctrine of "complexions". Galen classified plants according to paired qualities of hot/cold and dry/moist, and evaluated their intensity on a scale of one through four. Hence a plant would be described as "hot in the first degree" (i.e. not very hot), but dry in the third degree (very dry). It would then be administered for drying up excessive moisture (i.e. a head cold), but would be dangerous in cases of fever. Medieval and Arabic herbals followed this Dioskuridan-Galenic model, while commentaries on and translations of Dioskurides formed the backbone of pharmacological erudition.

With the invention of printing in the middle of the 15th century, the old problem of accurately reproducing illustrations was solved. A second case of the exhibit traces the burgeoning of the herbal in the Renaissance. While Dioskurides is still the nucleus of the herbal, new information, a new critical spirit, and above all a new tension between the quest for scientific knowledge and the traditional practical orientation of the herbal began to transform this ancient genre.

Herbal medicine was of interest not only to the professional practitioner, but also to the medical consumer. Indeed, the diffusion of information about "simples" (i.e. single plant remedies, as distinct from compound medicines) was viewed as a public good, in that it promoted healthy living habits, and enabled those of modest means, who could not afford a physician's care, to manage their own illnesses. Case 3 is devoted to the domestic herb from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Facsimiles of medieval handbooks of hygiene, Elizabethan encyclopaedias of herbaria, numerous editions of Culpepper's herbal, and the persistence of the tradition into the Victorian period bear witness to a vigorous and steady market for popular books on plant remedies - one which is still expanding today.

The explosion of herbal literature in the Renaissance coincided with the arrival of the first Europeans in the New World. Early explorers were at once baffled and excited by the plants they found there - plants unknown to Dioskurides, but of undoubted and sometimes extraordinary medicinal properties. The New World herbals in Case 4 show European writers vacillating between a traditional Dioskuridan-Galenic model for cataloguing and evaluating plants, and the astonishing novelty of the plants themselves. Identifying plants and knowing their "qualities", knowledge which our prehistoric ancestors valued, is still the theme of some Quebec herbals of the 20th century.

The exhibition runs until mid-April, when it will be re-mounted, in abbreviated form, in the exhibition cases of the Osler Library itself.

The Board of Associated Medical Services/ Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine in Toronto has recently presented the Osler Library with a splendid and very practical gift: a $25,000 endowment to support conservation of Osler Library books. These funds will be invested, and the income used, in part to augment the endowment, and in part to pay for ongoing restoration and conservation projects. Such a "dedicated" fund has been at the top of the Library's wish-list for a long time. Indeed, the Adopt-a-Book campaign was in part designed to stimulate interest in this crucial, but often neglected and unglamorous side of its work. Together with a similar endowment set up by an anonymous friend of the Library two years ago, these monies will enable systematic planning of the repair, refurbishing, rebinding and restoring of fragile volumes. Our thanks go out to the Board of AMS/Hannah Institute and to the Board of Associated Medical Services/Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine in Toronto for their generosity and for their confidence in the work of the Osler Library.

EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE NEWSLETTER: Faith Wallis, Osler Librarian and Editor; Edward H. Bensley Honorary Osler Librarian and Consulting Editor; Wayne LeBel, Assistant History of Medicine Librarian and Assistant Editor; Lily Szczepiel, Editorial Assistant.
The Library gratefully acknowledges the support it has received from Friends, both old and new, who have responded to the appeal for funds for the 1993-94 academic year. To date 273 Friends have given a total of approximately $16,956. Included in the total is a special donation of $5000 (U.S.) received for the Osler Library and for the use of the History of Medicine Librarian. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However welcome contributions have also come from Australia, Chile, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the West Indies.

The names of Friends whose contributions are recorded after January 31, 1994 will be listed in the June issue of the Newsletter.

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