



THE OSLER • LIBRARY • NEWSLETTER •

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Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal (Québec) Canada

In This Issue

Here, after an unavoidable delay, is number 116 of the *Osler Library Newsletter*. Our lead article is an analysis of one of the Library's medieval manuscripts, *De anima in arte alchemiae* ("On the soul in the art of alchemy"), Bibliotheca Osleriana 480, by Anna Dysert, a PhD candidate in the History Department at McGill. Working under Dr. Faith Wallis, Anna specializes in manuscript studies and the production and transmission of medical and scientific texts.

Amongst other stories, Dr. William Feindel reports on the new Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History made possible by a very generous donation by Dr. Granville Nickerson, MDCM '45. Dr. Richard Fraser discusses the Osler Fellows' Library, a new initiative to create a collection of meaningful books for undergraduate medical students. These books are selected by the Osler Fellows, who act as mentors to the students and are meant to sensitize them to the non-technical aspects of medicine.

Anna N. Dhody and Annie Brogan from the College of Physicians of Philadelphia describe a wonderful exhibition held at the college that recreated the dissecting room in which Osler worked in Philadelphia. We also report on some recent donations and the exciting launch of our latest publication, *Sir William Osler: The Man and His Books*, and our latest digital project, *The Osler Library Prints Collection*.

Finally, we must note a correction to our last newsletter. In the article "Dr. John Lancelot Todd, 1876-1949," Joseph Everett Dutton's name was mistakenly given as John Everett Dutton. Thanks to L. Barth Reller, MD, Professor of Pathology and Medicine at the Duke University School of Medicine, for pointing out the error.

A Physical Artifact of a Lively Scientific Culture of the Late Middle Ages

by Anna Dysert

Among the treasures of the Osler Library is a copy of *De anima in arte alchemiae* ("On the soul in the art of alchemy"), a treatise falsely attributed to Ibn Sina, known to the west as Avicenna. A 10th century Persian physician and philosopher, Avicenna became famous in medieval Europe during the 13th century through the Latin translations of his medical works, including the *Canon of Medicine*. Scholars believe that the text of *De anima* was translated into Latin in Spain from a lost Arabic original in the year 1226 or 1235.¹ The Osler Library's manuscript copy, Bibliotheca Osleriana (hereafter BO) 480, appears to date from the late 13th or early 14th century and was produced in southern Europe. While the text is found in various copies, the uniqueness and "customizability" of the medieval manuscript medium provides many hints as to who might have been interested in such a volume and why. It gives us a physical illustration of some of the ways in which alchemy had penetrated medieval thought and society.

Popularly imagined to be the quest to turn base metals into gold, medieval alchemy actually had a much wider range of interests and objectives. Alchemists' goals ranged from the discovery of the philosopher's stone to creation of a *panacea*, a universal drug to cure all illness. The refining operation necessary was also imagined to correspond to a process of spiritual purification, hence alchemy's esoteric and mystical connections, which become even more prominent towards the beginning of the early modern period. The alchemy found in *De anima in arte alchemiae* is based on refining the four principal elements of nature, reducing them to their essential properties in order, the author writes, to "improv[e] the nature of things."²

This idea of the improvement of nature would have appealed to the pharmacological interests of medieval doctors as well as surgeons. Michael McVaugh argues that during the 13th century, remedies derived from alchemical materials and procedures were a part of the surgeon's medical kit, in the form of treatments such as "sublimated arsenic," used for essentially cauterizing wounds chemically.³ Laboratory techniques described in alchemical operations also would have made these texts useful to practicing physicians. Taddeo Alderotti, who taught medicine and logic at Bologna during the second half of the 13th century and was part of the movement to introduce new Latin translations of Galen and Avicenna into the university medical canon, is also credited with pioneering new techniques of alcohol distillation, a skill traditionally associated with alchemical operations.⁴ While alchemy during the early modern period began to diversify and included craft skills such as metallurgy, medieval alchemy still had a philosophical flair. *De anima in arte alchemiae*, like most medical texts of its day, divides neatly into a theoretical portion, or *theorica*, and a practical portion, or *practica*. It, like medicine, represents a field of study that had both a strong philosophical framework that provided a guide to the functioning of the natural world (and the body within it, in the case of medicine) and a set of practically-oriented outcomes (the transmutation of metals and the creation of elixirs, in alchemy, and the healing of the sick, in medicine).

Although alchemy was not on medieval university course syllabi, it was related to the study of medicine and would certainly have had a similar readership, that is, educated, likely urban,

university scholars, gentleman scholars, and clergy. Its size and design point to an existence as a working manuscript. BO 480 is a small codex that uses a medium-grade parchment. It contains 236 leaves, written in less formal, though tidy Gothic script. The level of “neatness” of the hand is what is known as *libraria*, meaning it is not a particularly formal execution, but might have been produced by a university scribe copying on commission or even by the original reader/owner himself. Three different scribal hands are found in the manuscripts, all datable to the late 13th-early 14th century (Figure 1). The binding appears to be of Italian origin and dates from the 15th century. The manuscript is bound in dark brown leather with blind-tooled designs on the front and bottom cover and

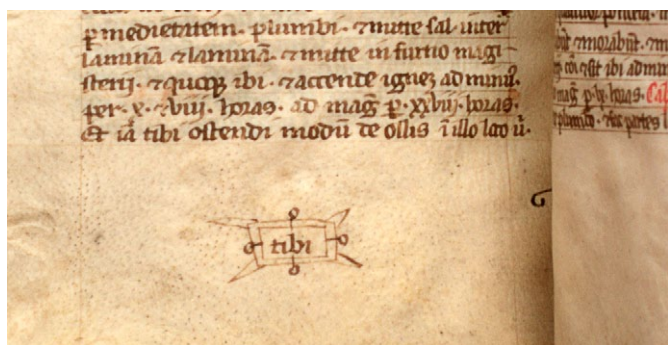


Figure 1: An example of a catchword. Catchwords were designed as aids for binding, so that booklets of leaves could be bound together in the right order. They are found starting in the 13th century.



Figure 2: Medieval manuscripts were bound in leather stretched over heavy wooden boards. Clasps were necessary to hold the boards closed and resist the parchment's natural tendency to expand.

two original brass clasps (Figure 2). The manuscript is sewn with three raised bands along the spine, also decorated in a blind-tooled hatched pattern. The pastedowns—those pages that are affixed to the inside of the binding—are contemporaneous with the binding and are covered with inscriptions and marginal notes, giving some hint, as we shall see, to the medieval career of the manuscript.

The text is in dialogue form and is composed of a prologue and ten *dictiones*, or sections. Each *dictio* is further divided into a number of *capitula*, or chapters. Each *dictio* is preceded by a numbered list of *capitula*. This example of division into numbered chapters and the compiling of “tables of content” demonstrates a new trend in book layout that began to be incorporated into scholarly works of theology, law, and medicine during the 12th century. *Mise-en-page* became more complicated and more standardized to include innovations such as running headers, tables of contents, and author symbols (as a system of citation). The idea, suggest scholars such as M. B. Parkes, was to allow a new sort of reading for a new audience of readers; whereas before, books like the Bible were read continuously, either in a private meditative fashion or aloud in a public setting, the scholarly texts being developed in the 12th century and absorbed into university curricula required students and masters to be able to cross-reference and to peruse texts for particular passages.⁵

The prologue to *De anima* introduces the dialogue, taking the perspective of an older *magister*, or master, instructing a younger acolyte, Abusalem: “Explanabo tibi fili mi” [“I will explain to you, my son.”]. The dialogue form is a genre convention of scientific and philosophical writing that can easily be traced back to antiquity. It survives in both Latin and Arabic literary tradition during the Middle Ages and appeals appropriately to a very medieval idea of scientific authority. Natural philosophy, like all forms of knowledge, derived legitimacy from antiquity; it relied on earlier works from accepted *auctoritates*, or authorities, such as Aristotle, and thus the scientific enterprise was one of revealing or recovering ancient knowledge. The *Porta elementorum* introduces the philosophical background of alchemy and explains the basic substances involved: “know, my son, that there are four elements, and there are four qualities and properties. The elements are fire, air, water, and earth, and the qualities are hot, cold, dry, and wet.”⁶ The four elements are the basis of medieval natural philosophy, adopted from the ancient Greeks. These principles of alchemy were inextricably connected with ideas about the composition of the natural world and the human body—ideas that also formed the basis of medieval “science” of medicine. Understanding the philosophy, Pseudo-Avicenna indicates, is necessary in order to decrypt the rest of the text.⁷ The first *dictio* asks the question whether alchemy exists. The author sets out to prove that alchemy is a *scientia*, in the medieval Aristotelian sense, and that its promises are possible. He points to the lineage of alchemy, listing its illustrious practitioners, as one proof of its existence. He divides the practitioners into roughly three groups: biblical figures, such as Adam and Noah; figures from antiquity, including Aristotle and Alexander the Great as well as the more recent Islamic natural philosophers, such as Geber and al-Razi; and a final group (thought to be a liberty taken by the Christian

translator), that includes John the Evangelist, two cardinals and a pope. The text's false attribution to Avicenna works in a similar way to legitimize and publicize the text.

The rest of the *theorica* answers the “what,” “why,” and “how” of alchemy. One 14th century medieval reader wrote in a marginal note in the form of a schema illustrating the headings of the *theorica* portion (Figure 3). This marginal note is one of the many hints we have of the readers behind the text. Who are our alchemists,

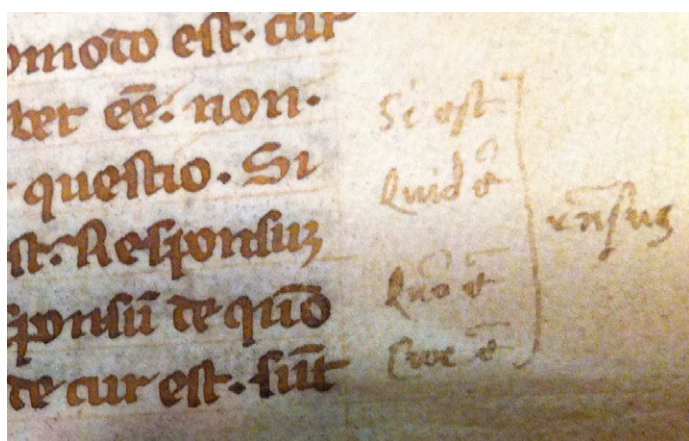


Figure 3: A reader gives himself a visual guide in the margin.(f.20r)

whose traces we find in BO 480? What kind of questions can we answer through the physical and textual evidence they have left us? Who could and would want to read or use such a book during the medieval period? An interesting question arises in the study of scientific and medical literature of the Middle Ages: is there evidence that such manuscripts are actually used by practitioners? One scholar, Linne Mooney, asks what in fact it means to “use” a scientific book during the medieval period, particularly for texts that are coming from Arabic sources and are heavily theoretical, rather than practically-oriented.⁸ Physical details from the manuscript, its *mise-en-page*, inscriptions and other marginalia provide us with many clues about its use. The design of the book and the way the text is laid out seems to indicate that this book was a working copy that probably was commissioned by a *magister*, student, or clerk connected with learned circles in a medieval university city. The parchment and writing are both of a neat but middling quality, signaling that the volume was not intended as merely a bookshelf adornment. The first leaf of the manuscript has sustained some damage and wear, perhaps indicating that it circulated or was used for a time without or with only minimal binding. The presence of reader aids such as the table of contents and running headers present in the manuscript show its indebtedness to scholastic book design, indicating that the text was copied perhaps by a professional copyist or an owner attached to the milieu of university book production. An early reader has gone even further in increasing the manuscript's usability by adding page numbers next to the titles of chapters when they are first given (Figure 4). In this way, the reader is indicating a desire to be able to use the text something like a reference book, flipping back and forth, visiting certain

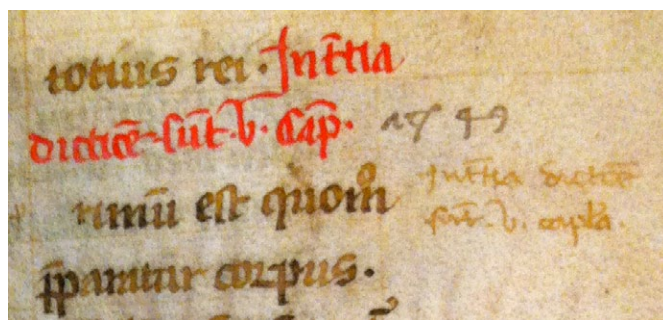


Figure 4: The rubric here announces, “in the third *dictio*, there are five *capitula*.” The words in pale brown ink slightly underneath the rubric in the margin serve as “cue” words, indicating what should be written in red ink (adding the rubrics is the second step after copying the rest of the text). Next to the rubric in the margin is written “ref. 49,” indicating the page number where the *dictio* begins. (f. vi r)

chapters then others. There are marginal notes written in brown ink in a 14th century cursive hand throughout the manuscript that seem to deal predominantly with two categories of concerns: first, this particular reader is interested in noting in the margin when information from a particular antique authority has been included; second is the reproduction of keywords and terms in the margin next to where they appear in the text, perhaps another method of facilitating cross-reference (Figure 5).

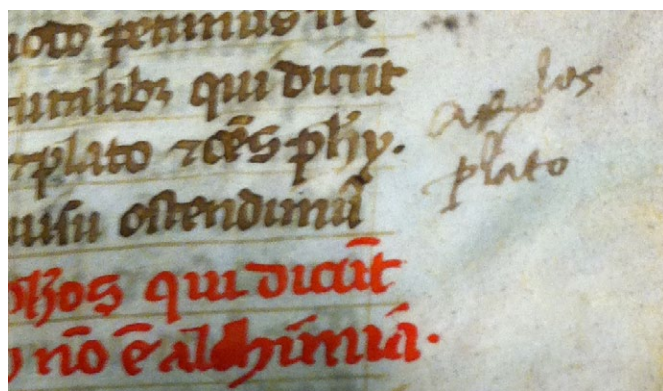


Figure 5: A reader's academic interests indicated in his “highlighting” of Aristotle and Plato.(f. 18r)

Another group of marginal and paratextual inscriptions indicate an entirely different set of concerns a late medieval writer might have had in mind. While our 14th century reader is interested in the academic trappings of the alchemical text, a 15th century reader appears to be more interested in the promise of its esoteric secrets. In an inscription on the last page of text, a reader claims, “in this old book, Polydorus, the count of Cabalian, discovered the apparently real philosopher's stone, which is no doubt why he made miracles during his lifetime.”⁹ While Polydorus has proven impossible to trace, his contribution to the manuscript illustrates the intellectual tension under which alchemy operated: its ancient provenance and theoretical aspects coincided nicely with the interests of academic

physicians, while its esotericism appealed to those seeking the magical or mystical, also exemplified by the reader/owner, perhaps a Christian cabalist, who inscribed the tetragrammaton onto one corner of a flyleaf.

The text of *De anima in arte alchemiae* illuminates in some small way the intellectual movement taking place in the Middle Ages, as Islamic natural philosophy took root and became the systematic framework for European science. But perhaps even more intriguingly, the text's physical manuscript vehicle itself, with all of its telling individuality, can be studied to draw conclusions about a text's usage, readership, circulation, and larger cultural significance. Mining the manuscript book, in a so-called "archeology of the book," can be an interpretive tool to give us a glimpse of the rich culture that surrounded it.

¹ The possible dates of the text's translation come from colophons found in other manuscript copies of the text.

² Sebastien Moureau, "Some Considerations Concerning the Alchemy of the *De anima in arte alchemiae* of Pseudo-Avicenna," *Ambix* 56, 1 (March 2009): 50.

³ Michael R. McVaugh, "Alchemy in the *Chirurgia* of Teodorico Borgognoni," in *Alchimia e Medicina nel Medioevo*, ed. Chiara Crisciani and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Florence, 2003), 60.

⁴ For more information about Taddeo Alderotti and his role in the history of medicine, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti and his Pupils* (Princeton, 1981). For an introduction to Alderotti and his development of the Bologna medical curriculum, see Faith Wallis, ed., *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* (Toronto, 2010), 197-204. Alderotti seems to be sometimes credited with inventing the distillation of alcohol, sometimes merely noted for his enthusiasm for the invention; see Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti*, 301.

⁵ M.B. Parkes, "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, eds. J. J. T. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), 115-144.

⁶ *Scias fili mi, quod elementa sunt quattuor, et modi et proprietates sunt quattuor, et elementa sunt ignis, aer, aqua, terra, et modi sunt calor, frigiditas, et siccitas et humiditas.*

⁷ *Si tu intelliges reversionem elementorum unius in alterum, intelliges totum magisterium, et intelliges illud cum auxilio Dei.*

⁸ Linne R. Mooney, "Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts," in *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A.G. Rigg*, ed. Richard Firth Green and Linne R. Mooney (Toronto, 2004), 184-202.

⁹ *In hoc antiquo libro polydorus comes Cabalianus invenit lapidem philosophorum verisimilem quare sine dubio faciebat mirabilia in vita sua.*



The Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship In Neuro History

by Dr. William Feindel

In July 2011 Granville Nickerson, MDCM '45, endowed the Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History in honour and memory of his wife who was regarded with admiration and great affection for her charming artistic talents by Dr. Nickerson's classmates. Mary Louise graduated as a scholarship student in Honours English from McMaster University where she began a musical career leading to her acceptance as an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto in solo voice performance. She sang in the Mendelssohn Choir in Toronto and the Elgar Choir in Montreal. She and Granville were active promoters and participants with the theatrical arts in the several locations where they lived. An active member of the United Church of Canada, she was noted as a skilful, knowledgeable, and effective lay preacher. Together they went to the Peoples' Republic of China on four occasions with the Evangelical Medical Aid Society of Canada, beginning in 1988.



Mary Louise Nickerson

Granville Nickerson, after completing graduate studies in Pathology at Harvard, became a highly regarded Montreal paediatrician, eventually becoming Chief of the Paediatric Service at the Royal Victoria Hospital, a position he continued when the children's ward was absorbed into the Montreal Children's Hospital. He was a member of the medical team at the Alexandra Hospital for Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Montreal that in 1951 pioneered the successful treatment of meningitis by PPD and streptomycin with nine of eleven patients surviving, an unprecedented result and among the first to be reported in North America.

To celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Class of Medicine of 1945, Granville Nickerson donated to the Osler Library a rare and valuable copy of an 18th century monograph on embryological studies by Samuel Thomas von Soemmerring, entitled *Icones embryonum humanorum*.

The Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History, now established, will allow scholars to carry out research utilizing the neuro history archival and artefact collections, the centrepiece of which is the Wilder Penfield Archive in the Osler Library, and which includes other unique resources in the history of neurosciences available at the Montreal Neurological Institute and the McGill University Archives.



Dr Nickerson with his daughters Janet Reid (left) and Marnie Marler (right) at the Osler Library's Board of Curators Meeting last November where a plaque commemorating the Fellowship was unveiled.

We are happy to announce the first two fellowship winners: Ms. Rachel Elder and Dr. Frank Stanisch. They are very strong researchers at different stages in their careers. Rachel Elder is a PhD candidate in the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. With the support of the Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History, Rachel will be conducting research on the neurosurgical approaches to epilepsy founded by Dr. Wilder Penfield at the Montreal Neurological

Institute in the 1930s and 1940s. Primarily, she is interested in patient experiences of awake brain surgery and the role Penfield's surgical epilepsy patients had in generating knowledge about the human brain. This project is a central component of her larger dissertation, preliminarily titled, "Secrecy and Safety: A Cultural History of Seizures in America," which explores social and experiential dimensions of epilepsy in mid-20th-century America. Rachel holds a BA in History and English Literature from the University of Guelph and an MA in the Social History of Medicine from the University of Warwick in England.

Dr. Frank W. Stahnisch is a historian of medicine and neuroscience at the University of Calgary, where he holds the endowed Alberta Medical Foundation/Hannah Professorship in the History of Medicine and Health Care. He is jointly appointed in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, and the Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, and is a member of the Calgary Hotchkiss Brain Institute and the Institute for Public Health. Dr. Stahnisch is currently on research leave from the U. of C. and works as a visiting professor in the Office of the History of Science and Technology at the University of California at Berkeley. His research interests in the history and philosophy of the biomedical sciences cover: the history of neuroscience, the emergence of modern physiology and experimental medicine, the history of psychiatry, as well as the development of modern medical visualization practices. As a recipient of the Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro-History, Dr. Stahnisch intends to finalize a monographic manuscript entitled *The Making of a New Research Field: On the Pursuit of Interdisciplinarity in the German Neuromorphological Sciences, 1910-1945*, which aims at reconstructing the important merging tendencies that, since the 1910s, have brought formerly separated disciplines (anatomy, physiology, neurology, psychiatry, etc.) much closer together. Research in the neurosciences *avant la lettre* became strongly reorganized in interdisciplinary research groups and found its substrate in new centers for neuroscientific research, especially in the German-speaking countries. For his research, he will be using the Penfield Archive materials, secondary literature from the Osler Library and German and international journals from the Redpath collection in the McGill University Library.

It is quite appropriate that Granville Nickerson's endowment of the Mary Louise Nickerson Fellowship in Neuro History strengthens the opportunity for scholarly study during the current McGill Campaign – *History in the Making*. We look forward with much satisfaction to receiving applications for the Fellowship, details of which are available on the Osler Library website at <http://www.mcgill.ca/library/library-using/branches/osler-library/nickerson>.



The Osler Fellows' Library

by Dr. Richard Fraser

The Osler Fellows' Library is an adjunct to the Physician Apprenticeship component of the McGill medical school curriculum, which was instituted in 2005 to assist students in their transition from laymen to physicians. This is achieved in part by providing a setting for reflection on and discussion of a variety of issues -- ethical, social, spiritual, etc -- which may not be considered in depth in a traditional ("disease oriented") curriculum. This goal is facilitated by Faculty mentors (Osler Fellows) who meet on a regular basis with small groups of students. All Fellows have been invited to suggest titles to be included in the Library, in order to provide a source of material for personal reading or for discussion in the Fellow/student group meetings. The Library is also meant to serve as a "snapshot" of what the Fellows as a group have found meaningful or helpful in their own medical career.

The Osler Fellows' Library is housed in the Osler Library. As readers of this newsletter undoubtedly know, the latter has its basis in the bequest of about 8,000 books collected by William Osler. Many books related to the historical, philosophical and humanistic aspects of medicine have been added to the Library over the years. Although some of the Fellows' selections have already been acquired, many are new titles which add to the overall collection. As might be expected, the Fellows' suggestions are varied in nature, and include well known novels, such as Cronin's *The Citadel*; biographies (both personal, Penfield's *The Torch*, and general, Nuland's *Doctors: the Biography of Medicine*); graphic novels (Fies' *Mom's Cancer*); short stories related to medical practice (Watts' *The Orange Wire Problem*); and philosophical treatises (Cassell's *The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine*). Each book has a frontispiece indicating the name of the "donating" Fellow and a short description of the reasons for his/her choice.

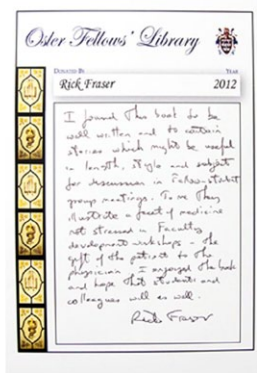
Approximately 30 books have been selected to date. It is anticipated that with increased recognition and use that this number will grow over the years. In his 2006 book, *The Library at Night* (which is itself included in the Library), Alberto Manguel writes "It is ... not unreasonable to suppose that ... the identity of a society, or a national identity, can be mirrored by a library, by an assembly of titles that, practically and symbolically, serves as our collective definition."¹ Although Manguel was referring to relatively large groups (such as countries), the principle applies as well to smaller groups, perhaps even one as select as the group of Osler Fellows.

¹ Manguel, Alberto. *The Library at Night*. (Toronto: Alfred Knopf, 2006), p 294.

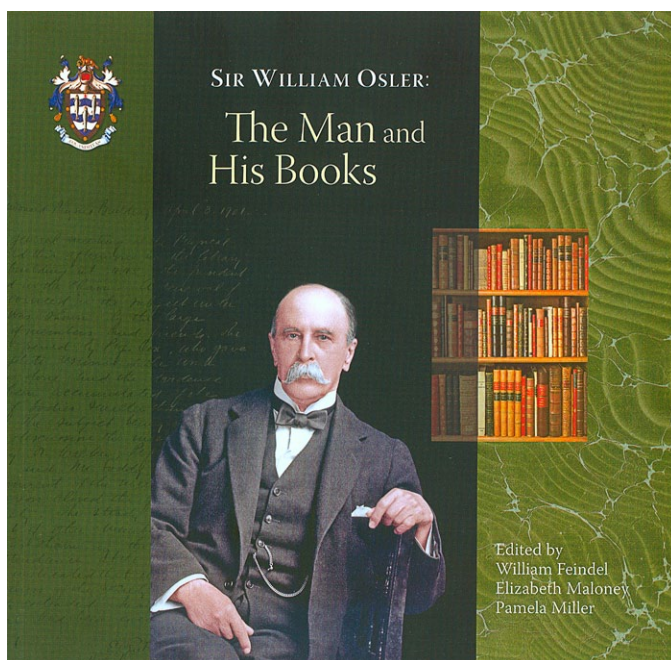
Sir William Osler: The Man and His Books

The Osler Library is pleased to announce the publication of its latest work, *Sir William Osler: The Man and His Books*. Edited by Dr. William Feindel, Mrs. Elizabeth Maloney and Mrs. Pamela Miller, this collection of essays is based upon presentations given at a symposium held in September 1999 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Osler's birth and the 70th anniversary of the opening of the Osler Library.

The book highlights several aspects of Sir William's bibliophilia and significant elements of the Osler Library's current collection.



Example of book selected with Fellow's frontispiece



The opening essay by Dr. William Feindel and Wayne LeBel, “Sir William’s ‘Astral Self’: Origins of the Osler Niche in the Osler Library,” explains the fascinating history of the focal point and most photographed section of the Library, where Sir William and Lady Osler’s ashes rest flanked by his favourite author. This is followed by “Osler and Francis: Creating the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*”, which analyzes Osler’s collecting habits and the cataloguing of his library. Subsequent essays discuss Arabic and Persian manuscripts, the extensive collection of 19th century French medical theses, and the variety of letters, manuscripts, archives, visual material and artefacts held in the Osler Library. The final entry outlines the role that Sir William Osler played, along with McGill medical librarian Margaret Ridley Charlton and George Milbry Gould, in creating the Medical Library Association in 1898.

Information about ordering the book is available by contacting the Library or by going to the Osler Library Shop page on the Osler Library website <http://www.mcgill.ca/library/library-using/branches/osler-library/shop/>.



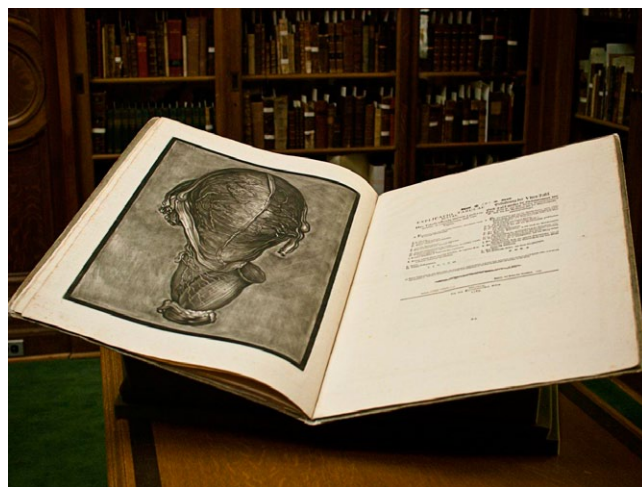
The Osler Niche in the Osler Library. Photograph by Karen Coshof



Recent Donations to the Osler Library

Donations of rare books and other material are an important part of building a rare book collection. They can add significant items to the library or help to build up the overall picture of the historical literature through accruals. The origin of the Osler Library lies, of course, with the profoundly generous donation of Sir William’s collection, and the Osler Library continues to benefit from the generosity of its friends. Over the past few months we have received several items for our collection, as well as the funds to restore two other works.

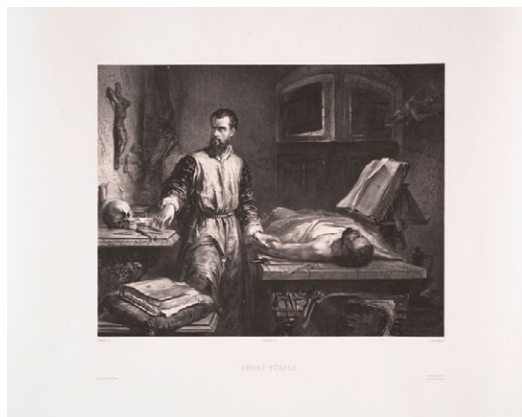
One particularly important work was purchased through the generosity of Dr. Milton Leong, BSc.’66, MDCM’70, DSc’00, a McGill medical alumnus. He provided the substantial sum required to purchase an extremely rare obstetrical atlas by Charles Nicholas Jenty, entitled *Demonstratio uteri praegnantis mulieris cum foetu ad partum maturi in tabulis sex... ad exemplar Londinense translata D. Casimiro Christophoro Schmidel, in aes incisa et recusa a Iohanne Michaelae Seligmanno/ Abbildung der Gebähr-Mutter aus einer schwangern Frau*. This was published in Nuremberg in 1761. This large, 18th-century anatomical atlas is especially renowned for its illustrations, drawn by Jan van Rymsdyk, a Dutch artist working in England. The plates were made with a process rarely used for medical illustrations, mezzotint. The results are rich images that look almost three dimensional. Van Rymsdyk is also known for his work on the obstetrical atlases of William Hunter and William Smellie, which are amongst the most important medical illustrations in history. The Osler Library already held the Smellie and Hunter atlases (Osler owned the Hunter), but not the book by Jenty. In fact, according to WorldCat no other Canadian library has this work, and only six libraries in the US own a copy. It very rarely comes on the market, and it is a great addition to our first-rate collection of anatomical atlases. Little is known about the author, but coincidentally he is the subject of a graduate student’s research, so the timing is perfect. Dr. Leong made the donation



Jenty’s *Demonstratio uteri praegnantis mulieris cum foetu ad partum maturi in tabulis sex*

in the name of Dr. Robert Arthur Hugh Kinch, former Professor Emeritus of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the McGill University Health Center, who passed away last summer.

Dr. W. Bruce Fye, a cardiologist and noted medical historian at the Mayo Clinic, donated a large lithographic portrait of Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), the author of the renowned and artistically stunning 1543 anatomical atlas *De humani corporis fabrica*. The print is a copy of an 1848 work by the Belgian painter Edouard Jean Conrad Hamman (1819-1888). The lithograph, engraved by Adolphe Mouilleron (1820-1881), is considered the first and best reproduction of the painting. In the image Vesalius, the great anatomist, is shown facing a crucifix, which references the tension between science and the church over dissection. The lithograph dates from c.1850 and measures 17 7/8 x 13 inches. It has been scanned and will be added to our online Osler Library Prints Collection <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/oslerprints/index.php>.



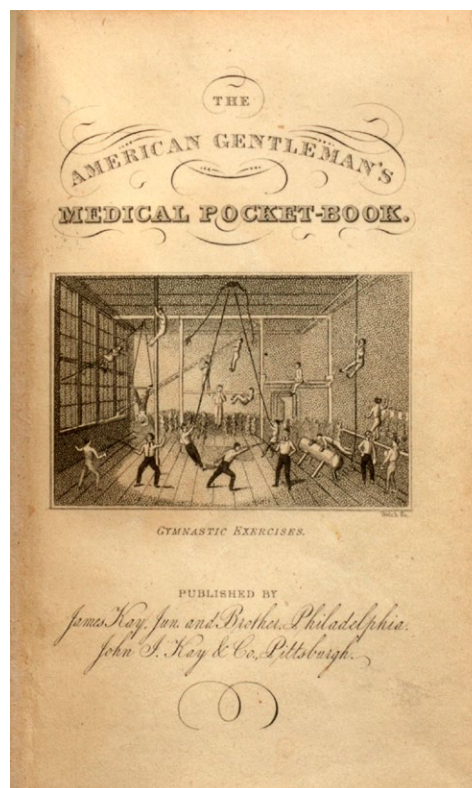
André Vésale, lithograph, ca.1850

The history of medicine covers a wide range of publications. One fascinating area is medical material written for the general public. These works served a variety of purposes, from selling medical nostrums peddled by quacks to helping those who did not have access or could not afford professional assistance. Recently, Mrs. Harris of Montreal donated an example of the latter, *The American Gentleman's Medical Pocket-Book and Health Advisor*, published in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia in 1833. It is a wonderful example of an early American self-help medical publication, which was the sort of book that was a necessity in a young, large country with too few health practitioners to ensure adequate personal medical attention. The anonymous author vividly describes the need for everyone to understand how to treat wounds and illnesses in the preface:

“I have known a considerable district in one of our western states, which contained but one doctor, and him I have met on his way to his patients by eight o'clock in the morning so drunk, as to render it necessary to lift him into his gig! Sometimes there is no physician of any kind to be obtained; or if there be, after waiting until the complaint has got to a height that baffles

all remedies, he arrives in a state similar to that described! What becomes of the sick, under such circumstances? It was on some such occasion that the necessity of a cheap, plain work, like the present, first suggested itself to my mind.” (pp. 3-4).

It is believed that this copy belonged to Dr. Andrew Fernando Holmes, one of the founders of McGill's Faculty of Medicine. The book's front and back covers were detached, so our book conservator Ms. Terry Rutherford created a new binding for it.



The American Gentleman's Medical Pocket-Book and Health Advisor

The Osler Library has also benefitted from two donations to repair specific books in the collection. The St. Andrew's Society of Montreal gave the Library the funds to restore a sketchbook of stunning handmade anatomical drawings executed by an unknown Edinburgh medical student in the early 19th century. The student created his own anatomical sketchbook, complete with descriptions, labels and a title page, which he called *Drawings of the Human Bones and Muscles after Albinus*. The name Albinus in the title refers to Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697-1770), who wrote the great 18th century anatomy book entitled *Tabulae sceleti et musculorum corporis humani* (translated as “Tables of the Skeleton and Muscles of the Human Body”). Studying in Edinburgh, this student would no doubt have been exposed to a very high level of anatomical teaching, as it was an important centre for this subject. The creator of the sketchbook most likely could never have afforded to purchase a richly illustrated anatomy book like Albinus’, but may

have had access to well-stocked libraries wherein he could have viewed the original. The sketchbook shows a very high appreciation and awareness of anatomical structures. Most striking, however, is the profound artistic ability of this student. He didn't slavishly copy the great master Albinus, but used his work as an inspiration for his own blending of art and anatomy. An early library note on the sketchbook states that it "displays the perseverance and grit of the impecunious Scottish Student in those days – to say nothing of an artistic talent, in this case of no mean order." The result is a very rare work of beauty by an unknown genius that demonstrates to an exceptional degree the effort which Scottish medical students made to learn their profession. The sketchbook itself was in good condition, but the binding had deteriorated and the covers were detached. The preservation work was carried out over the summer by Ms. Terry Rutherford and the sketchbook can now be used with ease. It is hoped that it will be featured in an upcoming exhibition.



Student sketchbook: *Drawings of the Human Bones and Muscles after Albinus*

A second major restoration project was undertaken thanks to the generosity of Frank Kruzich, P.Eng, a Montreal based, independent mining and minerals professional. Mr. Kruzich decided to fund the repair of one of our important anatomical atlases after attending the Osler Library's seminar "Medicine, Art and Visualization in the Nineteenth Century." Amongst the books displayed after the talks was John Lizars' *A System of Anatomical Plates of the Human Body: Accompanied with Descriptions and Physiological, Pathological, and Surgical Observations*, published in Edinburgh c.1830. This folio volume is well known for its vivid colour plates engraved by the author's brother. The condition of the book, however, made it very difficult to use or display. While on display the librarian's half-joking request for a potential donor to restore this work was kindly taken up by Mr. Kruzich. The book has now been rebound and is available for consultation.

The Osler Library is grateful for all the donations that it receives, including the generous financial gifts made during the last annual appeal. This generosity allows the Osler Library to carry out its

work of building its collection, restoring selected items, digitizing materials for online display, as well as undertaking numerous other activities each year. A fuller report on the Library's activities will appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.



John Lizars, *A System of Anatomical Plates of the Human Body*

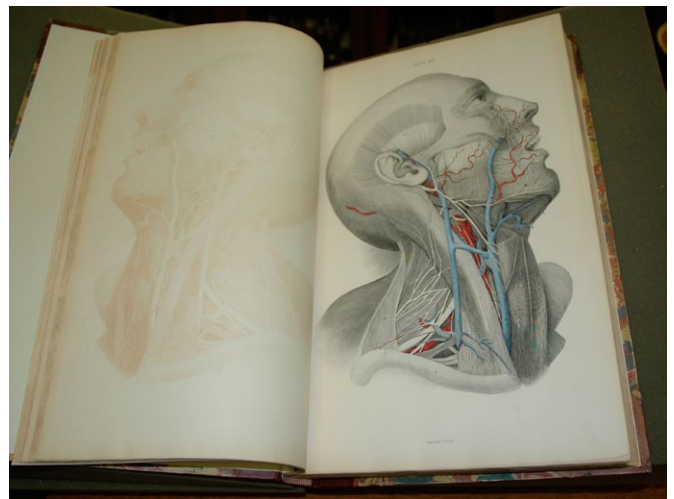


Plate XVII from John Lizars, *A System of Anatomical Plates of the Human Body*

The Green Room

by Anna N. Dhody and Annie Brogan

In July of 2010, the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch agreed to fund an exhibit for the Osler Society Meeting at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia on May 2nd, 2011. We decided to base the exhibit on the "Green Room," where Sir William Osler conducted over 160 autopsies while serving as Chair of Clinical Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and on the medical staff at Philadelphia General Hospital (also known as Blockley) (Image 1). The Green Room was on display in the second floor lobby of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia until early this year.

Osler's appointment to the University of Pennsylvania's Medical School was an historic and groundbreaking event. To say that Philadelphia was fraught with medical nepotism was



Image 1: William Osler at work in the Blockley Mortuary, Philadelphia General Hospital, 1886 or 1889 (William Osler Photo Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, CUS_044-001_P)



Image 2: Desk and autopsy table used to keep a post-mortem book by William Osler at Philadelphia General Hospital (image supplied by authors)



Image 3: William Osler conducting a demonstration in the “Green Room” at Philadelphia General Hospital, 1887 or 1889 (William Osler Photo Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, CUS_044-001C_P)

an understatement. Before Osler, there had been only one other faculty appointment given to a non-Pennsylvanian or non-alumnus in the university’s 120 year history. Philadelphia is the birthplace of American medicine. Pennsylvania Hospital, founded in 1751, was the nation’s first hospital. It was also home to the first medical library and surgical amphitheater. The Philadelphia General Hospital was itself the direct development of the Philadelphia Almshouse, founded in 1728. The rich traditions and medial heritage of Philadelphia fostered a breeding ground of physician families that still exist. That Osler was granted entrance into Philadelphia medical society speaks to his skills as a doctor and a teacher.

Osler presided over a portion of Philadelphia General Hospital known as the “Old Post House,” “Old Blockley” or the “Dead House.” Our exhibit showcases the same autopsy table that Dr. Osler used in the Green Room and the desk on which a post-mortem book was kept (Image 2). In addition, the famous photograph of Osler in the Green Room, surrounded by his students, was enlarged and printed on a vinyl mesh fabric and suspended behind the autopsy table (Image 3).

Two College Fellows and members of the American Osler Society curated an accompanying display. It features a small fraction of the books Osler gave to the Historical Medical Library of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, both during and after his time in the city. He continued to support the Library generously until his death in 1919.

Before Osler moved to Philadelphia, neurologist and prominent Fellow of the College, S. Weir Mitchell, was sent to unofficially investigate Osler’s social graces before his arrival. After their

meeting Mitchell was able to guarantee that Osler met the exacting standards of the fraternity of Philadelphia physicians. However, upon his arrival in October 1884, Osler proved that no vetting had been required. Already well-acquainted with a number of the leading lights of Philadelphia medicine, he quickly disarmed the remainder of the community with not only his surgical acumen but also his wit and charm. By January 1885, he was elected a Fellow of the College, and a year later he was elected to the Library Committee on which he served with Mitchell. He remained on the committee until he left Philadelphia for Baltimore.

Osler maintained both his affection and support for the Library even after his departure for Baltimore and eventually Oxford. He often sent a box of books to College Librarian Charles Perry Fisher, with a friendly note claiming that he already had a copy of a particular work he was sending along. In 1893, having placed a book order on the College’s behalf, he wrote to Fisher, “Your share... would be altogether too small to make it worthwhile letting you find out how much it would be.” Perhaps his most famous gift to the College, however, was \$25 and strong encouragement to pursue the purchase of the exquisitely illuminated 1478 first edition of Aulus Cornelius

Celsus *De medicina liber incipit*, which he discovered on sale for £80. In 1912, he wrote to Mitchell, "I'll give you \$25.00. Can't you bleed the other Fellows for the rest?" And bleed they did. Osler gave his final gift to the library toward the end of his life, bequeathing his 1348 illuminated copy of Bernard of Gordon's *Lilium Medicinae*.

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Early Canadiana Online

by David S. Crawford

In 1982 the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine, which was part of Associated Medical Services in Toronto, supported the production of a microfiche set of approximately 50 early Canadian medical journals that were published from 1826 to about 1910. This project was organised by Charles Roland, with the support of the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM). Roland, with Paul Potter, edited the invaluable *An Annotated Bibliography of Canadian Medical Periodicals, 1826-1975* from which the titles filmed were selected. Many of those filmed came from the Osler Library's collection.

Several years ago Canadiana.org, the successor to CHIM, started Early Canadiana Online (ECO), a project whose mission is "to support enduring access to Canada's digital documentary heritage for Canadians and the world."

The ECO Early Canadian Periodicals project, which covers periodicals in all fields, is being carried out in phases. Phase 2, which focused on journals published up to 1900, is drawing to a close. Phase 3 should be completed over the next couple of years and will bring the cut-off date to 1920.

As of April 2012 there are 68 journal titles in the Health and Medicine Collection within ECO, and it is estimated that when the project is completed it will contain about 80 titles. Though Roland only listed "medical" titles, the Health and Medicine Collection contains titles in other health fields, such as dentistry and nursing. The bulk of the content has been obtained by re-processing the CIHM microfiche, but the online version has filled-in many of the titles, issues and pages missing from the microfiche edition. The ready availability of online catalogues now makes it much easier to check library holdings. Efforts continue to "fill in the gaps", and it is to be hoped that sooner or later this excellent initiative will be extended past the currently planned end-date of 1920.

Roland and Potter's printed bibliography, now edited as an online-only publication by David Crawford, has been expanded to include all Canadian periodical titles on "health". The dates have been increased to 1826-1980 and it offers links to the digitised content on ECO and other providers.

Material in ECO is only available to subscribers but individuals can subscribe quite cheaply (\$100/year), and almost all Canadian universities are members. For the librarians among our readers it should be noted that the full MARC cataloguing information for the titles in the Health and Medicine (and other) collections are freely available for download from ECO. (See: <http://www.canadiana.ca/en/tools>)

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Crawford, David S. *Bibliography of Canadian Health Sciences Periodicals 1826-1980*. Available at: <http://internatlib.mcgill.ca/bibliography/contents.htm>

The Health and Medicine collection in ECO is available at: <http://canadiana.org/ECO/SearchResults?id=0da4db4cd0962263&query=Health+and+Medicine&range=collection&bool=exact&subset=all>

Canadiana.org can be contacted through their website at www.canadiana.org

William Osler: A Timeless Inspiration for Medical Students

If one is unfamiliar with the influence that Sir William Osler continues to play with medical students, the following incident should prove enlightening. Last autumn, the Library received a request for an image from a medical student named Laurier Comeault. The Library receives many requests for high quality digital copies of the visual material in its collections, such as from the William Osler Photo Collection (<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/osler/index.php>) in this case, but rarely from students studying medicine. The normal fee for digital images was waived and, out of curiosity, the student was asked to describe something about himself and his interest in Osler. He wrote back that he was a second-year student at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay whose chief professional aspiration is to come as close to the traditional definition of a generalist practitioner as possible. He would like to work in the Canadian far north as well as internationally with humanitarian organizations, especially Médecins Sans Frontières. After the digital photo was received, printed and framed, Laurier wrote that he had “finally received my portrait of Sir William Osler back from the framing studio and I am thoroughly delighted with the result. It now hangs in a place of prominence just above the desk from which I am writing you this message. It has already become something of a cherished personal heirloom of mine. It will forever serve as a symbol of that which I am striving to become as well as something that I can turn to for inspiration when I am lacking in motivation, focus or ‘Aequanimitas’.” One can respond by stating that one of the most inspiring aspects about our work at the Osler Library is being able to serve future practitioners like Laurier.



Laurier Comeault's office

Spoons, Nicknames and a Mystery by Gillian O'Reilly

“A mystery you might like” was the subject line in a message from my colleague, Linda Granfield, noted writer of non-fiction for kids. She wondered if I had an answer to the mystery reported in the last issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter* as to who Lily Osler was and why Lily received one of the spoons commemorating Ellen Osler's 100th birthday. Knowing my connection with the large Osler clan (my grandmother was a great-niece of William Osler and granddaughter of his ne'er-do-well brother Edward), she wondered if I had any ideas on the subject.

The first step was a quick message to my father, who reads each week to Peg (Margaret Osler) McIntyre. She is the 97-year-old granddaughter of Sir Edmund Osler and great-granddaughter of Ellen Osler.¹ Without explaining the details, I asked him to check on who Lily might be. Peg thought that Lily was the second wife of Britton Bath Osler, William's second oldest brother. It turns out that she was absolutely right, and when she and I discussed the matter later, she was able to fill in a few more details on the spoons.

Being an ever-cautious editor by trade however, I had to check this against the family tree and was puzzled to find that Britton's second wife was Elizabeth Ramsey, not Lily. In the meantime, my colleague Linda's flair for tireless research – and the wonders of internet genealogical resources – turned up a record of a Lily Osler travelling with some Ramseys on a New York-bound ship in 1906. Could Lily be a somewhat unusual nickname for Elizabeth?

Delving into a thoroughly enjoyable re-reading of *Lions in the Way*, Anne Wilkinson's memoir of the Osler family, I found a letter from Ellen written to Britton shortly before his death: “Truly I cannot be thankful enough to God that you have such a nurse and treasure in our dear Lily” and adds “Best love to dear Lily” in the postscript.

So Lily was indeed Elizabeth Ramsey. She married Britton Osler in 1897 and they had only a short time together before he died early in 1901, five years before Ellen's 100th birthday. She and Britton had no children, and according to the 1901 and 1911 census records, she seems to have returned to live with her father and sisters. Peg, whose memory is considerable, doesn't remember her at any family events.

Nicknames seem to have been more common in that era, so perhaps it is not surprising that Elizabeth Ramsey had a nickname like Lily. Furthermore, as Peg points out, among the Oslers “everyone had a nickname”; William was called “Benjamin” by his mother (because he was the youngest), his niece Annabel Margaret Osler was “Amo”, sometimes “Mo”, and so on. Deciphering references in letters has sometimes been a challenge for family historians who have to explain that “Jones” was really “Allen”, and “Tuck” was actually “Hugh.”

Perhaps, as a widowed daughter-in-law, Lily received an engraved teaspoon on, or even after, Ellen's birthday. There were extra spoons

which were engraved later. Peg says that my great-grandmother arranged to have two of them engraved for Peg and her sister Anne (great-grandchildren born in 1914 and 1910 respectively). Peg's spoon disappeared in a robbery, but one of her daughters has Anne's teaspoon.

Wondering about my grandmother Dinah (another nickname) and what happened to her spoon, I called my 91-year-old aunt who instantly got out my grandmother's teaspoon (labeled with her proper name Marion Frances Pauline); it has been used for the Christmas cranberry sauce for years.

An interesting side note: Dinah, when she was in her eighties, described to me her memories of Mrs. Osler telling her about the celebrations after the Battle of Waterloo when Ellen would have been nine years old!

¹ Since this article was written Mrs. Margaret Osler McIntyre passed away.



Photograph Collection from Osler Library Informs Restoration Work at Glencoe House, Scotland

by Judy Pate and Roger Niemeyer
Guardians of Glencoe House,
Argyll, Scotland

The summer of 2011 saw the purchase of Glencoe House in the Highlands of Scotland and the onset of an intriguing journey into exploring its past. Imagine our excitement as faces from the building's past looked at us from the laptop. We had stumbled upon a series of photographs of Glencoe House taken in 1905, less than 10 years after it had been built. We had discovered some of the treasures contained within the Osler Library at McGill University.¹

Glencoe House was built in 1895 by Donald Alexander Smith, Lord Strathcona. Although born in Scotland, Donald Smith had spent most of his life in Canada and amongst other achievements became Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Director of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway, President of the Bank of Montreal, and Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. In addition, in 1884 he notably set up a \$50,000 endowment to support women's education at McGill University, and he gave the university a further endowment of \$70,000 in 1886. Lord Strathcona was also named Chancellor of the University in 1888. He decided at 75 years of age to build a house in Scotland for his family and future generations, a lesson for all of us that age is no barrier!

Our aim was (and still is) to restore Glencoe House to its former glory. The building had been a hospital for about 60 years until it waved goodbye to its last patient in 2009; two years on we are now pleased to be the new guardians of the building. The magnificent building was evident with its majestic position looking down Loch Leven. There are still, however, missing pieces of the jigsaw, such as the original layout of the grounds which had long since been taken over by unruly rhododendrons and bamboo. The photographs from the Osler Library provided us with unique insights into the world of Glencoe House in 1905.

The photographs were taken by Marjorie Howard during a family visit in 1905. Marjorie was the daughter of Dr Robert Palmer Howard, who was a distinguished medical professor at McGill University. Her half brother Robert Jared Bliss Howard was married to Margaret Charlotte Smith (daughter of Lord Strathcona). The photographs depict Glencoe House as it was originally conceived by the famous architect, Sir Robert Rowand Anderson. Two wings were subsequently taken down in 1935.

We would like to thank the Osler Library for their help in our research. These photographs have brought to life the history of the house; a process that sometimes seems quite far removed from the characters that built and lived in such a building. We are still

searching for more information or photographs about the house or the individuals who lived in it. If you have any information at all, we would appreciate it if you could email rniemeyer@alliance-hotels.com

You can continue to view Glencoe House, its history and its restoration at www.glencoe-house.com.



Lord Strathcona and his daughter Margaret Howard, Glencoe, Scotland, 1905 (The Marjorie Howard Fitcher Photo Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, FUT2_059-002_P)



Lord Strathcona's estate at Glencoe, Scotland, 1905 (The Marjorie Howard Fitcher Photo Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, FUT2_059-008_P)

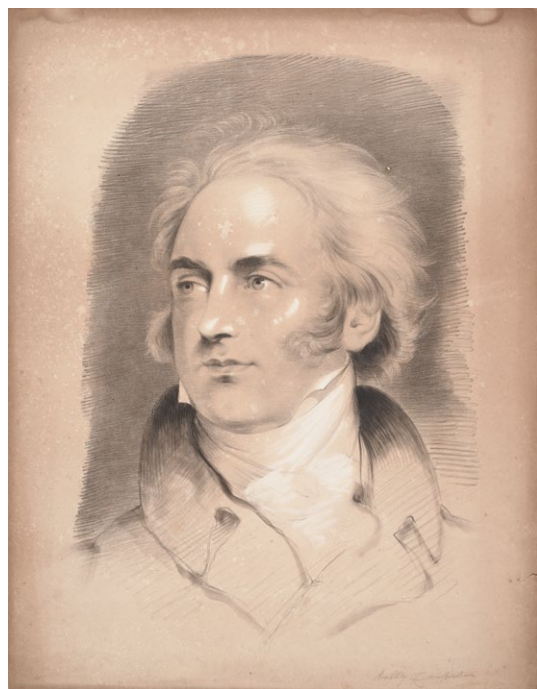
Notes from the Osler Library

Our 2011 Osler Library Travel Grant winner Professor Jim Connor, John Clinch Professor of Medical Humanities and History of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland, came to Montreal late last fall to carry out research in our archival collections. His project, *Listerism in Victorian Canada—the McGill Connections*, is part of a broader effort to study listerism as an example of knowledge transfer from Britain to North America in the Victorian era. At the Library, he consulted the archival papers of several noted early proponents of Joseph Lister's antiseptic surgical technique, such as Archibald Malloch (Malloch Family Fonds P 107) and Francis Shepherd (Francis John Shepherd Fonds P 024) among others. His good humour and patience were very much appreciated. Dr. Connor's research was subsequently presented in a keynote lecture delivered at the Lister Conference 2012, held in London to commemorate the centenary of Lister's death. The conference was a collaboration between the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the Royal Society of London, and King's College Hospital, London (where Lister was Professor of Clinical Surgery from 1877 – 1893). Dr. Connor's lecture should be made available on the conference website.

As noted in previous newsletters, the Library has been digitising its collection of 2,500 medical prints and related material. The site was completed last fall and is now available for viewing at <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/oslerprints/index.php>. The searchable and browsable website contains material that spans several centuries, countries, and artistic media. Ranging from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, the collection consists predominantly of prints, though it also includes some photographs, drawings, posters, and cartoons. The images in this collection, acquired from various donors at different times, are fascinating for both their historical significance and their artistic merit. Straddling the disciplines of art and science, the collection is a valuable resource for the history of medicine and the history of portraiture. The initial response to the site has been very positive. There was also an accompanying exhibition. The site was awarded the 2012 Publication Award for Best Online Resource by the Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences. Thanks to everyone involved in this project!



¹ The Marjorie Howard Fitcher Photo Collection, <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/fitcher/index.php>. This is a digitised version of two photo albums of images from the 1890s and first decade of the twentieth century.



Sir Astley Cooper. Lithograph, retouched by hand, ca. 1830. Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), artist. Samuel Cousins (1801-1887), printmaker (attributed to). (Osler Library Prints Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, #OPF000855)



Edward Jenner. Engraving, 1812. James Northcote (1746-1831) and John Raphael Smith (1752-1812), artists (after). Antoine Maxime Monsaldy (1768-1816), engraver. (Osler Library Prints Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, #OPF000434)



Souvent médecine varie. Wood engraving, hand-coloured, ca. 19th-20th century. Henriot (1857-1933) artist. Imagerie Pellerin (Épinal, France), printer. (Osler Library Prints Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, #OPF001026)



La jeune malade. Mezzotint, ca. 19th century. Jan Steen (1626-1679), artist. Galerie Georges Petit, printer. (Osler Library Prints Collection, Osler Library, McGill University, #OPF000964)

We are saddened to report the loss of Mrs. Margaret Katherine McIntyre, (née Osler). She was born on July 21, 1914, married Robert B. McIntyre in 1939, and died on November 25, 2011. She was the daughter of Edmund Featherstone Osler and Nadine Jane Hamilton Kerr, and a great-niece of Sir William Osler. She was five years old when Sir William died, but remembered him clearly at Craighleigh, her family home in the Rosedale section of Toronto. She will be missed by her son, Jamie McIntyre, a member of the Osler Library's Board of Curators, and her family and friends.



Mrs. Margaret Katherine McIntyre,
1914-2011.



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