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LIBRARY OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, PHILADELPHIA.

By Charles Perry Fisher, Librarian.

The following history of the Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the oldest medical library in the United States, is chiefly compiled from the admirable Reports of the late Drs. W. S. W. Ruschenberger and Alfred Stillé, contained in the Centennial volume of the College of Physicians, published in 1887.

The record of the society shows that the question of forming a library was first formally considered in 1788. A committee was appointed in reference to the matter June 3, and its report laid on the table July 1. It was resolved, August 5, "That the several members of the college be requested to send to the Secretary such books as they mean to present to the college."

In December Dr. John Morgan presented 24 volumes, and added others in January, 1789.

The committee appointed June 3, 1788, to prepare a plan for the formation of a library submitted the following, which was adopted March 3, 1789: First. That the business of collecting
books from the members, by way of donation to the Library, of procuring a suitable place for keeping them, and a person to attend at stated times for lending them to the members, be committed to the Censors and Secretary, who shall consult the college respecting the time and manner of lending them.

Second. That on the first Tuesday of July of every year, as soon as the Treasurer has made his annual report of the balance remaining in his hands, the college do grant such sums as they may think proper for the service of the Library for the ensuing year.

These primary enactments distinctly imply that the acquisition of a suitable library was very desirable in the opinion of the college.

In October, 1789, Dr. William Shippen presented the works of five authors, Dr. John Morris eight volumes and Dr. John Jones several. In November the President was authorized to draw fifty pounds ($233) for the purchase of books. Some were imported in 1790. In 1793 Dr. Rush presented a copy of Sydenham's works. A copy of the catalogue of the Library of the Pennsylvania Hospital was received from Dr. Parke; and the pamphlets of the college were ordered to be bound in 1794.

In 1795 Dr. Parke sent thirty-five pounds to purchase books and reported, August 4, the receipt of twelve volumes from London. July 5, 1796, a hundred and twenty dollars were appropriated for the use of the Library, and the Censors were directed, August 5, to prepare a list of books to be procured in Europe. Books purchased in Amsterdam arrived in 1797; and books of nineteen titles, submitted by the Censors, were ordered. In 1798 the Censors were directed to prepare a list to be purchased. Between June, 1800, and July, 1818, additions to the Library were made by gift and purchase every year. The Censors reported, July 7, that some volumes were missing, and recommended that a catalogue be made. The committee appointed for the duty,* reported, January 5, 1819, that the catalogue had been completed.

The number of books increased slowly. In 1825 the Library of the Kappa Lambda Society was deposited in the college. On their report the Censors were directed, November 28, 1828, to have the book-cases repaired.

The Library Committee stated, January 6, 1835, that the Library was in bad condition, going to decay, and was instructed to take measures for its preservation.

The committee reported, June 7, 1836, that besides a number of unbound pamphlets, the Library contained 291 volumes, namely, 31 folios, 67 quartos and 193 octavos; and was in condition for use were it more conveniently placed.

According to the annual reports of the Library Committee from this date till the close of 1843 very few volumes had been added, and the Library was "rarely, if ever used."

In May, 1844, the medical library of F.R. Otto was purchased for $200, and in July placed in a room over the office of Dr. Hodge, northwest corner of Walnut and Ninth Streets. June 4 an appropriation of $50, to arrange and catalogue the Library, was made; and the Library Committee recommended that a librarian be present one hour twice a month to loan books.

The committee reported, June 3, 1845, that one case of books stood on the landing of the stairway leading to "our room;" that the Otto collection was at Dr. Hodge's office, and that the Library was very little used. Drs. Bond, Condie, Parrish and Wood had presented 137 volumes during the year.

It was ordered, August 5, that the Library should be open from 11 o'clock a.m. till 2 o'clock p.m. Most of the medical periodicals published in the United States, and one from Canada, were received in exchange for the Transactions of the college.

The Philadelphia Medical Society deposited its library in the college December 1, 1846, and claimed its restoration December 7, 1859. During this period the books were accessible to the Fellows of the college.

The committee reported, March 6, 1849, that the Library continued "to steadily increase," and "was entitled to more attention than it received."
June 6, 1855. The committee reported that soon after the removal to Spruce Street the Library had been rearranged and catalogued, and that 350 volumes had been added during the past year.

December 5. Mrs. Moreton Stillé presented 119 volumes as a "memorial of her late husband."

January 2, 1856. $125 were appropriated for binding, and the same sum for the use of the Library January 7, 1857.

November 4. The committee reported the receipt of more than 900 volumes from Dr. Thos. F. Betton, including some rare and important works; and December 1, 1858, that the Library contained about 3560 volumes, and during the past year had been much more frequently consulted. The Betton collection numbered 1265 volumes.

May 4, 1859. Ordered that the Library be open one evening in the week.

June 1. A selection of books from the library of Dr. Bond, bequeathed by him, had been received.

December 7. The committee reported that Mrs. Mütter had deposited forty works; that 397 volumes had been contributed during the year, and that the Library contained about 4000 volumes, besides pamphlets.

December 3, 1862. The State Medical Society presented a complete set of its Transactions and Fellows of the college 192 volumes of French theses.

January 7, 1863. The executors of Dr. Isaac Remington presented ninety works, including 195 volumes, and 188 numbers of ten periodicals.

The Library Committee was authorized to move into the new building.

November 4. Ordered that cases be prepared to receive books to be presented by Dr. Samuel Lewis. The Librarian reported the receipt of a large number of books from Dr. Thos. F. Betton.

The most important epoch in the history of the Library was the founding of the Lewis Library, in 1864, which at once added to it more than 2500 volumes of the choicest works, in the finest
condition, so that in 1866 the Librarian was able to report a total of 9513 volumes. In the same year the liberality of the President, Dr. Wood, enabled the college to employ a librarian, who was in attendance daily. Thenceforth, "crescit eundo" literally described the progress of the Library. It became the legatee of Dr. Frank West, Dr. Joseph Carson, Dr. Wood and Dr. Weightman, while gifts poured in on every side. Among them may be especially distinguished a very curious and valuable collection made by the late Dr. Morris S. Wickersham, in Italy, and presented by him. A journal-society formed within the college, and whose means have been reinforced by the liberality of one of the Fellows, has furnished them the best periodical literature of every civilized country. The libraries of the late Samuel D. Gross and H. Lenox Hodge have also been deposited, and according to the last annual report the Library now (1886) contains 38,160 volumes, besides 16,026 pamphlets.

The average growth of the Library, per annum, since 1886, has been 2146 volumes. The report for 1901 gives the following figures:

Number of volumes in the Library....................64,916
Number of unbound Reports and Transactions........5,918
Number of unbound Theses and Dissertations ......14,713
Number of unbound pamphlets .......................37,764

In addition to the above, duplicate volumes at this date number 479.

Since 1886 many notable donations have been made by the Fellows and their friends, including the libraries of the late Drs. John Ashhurst, Alfred Stillé, J. M. DaCosta and William F. Norris; and through the efforts of several Fellows the endowment funds for the purchase of books have been increased to about $60,000.

The largest and most valuable purchase made for the Library, since its foundation, was that accomplished by the Library Committee in April, 1901, when they acquired the library of the late Dr. J. Stockton Hough, a unique collection
consisting of rare works on medicine, bibliography, biography, etc., numbering 3247 volumes and 2070 pamphlets.

To determine which were non-medical works or duplicates each was examined by the Honorary Librarian and Librarian, and compared with the catalogue of the Library, and 1500 volumes and 1039 pamphlets were retained. Some of the more important pamphlets were bound in forty-nine volumes, making an addition of 1549 books to the Library. The following statement by the Librarian will give some idea of the great value of this collection: 515 of the volumes were printed before the year 1700; 76 (known as incunabula) were printed in the fifteenth century, 175 in the sixteenth and 264 in the seventeenth. On the rarity of some of them, the following titles, with accompanying notes by Dr. Hough, will afford an illustration:


Joh. Ketham. Fasciculo di Medecina vulgare. Venetia, 1508. Sm. fo. [Only two copies known of this edition, this and one in the Public Library of Venice. It is rarer than any Latin or Italian edition of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. Purchased for 300 francs.]


Ambrose Paré. Briefe collection de l'Administration Anatomique. Paris, 1550. 12mo. [On the fly leaf of this book, written in French in 1867, and signed Munaret, are a number of notes showing the rarity of this work. He first mentions that Malgaigne had only been able to discover two copies of this edition, one slightly mutilated, the property of M. Cham-
pion de Bar-le-Duc, the other, a fine and complete copy, in the Bibliothèque Mazarain, No. 29,707. He then goes on to say that while hunting for an old book in Lyon he discovered this third copy, and after having collated and compared it with the one at Paris, he is bold enough to say that it is its equal, and further on, that the "restoration" of this precious volume has been made by Bruyère (one of the famous French binders) at a cost of 40 francs. The work is bound in crushed Levant morocco, outside plain, inside gold tooling.


Champerius. Index librorum in hoc volumine contentorum; Symphoriani Champerii libelli duo. Primus de medicinae claris scriptoribus in quinque partibus tractatus. [Lugduni, 1506.] Cost $35. [An extremely rare book. The first edition of the first medical biography, also bibliography, published.]


Johannes Peyligk. Philosophiae Naturalis. Liptzensi, 1499. fo. [The first book published with anatomical plates of individual organs. These plates copied from the edition 1498 of Mundinus. This is one of the rarest of rare books, worth at least $100. I have never seen it in any catalogue or elsewhere for sale. Stockton Hough, 1900.]

The non-medical and duplicate books of the collection were disposed of in October to the Library of the University of Pennsylvania for $1500.

A card system of cataloguing was commenced in 1881, the cards being arranged in a single index of authors and subjects. The classification and shelf numbering are the same as those employed in the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office at Washington, U. S. A.—this arrangement after a score of years.
of trial being considered the best for all practical purposes. A revision of the catalogue was commenced April 1, 1901. This includes the examination and comparison of each card, author, and subject, with the Index-Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, and new typewritten cards. It has been estimated that the work will be completed in about five years. All new work is made uniform with that of the revision.

Comparison of the work of the Library at the present time with its usefulness in the past two decades shows a remarkable increase in the numbers of those who make use of it in their studies and research work. In 1880 there were but 710 volumes reported as loaned, while at the end of the following decade (1890) there were 4416 works used in the Library, and 1866 loaned to the Fellows. Last year (1901) showed an increase to 12,462 works used in the Library, while 2556 were loaned.

The management of the Library has been entrusted to a series of Library Committees which, after the year 1834, were elected annually. The present committee consists of five Fellows who, in association with the Honorary Librarian (an elective officer of the college—a Fellow), and a Librarian (a paid officer of the college—not a Fellow), have direct charge of the Library and are considered responsible for the same. The present members are Drs. George C. Harlan (Chairman), Francis X. Dercum, Charles A. Oliver, William J. Taylor and S. Weir Mitchell; the post of Honorary Librarian being held by Dr. Frederick P. Henry, and that of Librarian by Mr. Charles Perry Fisher.

The office of Honorary Librarian was created in 1883. Dr. James H. Hutchinson was elected and served until his death, December, 1889. Dr. Frederick P. Henry was elected in January, 1890.

It is well understood that one cannot value a collection of books, or library, by the number of volumes; nor, perhaps, is it just to make comparisons. The Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia has been fortunate in becoming the depository of the libraries of many of the best collectors of
medical books for more than a century, and is, perhaps, the third library of its kind in the world. Visitors come, not frequently, it is true, hundreds of miles to consult books which they could not obtain elsewhere, not excepting the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office.

CLASSIFICATION USED AT THE LIBRARY OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, PHILADELPHIA.

A Anatomy.

A Dictionaries and encyclopaedias.
Aa History and literature.
Ab Comparative.
Ac General and physiological.
Ad Systems and manuals.
Ae Regional and surgical.
Af Essays, Memoirs, etc.
Ag Institutions, Schools, Dissecting rooms.
Ah Museums, Catalogues of collections, Laboratories.
Ai Histology.
Ak Embalming.
Al Methods and preparations.
Am Dissecting for post-mortem examinations.
An
Ao Artistic anatomy.