Treasures from the Chalmers Library
An exhibition at the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine

Monday 1 August 2016 – Saturday 29 October 2016
ADMISSION FREE
Open to all

OPENING TIMES
Monday – Thursday: 9.00 – 21.00
Friday: 9.00 – 17.30
Saturday: 10.00 – 16.30

The Library, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 0AE
Tube: Oxford Circus or Bond Street
Obituary.

ALBERT JOHN CHALMERS, M.D. VICT. & LIVERP.,
F.R.C.S. ENG., D.P.H.

News reached London last week that Dr. A. J. Chalmers died of acute infective jaundice in the General Hospital at Calcutta on April 5th. He was born at Manchester in 1870, son of Rev. James Chalmers, M.A., and was educated at Manchester Grammar School and University College, Liverpool. Qualifying in 1890, he held the Holt Fellowship of University College, Liverpool, before entering the West African Medical Service, acquiring in his four years on the Gold Coast that zeal for tropical medicine which lasted throughout his life. In 1901 he accepted a call to Ceylon, and for the next ten years was registrar at the Colombo Medical College, where he lectured on pathology and animal parasitology, and had the satisfaction of witnessing the development of the College into one of the principal teaching institutions in the East. After a period of service with the Pellagra Field Commission he became, in 1913, director of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories at Khartoum, a position from which he was taking a well-earned study-holiday at the time of his early death. Chalmers was an enthusiast and a never-tiring worker, whose literary output was very large, as witness the 2500 pages of the third edition of the "Manual of Tropical Medicine," in every part of which he collaborated with Castellani. His work on madura foot and on tropical skin diseases in general is of permanent value, and tropical medicine has lost in him one of its most faithful servants. A loyal friend and a generous colleague, Dr. Chalmers was also a popular practitioner when the opportunity was open to him in Colombo. In 1911 he received the Coronation Medal, and he also held a medal and clasp for the Ashanti Expedition of 1900, but his chief honours lie in the work which he did and the work which he inspired others to do. Dr. Chalmers leaves a widow, daughter of the late Edwin Cannington, J.P., but no children.
THE CHALMERS LIBRARY.

The collection of books from the library of the late Dr. Albert J. Chalmers, presented by his widow to the Royal Society of Medicine, contains about 1,800 volumes in all. It includes five volumes printed before the end of the fifteenth century, 64 printed in the sixteenth century, and 109 in the seventeenth century. The books he had collected fall into two parts—the early books already mentioned, and the remainder relating to the subject in which he was specially interested. Dr. Chalmers was at one time Director of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories (Soudan) and was joint author with Dr. Castellani of the large Manual of Tropical Medicine. Among the older volumes are several fine herbals, including a fine copy of that issued by Fuchs in 1543 and by Brunschvigel in 1546. There is also Turner's Greate Herball, 1568, printed in Cologne, probably compiled by the author during his residence there. There is a complete collection of the writings of Culpeper and a fine copy of the book De Contagione, by Fracastorius (1546)—a rare volume. The gem of the collection is considered to be a copy of the first printed edition of Celsus, De Re Medicina (1478). The Chalmers Library at the Royal Society of Medicine was formally opened on June 23rd, when Mrs. Chalmers was warmly thanked for her munificent gift.

BMJ – July 1st 1922, pg. 23
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Royal Society of Medicine
Opening of the Chalmers Library

The late Dr. A. J. Chalmers (of Khartoum) left with the Society for safe keeping a number of very rare books, including the first edition of Celsus. On his death, his widow, Mrs. Chalmers, decided to present these to the Society and added to them another large and valuable collection from Dr. Chalmers' library, together with a cheque for £500 for the appropriation and fitting up of "The Chalmers Room." This room, No. 27 on the third floor, has been fitted up as a reference library for the use of Fellows. Mrs. Chalmers has had a special catalogue prepared.

The formal opening of this Library was the occasion of an interesting ceremony at the Royal Society of Medicine, on June 23rd, 1922.

Those who took part in it assembled at four o'clock in the President's Room, where tea was served, after which the party proceeded to the landing immediately outside the door of the Chalmers Library. Here the President delivered the following short address:

This Library will serve a double purpose: a dedication to the memory of Dr. Albert John Chalmers by his devoted widow, and a sanctuary
for the books which he collected with so much care and judgment.

Dr. Chalmers worked with the prime object of doing good to men of all races and creeds. His fellow-workers prized his friendship—a rare distinction. The men of various races with whom he came in contact will cherish his memory, and his influence on students will be a fruitful heritage. He made himself acquainted with the history of the subjects to which he devoted his attention so that he might give credit to his predecessors, and he collected their books and leaves them for the advantage of his successors.

Great teachers are remembered because their deeds and experience are handed on by their pupils, and it is in this sense that great Masters in Science live again in the affectionate regard of their pupils. It is true that "the good men do is oft interred with their bones." Therefore it is wise of Mrs. Chalmers to cherish the memory of her husband by establishing this Library in the House of the Royal Society of Medicine. Here the books he collected and the periodicals which contain his many valuable contributions to Sanitation and Tropical Disease will be preserved, and made available to all workers who seek knowledge on these matters.

Dr. Chalmers was a brilliant example of the rare combination of Science and Practice, and this enabled him, with his indomitable energy, to
carry through work of inestimable value to millions of human beings in Imperial Britain. For this reason I feel it a rare privilege to open this Library.

The President then received the key from Mrs. Chalmers, unlocked the door and declared the Library open. The party entered the room, which is handsomely fitted with oak bookcases, also the gift of Mrs. Chalmers, and proceeded to examine the collection. This was seen to consist of two parts: (1) the books and periodicals on Tropical Medicine, numbering about 1,450, and (2) some 350 old and valuable works collected by Dr. Chalmers in various parts of the world. Always keenly interested in the history of medicine, he seldom failed to bring back with him some rare or interesting prizes from the old bookshops he so much enjoyed visiting. This part of the collection includes five volumes printed before the end of the fifteenth century, 64 printed in the sixteenth century, and 109 in the seventeenth century. It contains a fine copy of the first printed edition of Celsus, 1478, copies of the “Ortus Sanitatis,” 1511, Fuchs’ “New Kreüterbuch,” 1543, Bock’s “Kreüterbuch,” 1546 (these two last with the plates coloured), “The Greate Herball,” 1561, Turner’s “Herbal,” 1568, and many other volumes famous in the history of medicine. Mrs. Chalmers generously signified her intention of adding to this collection of old works from time to time.*

The members of the party signed their names before leaving. They were: Sir John Bland-Sutton (President), Mrs. Chalmers, Mr. C. H. Fagge (Hon. Treasurer), Mr. W. G. Spencer (Hon. Librarian), Dr. A. M. H. Gray (Hon. Secretary), Dr. Andrew Balfour, Sir Percy Bassett-Smith, Dr. Aldo Castellani, Dr. J. B. Christopherson, Professor R. T. Leiper, Dr. H. Marriage Perry, Dr. W. L. Prout, Sir Leonard Rogers, Professor W. J. Simpson, Mr. H. E. Powell (Librarian), and Sir John MacAlister (Secretary).
This undated item from the Society’s archive shows that Dr Chalmers had loaned to us a small number of books from his extensive collection.
Pedanius Dioscorides, fl.54 – 68 A.D.


Black litter: Fol.cxx Lugduni, 1512 Librarian's Room 106
Books featured in this Exhibition

**Jacobus Theodorus, 1525 - 1590**
Librarian's Room 1
The physician, botanist, and herbalist Theodorus (Jakob Dietrich), called Tabernaemontanus is often referred to as the "father of German botany."

**Thomas Geminus, c.1510 - 1562**
Compendiosa totius anatomie delineatio / caere exarata per Thomam Geminum. Londini : Imprinted ... by Nycholas Hyll ... for Thomas Geminus, 1553.
Librarian's Room 2
Usually thought of as the first of several works plagiarising Vesalius’s 1543 *De humani corporis fabrica*, the copperplate engravings used here allow for a sharpness of line impossible in the wood engravings used by the printers of Vesalius’s work.

**Charles Estienne, 1504-ca. 1564.**
De dissectione partium corporis humani libri tres ... / cUna cum figuris et incisionum declarationibus, a Stephano Riverio chirurgo compositis. Paris : S. Colinaeus, 1545.
Librarian's Room 3
This copy has autograph inscription of Estienne’s son on title-page, thus: "Ce livre appartien a pierre mathieu fis de estienne".
Leonhart Fuchs, 1501-1566.

New Kreüterbuch, in welchem nit allein die gantz Histori, das ist, Namen, Gestalt, Statt und Zeit der Wachung, Natur, Krafft und Würckung, des meysten Theyls der Kreüter so in teütschen unnd andern Landen wachsen ... beschrieben :|bsonder auch aller derselben Wurtzel, Stengel, Bletter, Blumen, Samen, Frücht ... allso ... abgebildet ... ist, das deszgleichen vormals nie gesehen, noch an Tag kommen ... Basell : Michael Isingrin, 1543.

Librarian's Room 4

Fuchs taught medicine at the University of Tübingen from 1535 until his death. As well as being rector of the university and writing the statutes of its medical faculty, Fuchs was the author of around twenty books including commentaries on Hippocrates and Galen, and a work on anatomy based on Vesalius.

“...the illustrations to Fuchs’ herbals represent the high-water mark of that type of botanical drawing which seeks to express the individual character and habit of each species.”


Ulysses Aldrovandi, 1552-1605

Monstrorum historia : cum Paralipomenis historiae omnium animalium / Bartholomaeus Ambrosinus ... volumen composuit. Marcus Antonius Bernia in lucem edidit. Bononiae : Typis Nicolai Tebaldini, 1642.

Librarian's Room 5

Aldrovandi’s large collection of specimens and monsters was assembled and published posthumously by Bartholommeo Ambrosini (1588-1657). Among several fictitious descriptions are some valuable authentic accounts including the first description of bladder exstrophy.
Johann Schultes [Scultetus], 1595-1645.

Cheiroplothēkē, seu armentarium chirurgicum xliii. tabulis aeri elegantissime incisis, nec ante hac visis, exornatum : Opus posthumum ... nunc primum in lucem editum, studio et opera Joannis Sculteti, authoris ex fratre nepotis.
Ulmae Suevorum : B. Kühnen, 1655.
Librarian's Room 6
Sculetus’s textbook of operative surgery and surgical instruments.

Johannes Mesue, the younger.

Opera. Liber de complexionibus, proprietatibus, electionibus...Grabadin Joannis filii mesue...Practica de medicines particularium aegritudinum...Petri Apponi addition. 1471.
Librarian's Room 12
The oldest book in the RSM library. No place of publication is given, but William Osler, in his Incunabula Medica of 1923, speculates Venice or Florence.

Yahya ibn Masawaih or Mesue the younger is said to have been a Jacobite Christian living at Maradin on the Euphrates in the 10th-11th centuries. However none of his writings has ever been found in their original language and no Arabian bio- or bibliographer knows him and it is now believed that a Latin author of the early 13th century assumed the name. At any rate, these works soon gained authoritative importance as the pharmacological quintessence of Arabic therapeutics, and the esteem in which they were held is shown by the fact that they belonged to the first medical books to be printed. The 'Grabadin', or apothecary's manual was the most popular compendium of drugs in medieval Europe, and was used everywhere in their preparation. It was also used in compiling the first London Pharmacopeia.
**Johannes de Ketham, d. circa 1490.**

Fasciculus Medicinæ, compositus per excellentissimum artium ac medicinæ doctorem dominum Joannem de Ketam Alamanum, tractans de Anothomia et diversis infirmitatibus corporis humani, cui annectuntur multi alii tractatus per diversos excellentissimos doctores compositi, necnon Anothomia Mundini.

Venetiis :|bper gregorium de Gregoriis,|c1513.

Librarian's Room 18

*This work was first published in 1491 and contains the first printed anatomical illustrations. The name of the author is possibly a corruption of Johannes von Kirkheim, a professor of medicine in Vienna around 1460.*

**Hieronymus Brunschwig, circa. 1450- circa. 1512.**

Liber de arte distillandi de simplicibus : Das Buch der rechten Kuntst zü distilieren die eintzigē Ding.

Strassburg : J. Grüniger, 1500.

Librarian's Room 19

*Brunschwig, a surgeon, alchemist, and botanist born at Strasbourg, became famous for his treatment of gunshot wounds and his work on distillation techniques. The book shown here is the earliest printed book on distillation from herbal and animal substances.*

**John Parkinson, 1566 – 1650**

Paradisi in sole paradisus terrestris, or, a garden of all sorts of pleasant flowers which our English ayre will permitt to be noursed up : with a kitchen garden and an orchard.


Librarian’s Room 21

*Parkinson was apothecary to James I. The title of this book, the first work on English gardening, is a pun on its author’s name (park in sun).*
**Thomas Moffett. 1553-1604**


Londini : ex oficina typographicâ T. Cotes, 1634.

This work was the result of its author’s extensive travels throughout Europe and the exhaustive and meticulous notes he kept on the insects he observed there.

**Abul Qasim [Albucasis], 936 - 1013**

Chirurgia venetiis.

Venetia, 1520

Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi, known also by his Latin name Albucasis, was born near Cordoba in 936. He is considered to have been the greatest surgeon in the Islamic medical tradition. His encyclopaedia of surgery became a standard reference work on the subject in all the universities of Europe for over five hundred years.

**Hieronymus Brunschwig, circa. 1450- circa. 1512.**

Das Buch zu distillieren die zusamen gethonen ding : composita genant durch die eintzige ding und das buch Thesaurus pauperum, für die armen, durch experiment von mir Iheronomy Brunschwick uff geklubt und geoffenbart, zů trost und heil der menschen und nutzlich ir leben und leib daruss zu erlengeren und in gesuntheit zů behalten.

Strassburg : Johann Grüninger, 1519

Hieronymus Brunschwig, circa. 1450- circa. 1512. Das Buch zu distillieren die zusamen gethonen ding : composita genant durch die eintzige ding und das buch Thesaurus pauperum, für die armen, durch experiment von mir Iheronomy Brunschwick uff geklubt und geoffenbart, zů trost und heil der menschen und nutzlich ir leben und leib daruss zu erlengeren und in gesuntheit zů behalten.

Strassburg : Johann Grüninger, 1519
Aulus Aurelius Cornelius Celsus, 25 B.C. – A.D. 50

De medicina.
Florentiae: A Nicolao impressus, 1478.
Librarian’s Room 38

Shown here is the bookplate of John Eliot Hodgkin, managing director of the Pulsometer Engineering Company Ltd., steam pump manufacturers, originally based in London and later at Reading.

Hodgkin, born in 1829, came to be known for his antiquarian interests, and was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Following his death in 1912, Hodgkin’s vast collection of antique coins, seals, pottery, documents, prints, and rare books was sold by auction at Sotheby’s. It is likely that the book shown here, the De Medicina of Celsus, published in 1478, was among them.

After the writings of Hippocrates, Celsus’ De medicina, written c. A.D. 30, is the oldest published medical document. It deals with diseases and their treatment, outlining those amenable to surgery and drugs, and those best treated by diet. The manuscript was thought lost until its rediscovery in Milan in 1443, after which it was edited by Bartholomaeus Fontius and became one of the first medical textbooks to be printed.
**Anglicus Bartholomaeus, fl. 1250**

Liber de proprietatibus rerum.
Argentine (Strassburg) : [Printer of the 1483 Jordanus de Quedlinburg (George Husner?)], 1485.

Librarian’s Room 39

An encyclopaedia of natural science probably written around the mid-13th century. Its title translates as *On the properties of things*.

**Nicholas Culpeper, 1616-1654**

Pharmacopoeia Londinensis. A physical directory :|bor a translation of the dispensatory made by the Colledge of Physitians of London, and by them imposed upon all the apothecaries of England to make up their medicines by. Whereunto is added, the vertues of the simples, and compounds. And in this second edition are seven hundred eighty four additions ... The second edition much enlarged, by Nich. Culpeper ... London : printed by Peter Cole, and are to be sold at his shop, 1650.

Librarians Room 40

**Johann Vesling, 1568-1649**

The anatomy of the body of man: wherein is exactly described every part thereof, in the same manner as it is commonly shewed in publick anato-mies...Englished by Nich. Culpeper.

London, Peter Cole, 1653

Librarian's Room 41
A history of the art of bookbinding : with some account of the books of the ancients : illustrated with numerous engravings, and photographic reproductions of ancient bindings in colour and monotints, edited by W. Salt Brassington.
Librarian’s Room 44

William Bullein, c.1515 – 1576
Bulleins bulwarke of defence against all sicknesse, soarenesse, and woundes that doe dayly assaulte mankinde:|bwhich bulwarke is kept with Hilarius the gardener, & Health the phisicion, with the chirurgian, to helpe the wounded souldiours ...
London : Thomas Marsche, 1579.
Librarians Room 42
Written while Bullein and his wife were imprisoned for debt, and first published in 1562, Bullein’s Bulwarke consists of The booke of simples, A little dialogue betweene two men, the one called Sorenes, and other Chirurgi, concerning apostumations, The booke of compoundes, and The booke of the use of sicke men, and medicines. It includes some of the earliest printed references to Paracelsus, and replaces a manuscript lost when the boat carrying Bullein’s possessions to London was shipwrecked.

Joannes Actuarius, fl. 1350
Actuarii Ioannis filij Zachariæ opera.: De actionibus et spiritus animalis affectib[us], eiúsq[ue] nutritione lib. II. De urinis lib. VII. Methodi medendi lib. VI. Rerum ac verboru[m] memorabilium index.
Parisiis : apud B. Turrisanum, in Aldina bibliotheca, 1556.
Librarian’s Room 73
Actuarius has been described as the last of the great Byzantine physicians, and his De urinis as the “most complete medieval treatise on urinoscopy.”
**Enemy to fraud and villainy.**

Deadly adulteration and slow poisoning unmasked, or, Disease and death in the pot and the bottle: in which the blood-empoisoning and life-destroying adulterations of wines, spirits, beer, bread, flour, tea, sugar, spices, cheese-mongery, pastry, confectionary medicines, &c. &c. &c. are laid open to the public, with tests or methods for the ascertaining and detecting the fraudulent and deleterious adulterations and the good and bad qualities of those articles: with an exposé of medical empiricism and imposture, quacks and quackery, regular and irregular, legitimate and illegitimate, and the frauds and mal-practices of pawn-brokers and madhouse keepers / by an enemy to fraud and villainy. London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, [1839?]

**William Jaggard, 1868-1947.**

Printing: its birth and growth.
Liverpool: The Shakespeare Press, 1908.

**Herbert P. Horne**

The binding of books: an essay in the history of gold-tooled bindings.
London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Truebner, 1894

**Falconer Madan**

Books in manuscript: a short introduction to their study and use. With a chapter on records.
London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Truebner, 1893

**Alfred William Pollard**

Early illustrated books: a history of the decoration and illustration of books in the 15th and 16th centuries.
London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Truebner, 1893

**Albert J. Chalmers, 1870-1920 and Captain R.G. Archibald**

The fungi imperfecti in tropical medicine.
London: J. Bale, 1914
MSS.36
*With manuscript notes and the signature of Albert J. Chalmers.*
There are several references in this book to the historical literature, almost certainly the product of Chalmers’ wide reading and his love of books. Chalmers’ co-author, Sir Aldo Castellani, made several important discoveries in tropical medicine. His obituary in the BMJ records his discovery at Entebbe in 1903 of “a trypanosome in the cerebrospinal fluid of a boy suffering from sleeping sickness, concluded that it was the cause of the disease, and confirmed his discovery by finding trypanosomes in further cases.”

Albert J. Chalmers, 1870-1920

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Albert J. Chalmers, 1870-1920
Albert Chalmers’ personal book plate