

# THE WARRINGTON DISPENSARY LIBRARY\*

by

R. GUEST-GORNALL

What wild desire, what restless torments seize,  
The hapless man who feels the book-disease,  
If niggard fortune cramp his generous mind  
And Prudence quench the Spark of heaven assigned  
With wistful glance his aching eyes behold  
The Princeps-copy, clad in blue and gold,  
Where the tall Book-case, with partition thin  
Displays, yet guards, the tempting charms within.

John Ferriar (1761–1815)

THAT the thousand or more items comprising the Warrington Dispensary old library have been preserved intact is due to Sir William Osler, whose fame as a scholarly student of medical history is second only to his great repute as a clinical teacher, and also to the opportunity given him by his arrival in England in 1904 to take up his latest academic appointment as Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. If he was seized with a wild desire to possess the tempting charms of this unique collection it was because he wished to help to build up the library of the School of Medicine at Johns Hopkins which he had just left after fifteen years and which was still in its early days, having been founded in 1893; that no niggard fortune cramped this generous impulse was due to William A. Marburg who paid for them. In the words of Professor Singer, Osler was a true book lover to whom the very sight and touch of an ancient document brought a subtle pleasure, and he would quite understand what Ferriar<sup>1</sup> meant in the lines above; in fact he had an elegantly bound copy of the poem, printed in Warrington, which was given him with several other books from the same press by his friend Sir Walter Fletcher with the following note.

Dear Osler,

I am sending the Aikin<sup>2</sup> today to you. I am delighted to have any chance of filling a gap for you, even such a trifle. You will admit that you make it very hard to find any joints in your harness. If you want all Aikin's things, will you put on a post-card what you already have and I will challenge myself to find some more if I can. It would be fun to work at the Warrington circle. Some day I must get out of the train at that now horrible place and see what remains of the old life can be found. My wife's great-grand-father Sir Henry Holland, owed a great deal I think to the Unitarian circle. His father was Peter Holland, surgeon, of Knutsford (the original of 'Cranford') whose father-in-law was the Revd. W. Willets, Unitarian, who persuaded Priestley to get on with his oxygen work, and whose mother-in-law was Catherine Wedgwood, the great Josiah's favourite sister. There was much linkage between Warrington, Manchester and Staffordshire Unitarians and no doubt with other groups elsewhere. Perhaps all this has been written up;

\* The author's family have been in medical practice in Warrington for over a century, his great-grandfather, John Guest 1792–1862, being chairman of the dispensary committee at the relevant time and it is against this background that these notes on the old Dispensary Library have been written.

<sup>1</sup> John Ferriar, M.D., physician to the Manchester Infirmary was a prolific writer on medical and non-medical subjects.

<sup>2</sup> John Aikin, M.D., son of the principal of Warrington Academy, also wrote on innumerable subjects. The book referred to here was *Essays on Song Writing*.

*R. Guest-Gornall*

I should like to find out. Some of the best intellectual life in the country went on in those circles—to which of course the Darwin's belong—and it ought not to be obscured from history merely because the orthodox and sterile Church in those days kept it out of University and social prominence.

Believe me, yours sincerely,  
Walter M. Fletcher.

1st March 1918.

All developing countries with new centres of academic study wish to build up a worthwhile library and when it comes to a new medical school in America wishing to found a medical history section it was natural to look to Europe the treasure house of their cultural history. At the very beginning of America's independent institutions this situation was curiously echoed by Priestley,<sup>3</sup> when he wrote from his new home near Philadelphia in 1792 'we have not the same advantages for literary and philosophical pursuits as you have in Europe, though in this respect every day we are getting better. Many books are now printed here, but what scholars chiefly want are old books and these are not to be had. We hope however that the troubles in Europe will be the means of sending us some libraries and they say its an ill wind that blows no profit'.

It was not the troubles in Europe that made this interesting collection the property of an American hospital, but the upheaval in Warrington brought about by the industrial revolution which set in in earnest about the time that Priestley left the town in 1767. At that time with narrow streets of the original medieval pattern its 8,000 inhabitants were busy with the many industries which had developed there in the eighteenth century, the chief one being the manufacture of sail-cloth for the Royal Navy. The town continued to supply at least half the country's requirements during the successive naval wars and there was an incessant demand for it while we were taking on France, Spain and Holland as well as mounting the greatest amphibious campaign then known against our rebellious American colonies. So it continued to the end of the Napoleonic wars when the advent of steam changed the pattern of industry. The local manufacturers made full use of the development of road and canal transport and brought in the raw materials, particularly coal, while their early application to industry of the ideas pioneered by the Lunar Society<sup>4</sup> members brought scientific advance, helping to bring the town to the forefront of engineering progress with the early adoption of a Boulton steam engine for cotton and wire making and with a tool making community which equalled Birmingham itself. This brought also the inevitable influx of population to its narrow streets and by the end of the eighteenth century the effects of overcrowding and primitive sanitation were being felt.

It was to combat these effects that the Dispensary was established in 1810 through the zeal and energy of Dr. James Kendrick. It had two local Members of Parliament<sup>5</sup> on its inaugurating committee and soon occupied a medium sized three-storey Georgian building in one of the main streets.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Priestley, F.R.S., scientist and Unitarian Minister and secretary for a time to the Whig politician, Lord Shelburne, was tutor at the Warrington Academy from 1761 to 1767. He died in America in 1804.

<sup>4</sup> The Lunar Society existed from 1765 to 1791. Its membership included Joseph Priestley, Josiah Wedgwood, Erasmus Darwin, Richard Lovell Edgworth, William Withering, Mathew Boulton, William Small (President Jefferson's beloved teacher), Robert Augustus Johnson, Thomas Day and James Watt with John Whitehurst, Jonathan Stokes and James Keir.

<sup>5</sup> John Blackburne and Peter Patten.

### *The Warrington Dispensary Library*

It was here that the library was housed in the committee room, the whole collection of old books being formed within twenty years of its foundation. Statements by Sir William Osler have repeatedly given the impression that the collection was originally in the possession of the Warrington Academy, or at any rate gathered together by the Academy tutors; of all this there is no evidence. For instance he had written 'a word or two about Warrington and the men who collected these books' and goes on to describe all the well-known figures connected with the academy. This lead others to plunge into the same error, including Harvey Cushing, who referred to 'the books and their previous habitat in the Warrington Academy,<sup>6</sup> the educational centre of the Unitarians in England'; and again completing the confusion he says 'the interesting lot of books, abounding in rather rare pamphlets, gathered in the heyday of the Warrington Dispensary when Aikin and his coterie flourished there'. This is a mixing up of the two institutions: the truth being that Aikin, although a doctor and not to be confused with his father who was a tutor of the Academy, was never concerned with the Dispensary, having left the district when the Academy was dissolved thirty years before the Dispensary was founded.

The Warrington Dispensary Library remained in active use until its removal to a new building in 1874. It was then that the books were put in a loft to be left as lumber for thirty-five years, their value to the medical historian unrecognized except to the firm of booksellers in the town who had been associated with its collection from the start. It was they, no doubt, who got in touch with Sawyers of London<sup>7</sup> from whom Osler bought the complete set in 1907. Unfortunately Sawyers were blitzed in World War II and no record of this transaction has ever been found except Osler's statement that he was approached by them saying that they had the old books of the Warrington Library for sale; some of the books were still in Warrington at the time and had to be sent down from the local booksellers in a second parcel. Many a more famous library has not been so lucky as to be kept together but has been lost sight of, broken up and scattered.

A collection of old books might add to the interest of any library and these, so fully described by Sir William Osler himself on their first presentation to Johns Hopkins University, were no exception. Most of them from the beginning were collected because of their historical interest but there are records of them being taken out and read, for when they were in Warrington the scientific advances in medicine were still in their infancy and the wisdom of the ancients was still correspondingly respected. A number of the later ones may well have been seriously consulted as medical text books.

For the reason why priority should be given to the formation of such a library in a small hospital in a provincial town one has to look to the individual enthusiasm of its creator and study, as Sir Walter Fletcher suggested, the Warrington circle and the intellectual climate which it created.

#### WARRINGTON AND DISSENT

The seventeenth century in which the town was closely involved in the civil war led to sufficient indulgence to non-conformists to see the establishment of a chapel

<sup>6</sup> The Unitarian College which achieved great reputation during its existence between 1757 and 1783.

<sup>7</sup> Charles J. Sawyer, New and Second-hand Bookseller at that time of 29 New Oxford Street, London.

by the Unitarians<sup>8</sup> and a school by the Quakers; a liberalizing influence being created by the two denominations who were most eager to overcome their educational disadvantages, who could accept science more readily into their beliefs and were dedicated to brotherly love rather than faction. They lived in reasonable peace with their Anglican townfolk and were to contribute the prominent members of the medical profession for which the town became well known.

#### WARRINGTON AND ITS ACADEMY

The Unitarian's final choice of Warrington, for geographical and other reasons, as the site of their latest college of further education, founded on liberal principles to an extent unknown in England at the time, was yet another protest against their exclusion from the older English universities. They demanded no declaration of faith from either teachers or students and insisting on no uniformity of worship for them (so that though all the tutors except one went to the Unitarian chapel, a third of the students went to Church) and they thereby brought an explosion in education which affected the whole country and beyond, brought many literary figures to visit the town, attracted a brilliant set of teachers and a succession of students who were to make their mark in commercial as well as medical and scientific fields.

Being the first college to introduce the study of modern history and the cradle of scientific education<sup>9</sup>, it was not long before medical studies were introduced. Priestley tried a course in anatomy during the six years he was tutor there but it was Aikin who embarked on a thorough-going premedical course.<sup>10</sup> It is often stated that the first medical society in the country was founded in Warrington in 1770, but the reference is in fact to the venture of the younger Aikin, aged twenty-three, who after qualifying at Edinburgh and then working with such distinguished figures as Charles White of Manchester and John Haygarth of Chester, came from a course at William Hunter's School of Anatomy to launch his own private course of medical instruction in the Academy where his father was still tutor in Divinity and English Literature.

It was advertised that 'many gentlemen intended for the medical profession have passed through a complete course of Academical learning at Warrington' and that 'Mr. Aikin proposed to give instructions preparatory to the regular study of Physic'. This he continued to do until just before the closure of the Academy in 1787, his students naturally going on to the medical school at Edinburgh where he himself had trained and which was of course open to dissenters. In all twenty-one students went in for medicine during the Academy's short life, six were to finish up in the Dictionary of National Biography and three in Munk's Roll.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Unitarian Chapel in Cairo Street in 1703 and the Friends' School at Penketh in 1687.

<sup>9</sup> A claim supported by Dr. J. Bronowski.

<sup>10</sup> The Medical Directory for 1779 reports 'Mr. Aikin proposes to give, to any gentlemen who are designed for the medical profession, a course of Private Instructions preparatory to the regular study of Physic. Session 10 Sept. to Thursday after Midsummer, Commons (exclusive of breakfast) £17 17s. 0d.; Rent of Apartment for Students £3 3s. 0d.; Courses of Lectures lasting 3 to 5 years £3 3s. 0d. a piece; Lectures on Chemistry by Mr. Aikin £2 2s. 0d.; on Anatomy by the same £1 1s. 0d. Many gentlemen of the medical profession have passed through a complete course of Academical learning at Warrington.'

<sup>11</sup> John Aikin (1758) John Bostock (1763) Edward Chorley (1777) Richard Codrington (1777) Peter Crompton (1781) Thomas Crompton (1776) George Daniel (1776) Robert Dukinfield (1764) Samuel Farr (1758) Philip Holland (1777) . . . Moorhouse (1772) Philip Meadows Martineau (1765) Caleb Hillier Parry (1770) Thomas Percival (1757) Edward Rigby (1761) John Taylor (1759) John Vize (1771) John Wadsworth (1765) and Snowden White (1763).

## *The Warrington Dispensary Library*

Amongst the books used for this 'admirably prepared course' were Baumé's *Manuel de Chymie* and the Haller's *Elements of Physiology* which Aikin himself had translated, and at the closure of the Academy there were in the natural philosophy section of its library 180 books in all and 14 of them were medical text books. None of these was kept for later collection by the Dispensary (as Osler imagined) but they were all transferred to the Academy's successor at Manchester.

In fact the Academy Trustees were insistent that their library should be passed on intact,<sup>12</sup> and resisted attempts by local residents to acquire the books and resolved at a final meeting on 29 June 1796 (when Aikin was present) 'that this Academy be now dissolved and that the library shall, on the same trust, be sent to the Academy at Manchester and that Mr. Bent<sup>13</sup> be authorised to deliver the books etc. to such persons as to be appointed to receive them by the Trustees of the Manchester Academy'. This same transaction is concluded with a minute of the Manchester Academy of the same year for an item of expenditure for 'packing the Warrington Library to send to Manchester'.

### WARRINGTON AND ITS LIBRARIES

The intellectual climate of the town was further heightened by the formation of a circulating library,<sup>14</sup> three years after the founding of the Academy; not only was it one of the first in the country and had the support of the Academy tutors from the start, but it roused the interest of the locally educated business men who were to be associated years later with the founding of the Dispensary and its library. The circulating library was in no sense medical and had no Natural Philosophy section at all, in fact it confined itself entirely to 'belles lettres' until 1811, when the first novel, Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker* was purchased;<sup>15</sup> but there was a thread of continuity with medicine and with the Dispensary through the personalities on the circulating library committee, particularly the secretary, William Eyres. The family of Eyres had been booksellers and printers in the town for a century before these institutions were founded and it was William Eyres, born in 1734, who became known as 'one of the neatest printers in the kingdom'. The many elegant folios, quartos etc., many of them set up by his own hand, which left his press under his own name or that of the London publishers with whom he was in contact, included works by the Academy tutors,<sup>16</sup> works by outsiders attracted to the town by the excellence of his printing, and outpourings by numerous medical authors both in prose and verse some of which were to be found later on the shelves of the Dispensary library. So it was through this atmosphere of literary interest in the town that libraries were encouraged and the Dispensary's library created.

<sup>12</sup> Acad: Min: 1.7.1784 'that Mr. Rigby having put in a claim to the books . . . the trustees are of the opinion that from entries in their books, Mr. Rigby cannot have any property in them, as the books cannot become private property, but, in case of failure of this Institution, must be given to some other dissenting academy'.

<sup>13</sup> Ellis Bent, prosperous Warrington sail cloth manufacturer (1735-1802) a Trustee of the Academy.

<sup>14</sup> Academy Library 1757, Circulating Library 1760, Dispensary Library 1810.

<sup>15</sup> A Circulating Library minute of 1763 records the Revd. J. Priestley recommending the purchase of Franklin's book of propaganda against his proprietors, 'An Historical Review of the Constitution & Government of Pennsylvania'. This gave an early indication of some of his future interests and was three years before he ever met Franklin.

<sup>16</sup> Enfield, Forster, Priestley, John Howard, Thomas Percival, etc.



William Eyres found time to act as secretary of the Circulating Library from the beginning and though he maintained his interest in it for fifty years, the post was after a while taken on by his partners and successors in business, John and James Haddock. The Haddocks maintained the high standard of printing in their day and although none of their work is found in the Dispensary collection Osler was given some excellent examples which are to be found in the library at Montreal. The Haddocks lived to become both committee members of and booksellers to the Dispensary when it was founded in 1810, and remained so during the whole period when its old and early printed collection was being made.<sup>17</sup>

#### WARRINGTON AND AMERICA

It would not have surprised an eighteenth-century Warringtonian to have been told that one of his libraries would eventually find a home in America, because there was a great bond of feeling and association between the two big dissenting groups in the town and the distant colonists. There was as well an identity of outlook over their attitude to the government, under whose restricting laws they both suffered: even though it might take two months to make the passage out, surprisingly close contacts were maintained between the two communities.

The Quaker, Dr. John Fothergill (1712–1780) was the son of a Warrington mother, and his father had paid many visits to America, even in those days, as ‘a Public Friend’, forging links with the colonies which were to become stronger as time went on. Two of Fothergill’s brothers lived in Warrington, one of them, also a famous Quaker preacher who had spent some time in America too, was the Samuel Fothergill to whom Lettsom came as a pupil in 1750 bringing with him a lively disposition from the wealthy West Indies.

John Coakley Lettsom (1744–1813) was later to have closer association with John Fothergill when he was at the height of his success as a London physician and when, amongst many other activities he was frequently in contact with leading Americans. Fothergill worked with Benjamin Franklin<sup>18</sup> as a negotiator on behalf of Lord North’s administration and he also met many younger Americans who, after a period studying medicine at Edinburgh or in Europe, were later to make their mark on their return to Philadelphia or Boston. Franklin himself drew together all sorts of contacts, being well known in England for his writings even before his arrival here to begin his long period as agent for Pennsylvania. He became acquainted with many in the north including the Warringtonians, Percival and Priestley, and the members of the Lunar Society.

Again it is interesting to note that Priestley who was to accompany him to his gruelling interview<sup>19</sup> with the Privy Council was openly advising his own students in Warrington to ‘follow the sun to freedom’.

Warrington at this time had no representation in Parliament so that although the Academy tutors and other Dissenters in the town were Whig and pro-American in

<sup>17</sup> W. Poulson succeeded to the business in 1850 and is mentioned as ‘jealously guarding the records’.

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston in 1706. He was in England as a printer’s apprentice from 1724–1726, as agent for the Pennsylvanian Assembly 1757–1762 and again from 1764–1775.

<sup>19</sup> The presentation of the Massachusetts Petition, for which colony Franklin was by then also acting.

## The Warrington Dispensary Library

their outlook they had no one to put their point of view and were in fact more disenfranchized than the colonists themselves.<sup>20</sup> It was fortunate that this was some time before Pitt's period of McCarthyism or else the Academy toast at dinner 'Civil and Religious Liberty the World Over' would have been highly suspect.

A few of the Warrington students came from America and many from the West Indies so the town was familiar with their ways and their dress. Their tutors were sympathetic to their outlook and well knew that they had more insight into what was going to happen across the Atlantic than Whitehall, but they were sometimes alarmed at their anti-English zeal such as when one young man<sup>21</sup> lodging with Dr. Enfield, his tutor, had to be restrained from illuminating his windows for every American victory. These students came from very prosperous homes and introduced an exotic and somewhat unmanageable element into the Academy.<sup>22</sup> None of them went on to study medicine. Lettsom was privately tutored in the town and was not one of them.

### WARRINGTON AND MEDICINE

In the eighteenth century the doctor/patient ratio seemed little different from today, the town supporting five apothecaries and two men of physician status.<sup>23</sup> Some of them were friends of Dr. John Fothergill and with him were credited with being the originators of the democratic type of medical society we know today. Two dynasties of physicians from the town became well known, Pemberton<sup>24</sup> and Percival.<sup>25</sup> The cultured tradition in the Percivals reaching its height with the publication of his *Ethics* in 1803, a book which was to be recognized as having far-reaching effects on both sides of the Atlantic.

If Warrington had one of the first medical societies, London was quick to follow, and it was Lettsom who in 1773 founded the Medical Society of London. A fellow Friend, a man he had known as a boy in Warrington, was its first secretary;<sup>26</sup> Aikin also was one of its founder members.

Back in the Lancashire town itself all was still activity as the result of liberalizing

<sup>20</sup> It is easy to forget how powerful and virtually independent so many of the colonies' Assemblies had become, some of them having been functioning as local Parliaments for a century and taking little account of the King's representative, the Governor: quite a parallel to a present day situation in Africa.

<sup>21</sup> Probably Henry Laurens. His Huguenot father was not only extremely wealthy but was one of the wisest statesmen that the colonies produced in those early days. He acted as one of the first Presidents of the American Congress in 1777. He was captured by the British on the high seas while on a mission to Holland, treated as a political prisoner and put in the Tower. He had previously brought his sons to England to be educated because he was dissatisfied with the schools in Charleston, his home town, and although distrustful of most of the English ones too, was attracted to Warrington with its advanced methods of education, including science, its Protestant atmosphere, its liberal and pro-American outlook. Young Henry Laurens was the only one allowed to visit his father in the Tower, where he was from 1780 to 1783 and he came down every school holiday to London.

<sup>22</sup> An Academy minute of 1773 resolves 'That no student shall wear gold or silver lace on any part of his clothes, laced ruffles, silk coat, waistcoat or breeches or fine silk stockings'.

<sup>23</sup> In 1783 it was W. Turner, M.D. (Edin.), 1756; T. Pemberton, M.D. (Leyden), 1777; J. Aikin, Lecturer in Anatomy; J. Hankinson, J. Orford, T. Monks and M. Markland, apothecary-surgeons.

<sup>24</sup> Grandfather of Lord Kingswood.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Percival (1740-1804). Another literary member of the family who left his library to Percival of the *Ethics* was Thomas Percival (1691-1750). Osler describes him as brother to the Percival, but he was his uncle, and it is of him that it is recorded that not only that his diploma signed by Boerhaave himself is still in existence, but that 'his love of learned ease contracted the sphere of his professional exertions; and his practice was confined to Warrington and a small surrounding district.'

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Gilbert Thompson, son of the headmaster of the Friends' School at Warrington.

ideas in the air, the experiments in education and religious observance, the perfection and industry of the local printing press, the birth of scientific education which it sponsored, and the contacts with the New World.<sup>27</sup>

In the midst of this in 1770, James Kendrick, founder of the local dispensary was born and passed his formative years. On 16 January 1785 (two days after his fourteenth birthday), he was apprenticed to a local apothecary, James Hankinson, and went on, steeped in the literary and scientific tradition in the town, to practise there until he died at the age of 76.<sup>28</sup> To his successful practice he added a fellowship of the Linnaean Society, and published medical treatises of his own, and edited many others through a close association with the printing house of Eyres, which, although the Academy was by now closed, was busy turning out the works of Aikin, Pennant<sup>29</sup> and Roscoe.<sup>30</sup>

Kendrick had long been anxious to found a dispensary and this he was able to do in 1810 when he was 30. His taste for academic activities had been so much encouraged by the atmosphere he had been brought up in, that from the first he attempted to revive the departed influence of the Academy, by associating the Dispensary with a literary and scientific society, at which papers were read and which the local medical apprentices were encouraged to attend. In all this he was supported by influential figures, some of them well adapted to the idea through their local education at the academy or through serving as officers of the Circulating Library, or because of their medical contacts.

It was this group who acted as Kendrick's committee for the new Dispensary which moved to a larger building in 1819 and were able to help him make the collection which formed the 'old books' of its library.

#### THE DISPENSARY LIBRARY

The first printed catalogue of the library is dated 1834. It is prefaced by the rules which show there was the usual awkward obligation on the librarian (the resident-apothecary for the time being) to replace all lost books at his own expense. It was also stated that the circulating membership was to extend beyond the town and that the annual subscription was to be one guinea.

Two apprentices were attached to the Dispensary and their indenture fees of £25 were also allocated to the library funds. It is estimated that this, together with the subscriptions, would give them about £20 a year to spend on books; there must have been other sources of income as well, as one year is recorded in which they spent £80,<sup>31</sup> while quite a number of the volumes were gifts.

By the time of the printing of the catalogue their collection of old and early printed

<sup>27</sup> Warrington initiated scientific education throughout the world, according to Dr. J. Bronowski.

<sup>28</sup> Recognition of his work is shown in a Dispensary minute of 21 May 1847 which says 'that the committee receives with the deepest regret a letter from Dr. Kendrick announcing his resignation of the Office of Consulting Physician; and whilst they grieve to hear that the infirmities attending the close of a long and benevolent life compel his retirement to a more private sphere, they are unanimous in recording the high sense of his valuable services.

They shall ever remember him with gratitude as the Father and Founder of an excellent Institution which has conferred incalculable benefits on all classes in the town. John Guest, chairman. Edward Gaskell, secretary.'

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Pennant, the naturalist.

<sup>30</sup> William Roscoe of Liverpool.

<sup>31</sup> 1832 'the sum of £80 to be spent on books, which Dr. Kendrick is to see duly arrive and are catalogued'.



### *The Warrington Dispensary Library*

books, the 'Warrington Collection' which Osler purchased, was complete, having been assembled in less than twenty years; they were then only buying the current medical publications. The assembling of the older books must have been facilitated by the literary know-how of Kendrick and his associates, and by the first class booksellers in the town.

There is no record of any protest being made that this money was being spent on books rather than the patients, as when the Manchester Medical Society was forming its library later in the century. Then, the librarian's purchases were defended, not only on the grounds that the rare and old books were an asset to the library, but because over 10,000 had been added to the shelves at an average cost of 2s. 2½d. each. So, no doubt, at Warrington the cost of the second-hand books (the bulk of them published round about 1770) would be well within their means, their purchase of current medical text books costing them about 10s. 0d. each.<sup>32</sup>

A scholarly description of the more important items in the collection was given when they were first presented to Baltimore and incorporated into their Medical History Section. The value of some came from the fact that they were products of some famous early printing house, of others because of rarity, and of some because of their famous authors and the contact they brought with the great medical thinkers of the past; all with varying degrees of interest to the medical historian.

There were examples of elegantly printed, beautifully bound and obsequiously dedicated books whose contents revealed the author as more than a prisoner of his times, medically. They are almost impossible to read with the repetition of ignorant and superstitious nonsense; at the other extreme there are the manuscript lectures of John Rutherford,<sup>33</sup> described as written in his own hand but probably copied out by one of the students and brought back to Warrington. These reveal at once why a training at Edinburgh was sought by so many students and also the quality of the teaching handed on from the 'master', Hermann Boerhaave. Osler must have prized this unpretentious volume, as, though stamped with the Dispensary mark, he never let it reach Baltimore but kept it to himself so that it passed eventually to the Osler Library at McGill University. Rutherford's lectures have a modern ring about them although written only two years after Culloden when some parts of Scotland were regarded as hardly civilized: so too do the teachings of that other polemical star of the Edinburgh medical school, James Gregory,<sup>34</sup> who wrote in *The Duties and Qualifications of a Physician*, published about the same time, 'There is a numerous class of patients who put a physician's good nature and patience to a severe trial; those, I mean, who suffer under nervous ailments. Although the fears of these patients are generally groundless, their sufferings are real'. This enlightened appreciation of the anxiety state would seem to be in advance of most eighteenth-century thinking.

Nearly half the contents of the library were books or pamphlets printed between 1750 and 1800 and amongst these it is easy to find many which have a hint as to why they were included, for nearly all of them have their previous owner's name on the fly leaf, sometimes giving brief particulars in addition such as, 'ex dono autoris'

<sup>32</sup> 1500–1550 six books, 1550–1600 eighteen, 1600–1650 twenty-nine, 1650–1700 ninety-eight, 1700–1750 two hundred and seventeen, 1750–1800 five hundred and fifty two, 1800–1850 eight.

<sup>33</sup> Dr. John Rutherford, maternal grandfather of Sir Walter Scott.

<sup>34</sup> James Gregory 1752–1821, library cat: 342 octavo.

(lib. cat. 396) or for a Dutch materia medica of 1654 'Wm. Vincent senior eius liber. Ex dono Eliz. Vincent 27.8.1706', (lib. cat. 800) or as in an old herbal which has a double clue to its original purchase in 'Wrightson Mundy 1724 liber eius', with 'pret: 4/0 1684' in another hand (lib. cat. 480).

Most of these names denote local associations, such as Kendrick's in a book donated no doubt as a curiosity; this is by William Clowes and printed in 1591 and even those who find longwinded title pages as tedious as a twice-told tale cannot fail to smile at the sixteenth-century flourish of *A proved Practice for all young Chirurgicals concerning burning with Gun-powder and wounds made with Gunshot, Sword, Halbard, Pike, Lance and such other* (lib. cat. 251). Remembering that the horse was the doctor's only means of transportation right into the present century and that for the apothecary there was no carriage, only the saddle, we find *The Farrier's Vade Mecum or Gentleman's Pocket Companion, a Compendious Treatise on the Practice of Horse Medicine or the Art of Farriery. To comprise everything which is really useful in the disorders by which that Noble Animal suffers*, S. Freeman, London, 1772 (lib. cat. 746), not perhaps out of place. There is an added interest here in that the book was one of a number from the Kirkland family mostly from the library of Dr. Thomas Kirkland of Ashby de la Zouch<sup>55</sup> but this one had belonged to his son James Kirkland, Surgeon to the Tower, and evidently reached Warrington through the grandson, T. K. Glazebrook, who was a member of Kendrick's committee. By the time the library was being built up there were no longer any men in the town with the M.D. Leyden (M.D. Edinburgh having taken its place locally as the hallmark of the physician), nevertheless they must have been delighted with the 'Malphigi'<sup>56</sup> with the note inside showing it to have belonged to Boerhaave himself. This must have been one of the last books to join the old collection as it is not in the library list and was kept by Osler and is now to be found at Montreal. All the works of Sydenham (lib. cat. 559) were collected by Kendrick and are there to be of use to scholars and many other classics as Descartes's *De Homine* (lib. cat. 228), Harvey's *De motu cordis* (lib. cat. 766), and Witherings *Foxglove* (lib. cat. 676) (only the last in first edition) to delight the bibliophile; when Osler made the presentation he had specially bought a first edition of *De motu cordis* to complete the collection. Other books, examples of the kind to be found in most libraries of this type, have been fully described elsewhere but mention can be made of a topical pamphlet for eighteenth-century readers *Distilled Spirituous Liquors, the Bane of the Nation* (lib. cat. 734), and the many treatises on gout which included Cadogan's (lib. cat. 590), in spite of Dr. Johnson's scathing criticism that 'the good in it was borrowed, the nonsense was all his own.'

Dr. Kendrick was himself interested in smallpox, as who could fail to be in the days when it was endemic, an account of its effects in Warrington when he was a boy having been communicated to the Royal Society by Dr. Percival; so the library contained all the contemporary publications and earlier records of the subject including Dimsdale's account of his trip to Russia (lib. cat. 571).

<sup>55</sup> Dr. Thomas Kirkland 1721–1798, see also an interesting account in D.N.B.

<sup>56</sup> Marcello Malpighi, *Opera Omnia*, London 1686, 'presented to the Warrington Dispensary Library by Edward Gaskell, Esq. 20 Nov. 1839.' with the earlier entry 'MALPIGHI OPERA E. LIBRIS JOHIS ROGERS, IN VENDITIONE LIBRORUM CLARISSIMI BOERHAAVE AN 1739, HIC LIBER CUM OPERIBUS POSTHUMIS LONDON. 1697 VENDEBAT Florensis 22. i.e. sterlingorum 02.00.4.'

## *The Warrington Dispensary Library*

Rush's *Medical Enquiries*<sup>37</sup> recalls a name famous in early American medicine and politics; he was one of Dr. Fothergill's protégés and went on to found medical institutions in Philadelphia as well as being the only doctor to sign the Declaration of Independence. These volumes of his were printed in Philadelphia and so had made the passage to Warrington under sail, before Osler took it back by steam. William Hillary<sup>38</sup> was another assisted by Fothergill, who arranged for him to join the Quaker community in the Barbadoes; from there came the material for his book and also some young men as students to Warrington; it may have been this which made Kendrick acquire it rather than any interest in tropical diseases. Lettsom's inaugural thesis on the effect of tea,<sup>39</sup> a copy of which is among the pamphlets, shows by its dedication that he had not forgotten his early days, while many another volume, products of the local press like Aikin's *Biographical Memoirs of Medicine* (lib. cat. 164), continues the local interest.

In 1861 the librarian reported that seventeen of the old books were missing, but a later check showed that most of them were returned and so in spite of many vicissitudes the collection remained intact to catch Osler's eye and to provide eventual material for study by American medical historians.

As medicine and society itself become increasingly dominated by science and technology and the role of the historian as a guide to political actions has become discredited, there is a tendency to reject the past writings of medical men, the scientific content of whose treatment was trivial and whose chief therapeutic weapon was authority, presence and prestige. The fact that these men were some of them intellectual giants and were highly trained within the limits of knowledge available at the time is overlooked. Now that the language of technology is isolating the doctor still further from that long and winding road down which all his knowledge has slowly travelled and been painstakingly accumulated there has been a natural reaction to re-emphasize the historic role of the physician, the bridge between humanism and science.

This reaction is not as noticeable on this side of the Atlantic, where vestigial traces of past mental processes and historical traditions are more obvious, but it has, by contrast, found its greatest expression in the country where this library has come to rest. In America and Canada there are Chairs of Medical History and a career in the subject from graduation, and as the effect of their studies becomes increasingly felt, aided we hope by similar acquisitions to Osler's, they will yet be able to release the scientist from his uncultured bondage to the present.

<sup>37</sup> lib. cat. 516. Benjamin Rush came to graduate in Edinburgh and met Fothergill in 1769.

<sup>38</sup> William Hillary another Wensleydale Quaker 1697–1763. His 'Epidemical Diseases of Barbadoes' was first published in 1759.

<sup>39</sup> The dedication to John Fothergill included also, a tribute to 'ejusdem fratri SAMUELI FOTHERGILL, civi Warringtoniensi intergerrimo' . . . ' lib. cat. 587.

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Notes, etc.

After Osler's death Sherrington got this book off the shelf, brought it to me with a twinkle in his eye, & told me he had LENT it to O. in 1914. About 1916 he found the book when O. was out, saw that O. had written (opposite), "Given to me . . .", hadn't the heart to disillusion him, and so he (S.) added the "E Libris.. ." addressing in the expropriation!

27.xi.47 (S.'s 90th birthday)

See also \$5.00, also specified. W. W. F. & W. S. D. among, "Being a reference #93. 1950. J. Amer. Med. Coll. 1: 27: 161-73 and reprint, pp. 4 & 13.

Figure 1. Typed note by Dr. W. W. Francis concerning Sherrington's 'gift' to Osler and other books that unofficially found their way onto his shelves.

E libris  
 Gulielmi Osler. 1914.  
 Given to me VIII. 16.14. by *ES. Sherrington*

Figure 2. These entries on a copy of Descartes' *De Homine* (1662) in the handwriting of both Osler and Sherrington regularize the ownership of the volume.





Figure 4.  
Dr. James Kendrick (1771–1847), founder of Warrington Infirmary and its Library.

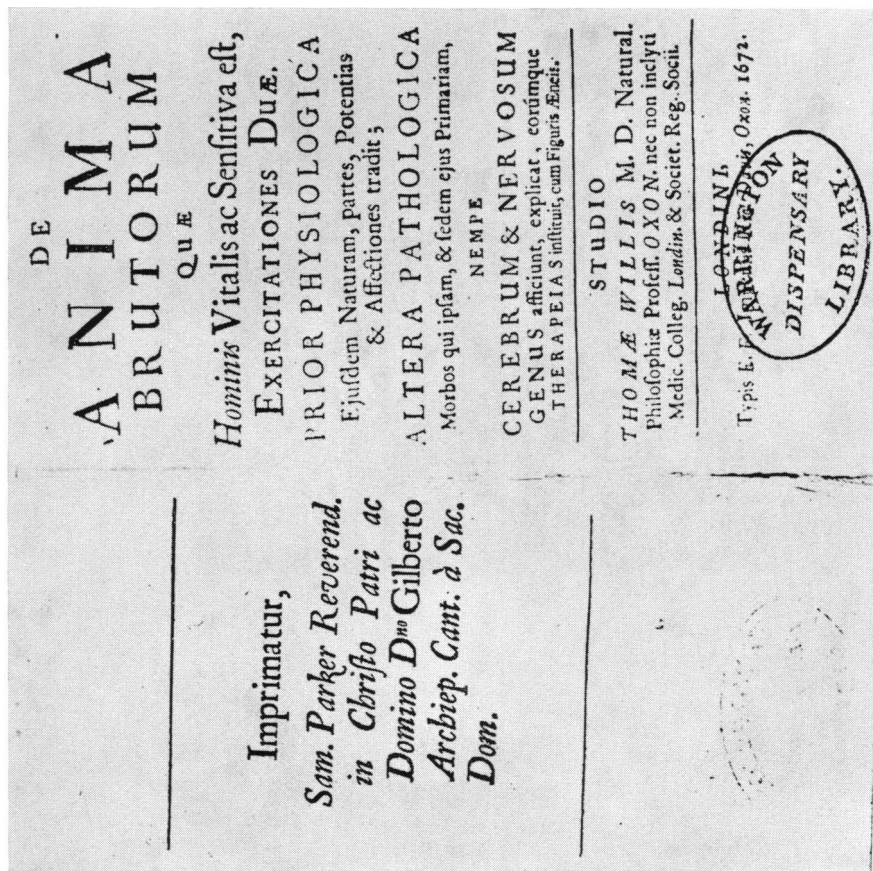


Figure 3.  
This volume followed *Cerebri Anatomie* amongst the works of Thomas Willis (1621–75), the Oxford Professor of Physiology. The compulsory censorship of medical publications, as shown by the 'Imprimatur', came to an end in 1693.



Malpighii Opera 296  
 E Libris Joh<sup>is</sup> Rogers  
 in Venditione Librorum clarissimi Boerhaave An. 1739.  
 hic liber cum Operibus posthumis Londini. 1697. vendebat  
 Florenis 22. i. e. Sterlingorum 02. 00. 4.

Figure 5.

A note on the fly leaf of the library's Malpighi confirms that when Boerhaave died in 1738 John Rogers bought it at the sale.

March 1st 1918

Dear Osler,

I am sending the Aikin to-day to you. I am delighted to have any chance of filling a gap for you, even by such a trifle. You will admit that you make it very hard to find any joints in your harness! If you want all Aikin's things, will you put on a postcard what you have already, and I will challenge myself to find some more if I can?

It would be great fun to work at that Warrington circle. Some day I must get out of the train at that now horrible place and see what remains of the old life can be found. My wife's great-grandfather, Sir Henry Holland, owed a great deal I think to that Unitarian circle. His father was Peter Holland, Surgeon, of Kentsford (the original of "Cranford"), whose father-in-law was the Reverend W. Willets, Unitarian, who persuaded Priestley to get on with his oxygen work, and whose mother-in-law was Catherine Wedgwood, the great Josiah's favourite sister. There was much linkage between the Warrington, Manchester and Staffordshire Unitarians, and no doubt with other groups elsewhere. Perhaps all this has been written up, and I should like to find out. Some of the best intellectual life in the country went on in those circles - to which of course the Darwins belong, - and it ought not to be kept obscured from history merely because the orthodox and sterile Church in those days kept it out of University and social prominence.

Believe me,  
 Yours sincerely,  
 Walter L. Fletcher

Figure 6.

Sir Walter Morley Fletcher, secretary to the Medical Research Council, writes to his friend Sir William Osler about 'the Warrington circle'.



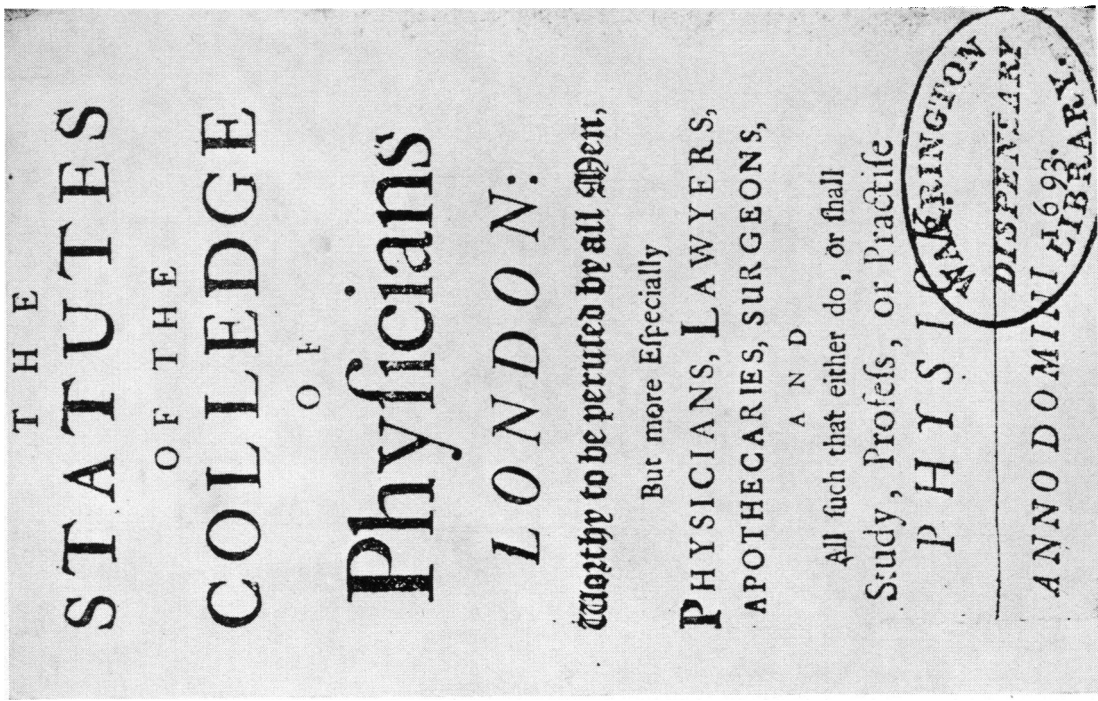


Figure 7.

The statutes of the College, first drawn up in 1520, were revised and republished at intervals. The title-page of the statutes during the presidency of Thomas Burwell.

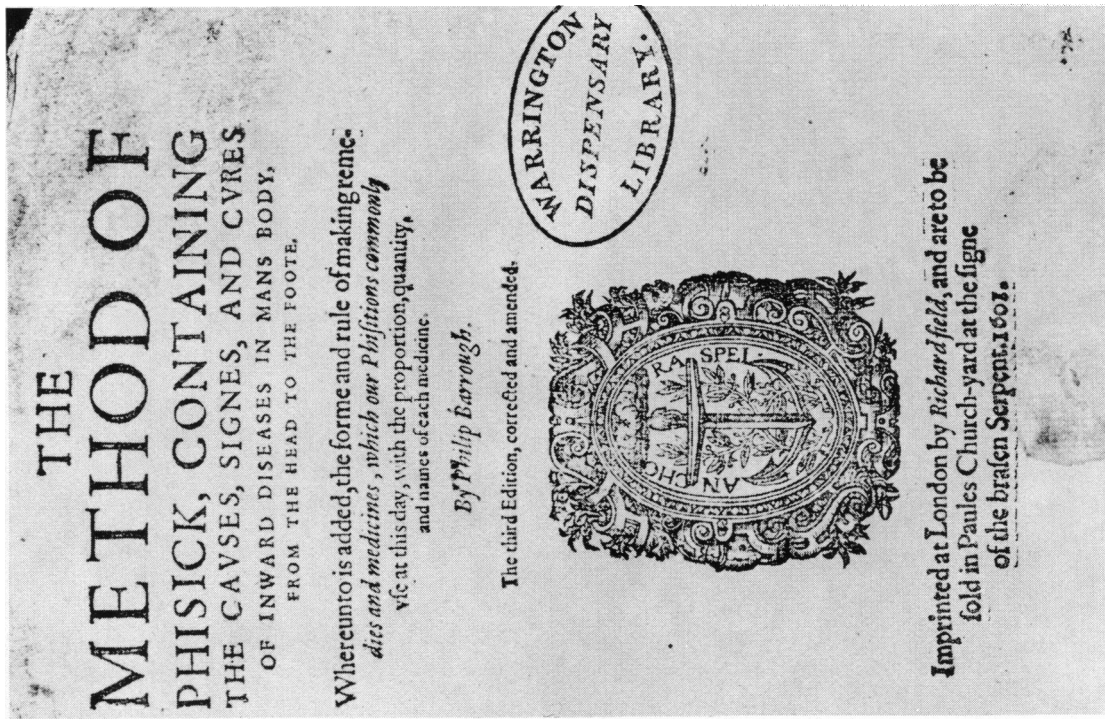


Figure 8.

The title-page of a book on Elizabethan medicine; the printer, Richard Field, also printed for Shakespeare.