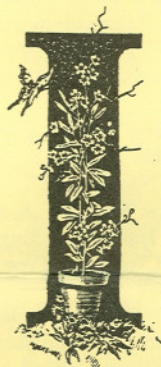


OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

No. 54 – February 1987

THE OSLER COLLECTION OF MYRON PRINZMETAL AT MCMASTER UNIVERSITY



IN 1947 MYRON PRINZMETAL wrote to Dr. W.W. Francis, the first Osler Librarian at McGill University, informing Francis of his intention to piece together an Osler collection. He had made "a fairly nice start ... a few reprints, letters, many books, lots of pictures", and he had even arranged for Seymour Thomas to paint a copy of the famous Osler portrait.¹ A cardiologist from California, Prinzmetal is known in medical circles for his filmed experiments in which he and his associates induced auricular arrhythmias in two hundred dogs.² He first described variant angina, sometimes

referred to in the medical literature as Prinzmetal's angina.

Prinzmetal was also an avid collector of the history of medicine. From Francis he received duplicate offprints and books written by Osler. In return he made several generous donations to the Osler Library. Their correspondence, comprising some thirty letters, begins on a serious note. But, once the two men became better acquainted, their exchanges were jocular and occasionally juvenile. In a few letters Prinzmetal addresses Francis as "Dear Nephoooo or Neffoew", refers to himself as "Dr. Prinz Muddle", and signs the letter "Your Unk W.O.". When Francis asked Prinzmetal if he could obtain a copy of *The Diseases of Women* (1940) by Trotula of Salerno for Osler's Oxford medical student, Mrs. Geoffrey Jefferson, whom Osler affectionately called "Trotula", Prinzmetal sent a copy at once but inscribed it "To that Big Fat Francis from M.P.". Not to be outdone, Francis appended a learned, witty, but somewhat complicated reply to the book's fly-leaf: "[from] that Long Lanky M P, of Los Angeles, cardiac wizard, geiger-counting erythroblastic irradiater AND ardent Osler fan, en route to WO's 'Trotula', viâ the custodian of his ashes, books, and PEN [a gift from Prinzmetal] which writes this in the hand of W.W.F. TROTULAE SUAE d.d. Manes Egertonii Y. Dav[id]is per manus discipuli et nepotis. Osler Library, 1 May, 1950." Francis added, perhaps by way of clarification, that the book is "a gift to his Trotula from the Shades of E.Y.D. by the hands of a disciple [Prinzmetal] and a nephew [Francis]".³

It was not just Osler's publications that Prinzmetal wanted to collect. He informed Francis that he was interested in purchasing Osler's original letters and manuscripts, though he had never seen any of these listed in antiquarian catalogues. He told Francis: "I would be interested in buying W.O. old chairs, ... or desks - - but I suppose their value was never appreciated & they are lost or burned for fire wood - - or even old suit cases or brief cases (E. Rosencrantz has a beautiful one)."⁴ Francis had already sent him "a relic ... Osler's flask, with silver cup attachment inscribed W.O./1905" which had been given to Osler "by some of 'the boys' on his departure from Baltimore, and always went travelling with him by train or motor."⁵

It was Prinzmetal's intention to give his library to a university, but by 1975 his health had deteriorated considerably and the family engaged the antiquarian dealer, Jacob Zeitlin of California, to sell the entire library. Luckily, at that point, news of the sale came to the attention of Dr. William Carleton Gibson who had become friends with Prinzmetal and had inspected his library on several occasions.

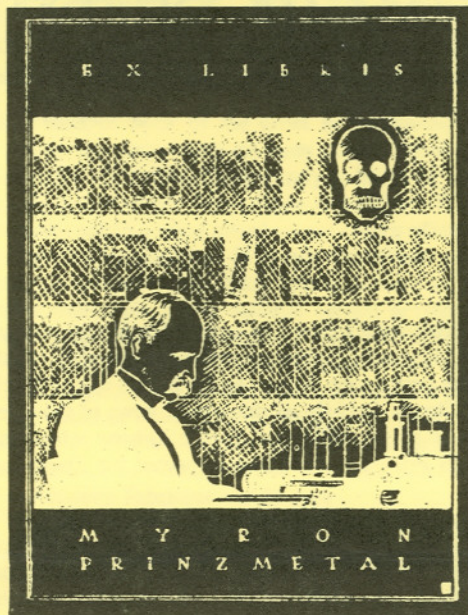
Gibson is currently the Chancellor of the University of Victoria. He has had a distinguished career as a physician, professor, and historian of medicine. A member of the American Osler Society and the Osler Club of London, he established his reputation as an Oslerian during his medical student days at McGill when he wrote "An Appreciation" contained in the second edition of Maude E. Abbott's bibliography of Osler. It was not Prinzmetal's Osler collection that piqued Gibson's interest primarily, however, but an oval portrait of William Harvey discovered in 1948 by Sir Geoffrey Keynes in the ruins of Rolls Park, the home of Sir Eliab Harvey, William's eldest brother. The portrait was exported illegally by two English dealers and was sold to Prinzmetal. Gibson, in collaboration with Jacob Zeitlin, helped to arrange for the repatriation of the Harvey portrait, and it now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery of London.⁶

Once Gibson became aware that the Osler collection could be purchased separately from the rest of Prinzmetal's library, he alerted Dr. G.R. Paterson of the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine. Gibson told Paterson that the opportunity should not be missed to purchase this important Osler collection with Hannah funds and to house it in a Canadian library. The Woodward Biomedical Library at the University of British Columbia had acquired Felix Cunha's collection of Osleriana from San Francisco.⁷ The Hannah Institute acted quickly, and the Osler items were forwarded to Toronto in May 1976. With the assistance of Dr. Charles G. Roland, the collection was then transferred to the Health Sciences Library of McMaster University in 1977.

Prinzmetal numbered and annotated all of the entries in his copy of the second edition of Abbott's bibliography, the highest number being 1298. At some unrecorded time he wrote "330 items" in the front of his copy although the collection is now somewhat larger than that number indicates. He placed Osler's articles, offprints, and pamphlets in thirteen specially constructed boxes decorated in marbled paper; the filing of these items consequently corresponds to the respective number in Prinzmetal's copy of Abbott's bibliography.

A few of the books carry Prinzmetal's Osler bookplate. Measuring 105 x 80 mm., the bookplate is on cream-coloured paper and features a somber black-ink sketch of Osler. Osler is seated at his desk looking down at his notes or a book. Behind him are shelves of books and a skull positioned at the top right-hand corner (see the accompanying illustration).

The initial letter on this page is reproduced from *Le Livre moderne: revue du monde littéraire et des bibliophiles contemporains*, publiée par Octave Uzanne, Paris, vol. 2, 1890 (Bibl. Osl. 7169).



Prinzmetal's Osler collection contains many of Osler's well-known works such as *Modern Medicine*, *The Principles and Practice of Medicine*, *Aequanimitas*, and *An Alabama Student*. These have been collected in their multiple editions and impressions. Many items are autographed association copies. Thus, for example, there are two copies of *Incunabula Medica*, one a presentation copy from Grace R. Osler to Thomas McCrae, the other also signed by Osler's wife but presented by Francis to Norman B. Gwyn. It would appear that Prinzmetal obtained quite a number of items from Gwyn's Osler collection.

Of particular interest are several books which at one time were either part of Osler's personal library or were given away by Osler to an acquaintance. These include the following: Robert Southey's *Journal of a Tour in the Netherlands in the Autumn of 1815* (Boston; New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1902), signed by Osler; E.E. Hale's *In His Name: A Story of the Waldenses, Seven Hundred Years Ago* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), signed by the author with a letter from him to Osler affixed to the front pastedown; H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), scorched in the fire at Osler's residence in Oxford in 1915 and traded by Francis for a usable copy; B. Jowett's translation of *The Dialogues of Plato*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), inscribed twice by Osler to his eldest brother Featherston who in return gave it to his grandson William Osler Abbott,⁸ and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, new ed. (London: Printed for Thomas Tegg, 1845), a presentation copy from Osler to Gwyn.

Although Prinzmetal's Osler collection is housed at McMaster's Health Sciences Library, the Osler memorabilia that Prinzmetal acquired did not come with the collection. As a result, the commissioned copy of the Seymour Thomas portrait and Osler's flask have gone elsewhere. Gibson recalls that Prinzmetal also owned Osler's wartime greatcoat, once in the possession of Dr. Thomas McPherson of Victoria.⁹

McMaster's Health Sciences Library has a relatively small budget for the history of medicine. The main emphasis of the Library's collection policy is on Canadiana in the nineteenth century. In view of the budget and the collection policy, the Library has decided not to add substantially to Prinzmetal's Osler collection. There are significant collections of Osler elsewhere in North America, and publications such as *The Collected Essays of Sir William Osler* (1985) and the Hannah Institute's microfiche of writings by and about Osler adequately serve most researchers.¹⁰ A recent item that

the Library did purchase was a presentation copy of the American edition of R.M. Bucke's *Man's Moral Nature* (1879). In this case the purchase was made chiefly because of Bucke's position as Superintendent of the London Asylum in Ontario around the turn of the century, but Bucke's inscription to Osler on the book's fly-leaf was definitely a bonus.¹¹

References

1. Prinzmetal to Francis, 9 April 1947, Francis Papers, Osler Library. Prinzmetal's copy of the Seymour Thomas portrait was reproduced on the frontispiece to the Osler Memorial Number of the *Archives of Internal Medicine* (vol 84, July 1949) and on the front cover of *Current Medical Digest* (vol. 36, December 1969).
2. Prinzmetal et al.: Mechanism of the Auricular Arrhythmias. *Circulation* 1950; 1: 241-245. See also his *Auricular Arrhythmias*. Springfield, Ill., Charles C. Thomas, 1952.
3. Francis to Prinzmetal, 1 May 1950, Francis Papers, Osler Library. For Osler's letters to Trotula', see Harvey Cushing: *The Life of Sir William Osler*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925, vol. 2, pp. 203-204, 317-318, 329.
4. Prinzmetal to Francis, 29 May 1949, Francis Papers, Osler Library. In April 1948 Prinzmetal went to San Francisco where he attended the meeting of the American College of Physicians, but the main attraction of the city was the Rosenkrantz collection of Osleriana at the University of California Medical Library.
5. Francis to Prinzmetal, 25 June 1948, Francis Papers, Osler Library.
6. Gibson: Celebrating the "complete observer": William Harvey's 400th Birthday. *CMAJ* October 7, 1978; 119: 793-794, 796-798, 801. I am grateful to Dr. Gibson for sharing information with me about his relationship with Prinzmetal.
7. Prinzmetal's copy of Cunha's *Osler as a Gastroenterologist* (1948) bears the following inscription on the front free endpaper: "To Myron Prinzmetal on the occasion of spending an evening at his home discussing our mutual admiration. None other than Sir William - - Sincerely Felix Cunha."
8. Prinzmetal purchased this first edition of Jowett's *Plato* from the Williams Book Store of Boston on 17 February 1949. When William Osler Abbott died, his widow sold his books without consulting her brother-in-law, Dr. Malloch of the New York Academy of Medicine, about their possible value. The book is briefly referred to in Cushing's *Life*, vol. 2, p. 234. The Osler Library's copy of Jowett's *Plato* (*Bibliotheca Osleriana*, no. 217) is the third edition and was a birthday present given to Osler from his wife on their honeymoon in 1892. See Francis to Prinzmetal, 17 February 1950, Francis Papers, Osler Library.
9. Gibson, *op cit.*, p. 119.
10. The Hannah Institute's microfiche edition of Osleriana consists of sixty publications by and about Osler. Many items from Prinzmetal's collection were used for the basis of the reproduction. Copies of the microfiche set have been deposited at each of the five Ontario universities having Hannah Chairs. See G.R. Paterson: The Hannah Institute: promoting Canadian history of medicine. *CMAJ* June 1, 1983; 1325-1328.
11. On Bucke's interaction with Osler, see G.H. Stevenson: Bucke and Osler: A Personality Study. *CMAJ* February 1941; 44: 183-188.

Carl Spadoni
Archivist
Health Sciences Library
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

COMPUTERIZED CATALOGUING INITIATED THROUGH WELLCOME TRUST GRANT

The new year began on a highly auspicious note with the announcement by the Wellcome Trust of a grant of over \$86,000 to catalogue the uncatalogued historic works in the Osler Library. Approximately 6,500 books will be catalogued under this programme. These include transfers from the McGill Medical Library, titles purchased with funds from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and from the McGill Advancement Program, and numerous gifts from hospitals, educational institutions, and individuals. A rather surprising percentage of these titles are works published in the 17th and 18th centuries, and their full description will greatly enhance our picture of the special strengths and qualities of the Osler Library's collection. Most importantly, however, this grant will inaugurate the conversion of the Osler Library's catalogues to machine-readable form, and their integration into the University's computerized data-base. As the cataloguing will be done through a cooperative information system, UTLAS, libraries across the continent, and indeed around the world will soon have access to the Osler Library's catalogue on-line. Computerized cataloguing of current purchases will also begin this year and the reconversion of manually catalogued records is in the planning stages.

Those who have followed the fortunes of the Osler Library for a number of years will remember how the Wellcome Trust's establishment of an endowment fund for book purchases in the Library helped it turn a critical corner in its career, and to become a continuously growing resource for medical history. This new act of generosity and confidence will ensure that the Osler Library enters the 21st century well-prepared to serve the needs of medical historical scholarship, and for this we are deeply grateful to the Wellcome Trust.

THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

On the 25th November 1986, at the Third National Conference on Medical History and Health in Australia, an Australian Society of the History of Medicine was established. The objects of the Society are:

- a) the association in Australia of a society of persons interested in the history of medicine;
- b) the encouragement in Australia of the study and the teaching of the history of medicine and the development of critical standards in the field;
- c) the organisation in Australia of conferences, meetings and discussion groups for the presentation and discussion of papers, dissertations and other matters relating to the history of medicine.

Membership is open to all interested in the history of medicine.

All enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, Professor Harold Attwood, Medical History Unit, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia.

DISCOVERING "THE BOOK OF THE HEART"

The subject of the latest exhibition of books in the display cases at the doors of the Osler Library is "The Book of the Heart: Historical Writings on Cardiology." This exhibition looks at how the book served to convey information about an organ which, albeit conspicuous, was nonetheless highly mysterious. For it is an ironic fact that the heart's role as the seat of life was manifest even to primitive man, yet there were almost no opportunities until the very recent past to observe the living heart at work. The relationship of its structure to its motion, and its connection to the vascular

system, or to respiration, or to phenomena such as pulse and blood pressure, had to be pieced together by a complex process of logic and observation that took centuries to unfold. Hence the book served as the major "laboratory" for speculation and research on the heart.

Behind the "Book of the Heart" lies the notion that the heart held sway over psychological experience as well as physical life. In particular, the heart was the organ of love, and our exhibit opens with a woodcut published in 1470 by a German artist known as Meister Caspar. It demonstrates the power of Venus by showing all the myriad ways in which the heart might be tormented by love. The artist who illustrated King René of Anjou's allegorical romance, *Le coeur d'Amours espris* (1467), depicts the stealing of the poet's heart by Love as a literal theft. The eerie combination of allegorical personifications of emotion (Love and Ardent Desire) and living people (King René) within a setting of high realism well exemplifies the ambivalent attitude towards the heart that underlay efforts of early medical men to comprehend its workings.

Speculations about the function of the heart and the circulation of the blood prior to the time of William Harvey essentially revolved around problems raised by Galen's model of pulmonary circulation, and it is to this model that the second section of the display is devoted. Galen believed that blood was formed in the liver, and passed along the vena cava to the right auricle during diastole. Diastole also drew air from the lungs into the left auricle. During systole, the blood passed through invisible pores in the septum into the left auricle; there, "vital spirits" were formed by the interaction of blood and air. Blood and "vital spirits" were then conveyed throughout the body through the arteries. Medieval anatomy treatises such as that of Guido of Vigevano (born c. 1300) showed the heart in its traditional Galenic relationship to the lungs and liver.

Leonard da Vinci's anatomical drawings, displayed in the third case, demonstrate the daunting chasm between knowledge of the anatomy of the heart, and theory about its physiology — a chasm very difficult to bridge in that the heart, alone of all the organs, could not be understood apart from its motion in a living being. Hence even informed dissection was often of little assistance to understanding. Leonardo's drawing of the vascular system is based on the Galenic assumption that its purpose is the conveyance of "vital spirit" throughout the body, and is entirely theoretical. On the other hand, his exterior views of the heart showing the coronary vessels are based on acute first hand observation. The conflict of theory and observation is best illustrated by Leonardo's cross-section of the heart, showing the ventricles. Ever since the time of Galen, anatomists had regarded the heart as consisting of ventricles only, and had contended that the auricles were no more than appendages of the veins. Leonardo contested this traditional view, arguing that the auricles were an integral part of the heart, yet his sketch duly depicts the obligatory Galenic "invisible pores" in the septum.

Scepticism about the existence of Galen's "invisible pores" was voiced by a few medieval Arabic writers, and more concertedly in the Western Renaissance by Michael Servetus (1511?-1553), Realdo Colombo (1516?-1559) and Andreas Vesalius (1525?-1603). However, it is difficult to determine the relationship between these writers, and in particular, to resolve the problem of the mutual influence of Servetus and Vesalius. The first edition of the latter's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) expressed cautious doubts about the pores, but the revised version of 1555 — published two years after Servetus' *Christianismi restitutio* enunciated a theory of pulmonary circulation that eliminated the need to posit a passage of blood through the cardiac septum — was quite explicit that there were no "invisible pores".

Michael Servetus' *Christianismi restitutio* is essentially a theological work, but it contains an important description of the passage of the blood "not through the middle wall of the heart, as is commonly believed, but with the consummate cunning...in a long course through the lungs...". Its possible influence is much

debated, for Servetus was burned as a heretic in Calvin's Geneva in the same year as his book was published (1553), and his writings were proscribed and confiscated. Only a handful of copies of the original edition have survived, and even the Osler Library's 1790 reprint is a very rare book.

The most famous book of the heart is undoubtedly William Harvey's *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis*, the first work to describe systemic (as distinct from merely pulmonary) circulation. Flanking a facsimile of the first edition (Frankfurt, 1628) — our original remains safely locked away! — are copies of its numerous later editions and translations. Harvey's exposition of systemic circulation was essentially the final link in a chain of reasoning and experimentation about the vascular system developed by his teachers and predecessors, particularly Andreas Cesalpinus and Fabricius de Aquapendente of Padua. The latter's *De venarum ostiolis*, originally published in 1603, demonstrated the presence of valves in the veins of the arm by an experiment later reproduced and developed by Harvey in his monumental treatise; we have juxtaposed illustrations from these two works to indicate the close relationship between Fabricius and Harvey.

One of the earliest advocates of Harvey's views on the circulation of the blood was René Descartes. His *De hominis figuris ...* (Leiden, 1662) contains an ingenious engraving of the heart with lift-up flaps revealing the connection between the external aspect and the internal structure of the organ — a remarkable illustration of how the book of the heart might function as a scientific teaching model.

Reactions to Harvey's theory of general circulation and to the role of the heart as a "pump" varies from enthusiastic approval to violent rejection, with incomprehension and misrepresentation thrown in for good measure. A selection of these various viewpoints culled from the shelves of the Library includes Robert Grove (1634-1696), Bishop of Chichester's poetical *Carmen de sanguinis circuitu* (London, 1685), and Oliver Hill's anonymously printed *Essay of D.M. a Friend of Truth and Physic Against the Circulation of the Blood* (London, 1700). Hill's arguments are interesting in that they demonstrate the force of the ancient Galenic physiology, bound up as it was with layers of mythopoetic and philosophical speculation. For Hill, the analogy between the human heart and the Sun, the "heart of the Universe", was of primal importance. "Heat" was the key factor. "The true Cause of the Motion [of the heart]", he claimed, "is seen in the Blood...to wit, by the Heat of Life kindling in the left ventricle, and breaking out into Flames or Flashes, like the Lightning ... making a Puff and Blast: the first whereof swells the Heart; and the other moves the Blood. And by the by demonstrates Trinity in Unity."

Richard Lower's *Tractatus de corde*, published in 1669, can be said to be the first truly comprehensive account of the anatomy and physiology of the heart. His description of the spiral course of myocardial fibres, as revealed by one of the work's illustrations, is especially remarkable. In order to study coronary anastomoses, Lower employed a technique, devised by Christopher Wren, of injecting fluid into the vessels. This technique was adapted and amplified by the Dutch anatomist Frederik Ruysch, who injected metallic salts or wax into blood vessels in order to create anatomical and pathological museum specimens. These are the basis of the superb illustrations of hearts, healthy and diseased, in his anatomical works. One of these, showing a heart injected with red wax to show the ramification of the coronary vessels, shares the display case with Lower's treatise.

The book of the heart attempted to record not only what the heart did and what it looked like, but how it felt and sounded. The monitoring of the pulse is probably one of the oldest diagnostic techniques in the medical repertoire, and merits a special section to itself. The title page of John Floyer's *The Physician's Pulse Watch* reflects the number of variations on the tradition available to 18th century physicians, including the newly-discovered Chinese methods of pulse-reading, and "a new mechanical method"

involving Floyer's own invention of a watch with a second hand. François Nicolas Marquet's method of registering the pulse, enunciated in his *Nouvelle méthode facile et curieuse, pour apprendre par les notes de musique de connaitre le pouls de l'homme ...* (Nancy, 1747) is noteworthy for its use of musical notation, perhaps the best way of conveying information about pulse rhythms and rates through the medium of the printed page.

Our final case is devoted to advances in the illustration of heart conditions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A superb lithograph from J. Bouillaud, *Traité clinique des maladies du coeur* (Paris, 1835) depicts mitral stenosis, seen from above, with valvular nodosities, while a page of Maude Abbott's *Atlas of Congenital Heart Disease* shows the tremendous variety of media for visual expression available to the modern cardiologist, from the traditional drawing to radiographic and microscopic photography.

Faith Wallis

ADAMS COLLECTION RETURNS TO THE OSLER LIBRARY

Longtime readers of this *Newsletter* may recall a lively account of the "association in crime" of Frank Dawson Adams and William Willoughby Francis which appeared in number 10, June 1972. The "crime" was, of course, incorrigible bibliomania, or so Dr. Adams himself expressed it; but it would be more accurate to describe it as a creative and scholarly collaboration in the building of two complementary collections. Frank Dawson Adams (1859-1942), professor of geology and the first Dean of Graduate Studies at McGill, assembled an impressive private library of rare historic works on scientific subjects. Geology had pride of place, but chemistry, botany, astronomy and medicine are also present in abundance. In 1942 Adams bequeathed this collection to the Osler Library, where it would join, he hoped, the numerous volumes he had already purchased for the Library at the suggestion of his friend Francis, as well as 36 titles from the 15th to the 17th century deposited by Dr. Adams here for safe-keeping. Unfortunately this reunion had to be postponed for almost 45 years, for the Library could not accommodate 1,500 extra books in its old quarters in the Strathcona Medical Building. The Redpath Library, and later the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of McLennan Library generously agreed to shelter the collection in the interim, but in February of this year the Adams Collection will be physically reunited in its true home, the Osler Library.

While the collection contains a significant percentage of medical works, it might strike the casual observer as curious that a primarily geological library should come to rest in the Osler Library. But as the author of "Associates in Crime: Frank Dawson Adams and William Willoughby Francis" points out, the two collections are remarkably harmonious. Particularly in the Renaissance and early modern periods, physic and natural philosophy were very close, and many of the same authors appear on both Sir William Osler's and Frank Dawson Adams' shelves. Osler himself purchased key works on the philosophy of science and important monuments of scientific writing in various fields in order to set his medical library into a wider context of learning. All these factors serve to make the Adams Collection more than welcome within the Osler Library, but most important, the Collection is an enduring memorial to two very gifted "associates in crime".

CORRECTIONS

The note entitled "Osler and the editor of *Life* magazine," which appeared in the October 1986 *Osler Library Newsletter*, contained two errors. "John Hopkins" should be Johns Hopkins and in the journal reference dated October 19, 1985, the year should be 1895. Also, in the second line from the bottom in the right hand column on page 2, again, "John Hopkins" should be Johns Hopkins.

1986-87 CONTRIBUTORS TO THE FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The Library gratefully acknowledges the support it has received from Friends, both old and new, who have responded to the appeal for funds for the 1986-87 academic year. To date 280 Friends have given a total of approximately \$11,300. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have come also from Argentina, Australia, Denmark, England, Japan, Switzerland, South Africa, West Germany.

The names of Friends whose contributions are received after January 31, 1987 will be listed in the June issue of the *Newsletter*.

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