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BY

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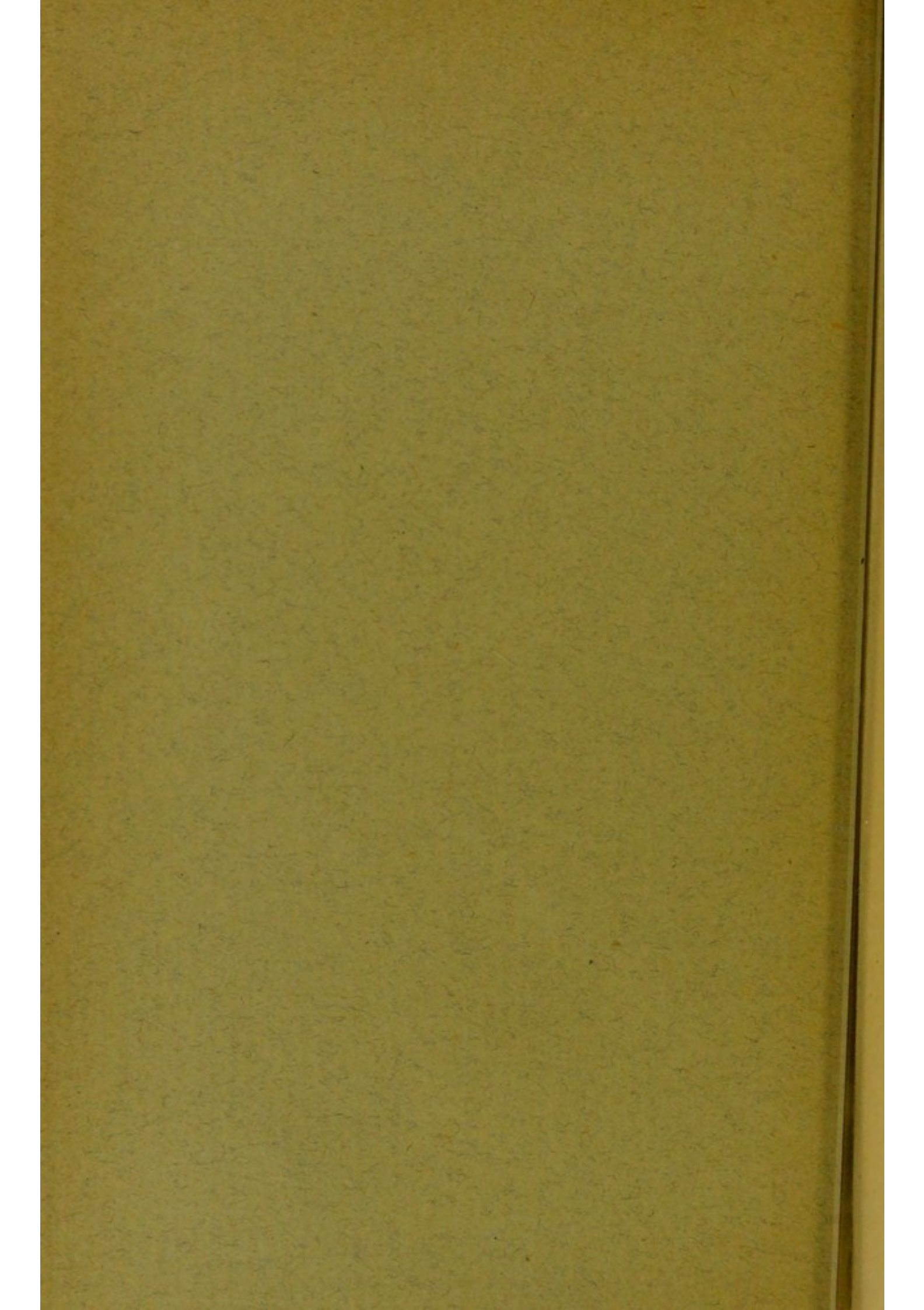


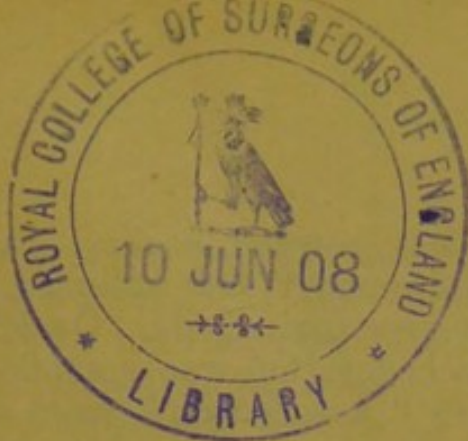
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THE BOSTON MEDICAL LIBRARY. ITS PAST,
PRESENT AND FUTURE.

BY JAMES F. BALLARD,

Second Assistant Librarian, Boston Medical Library.

THE Boston Medical Library is thirty-two years old, having been first organized as the Boston Medical Library Association on Aug. 20, 1875, with the following officers: President, Oliver Wendell Holmes, M.D.; Vice-President, Charles E. Buckingham, M.D.; Secretary, Oliver F. Wadsworth, M.D.; Librarian, James R. Chadwick, M.D.; Treasurer, A. Lawrence Mason, M.D.

Two rooms were secured at No. 5 Hamilton Place, and the library was opened in the autumn of 1875, with the present assistant librarian, Dr. Edwin H. Brigham, in charge. The growth was rapid from the beginning, and was accomplished chiefly by means of donations and exchange. At the end of the first year the library contained 4,488 volumes. Of this number, 2,639 were periodicals, and 120 different periodicals were received regularly and kept on file. The association was incorporated under the General Laws of Massachusetts on Oct. 9, 1877.

In 1878, the building at 19 Boylston Place was purchased and altered to suit the needs of the Association. It was dedicated on Dec. 3, 1878, at which time the number of volumes had increased to about 8,000. The growth in the new home was so rapid that the librarian, in his report for 1886, urged the necessity of a new

building in a less crowded locality. At this time the library contained 17,000 volumes, more than half of which were periodicals. On May 4, 1896, the act of incorporation was amended by dropping the word "Association" from the title of the Library, thereby forming the present legal title of "Boston Medical Library."

After a number of conferences at which plans for a new building were discussed, a special meeting to raise funds was held on Nov. 29, 1898, and a committee of twenty-five appointed for this purpose. The number of volumes on the shelves had increased to over 30,000, with about three-fifths periodicals. The direct result of the special meeting was the erection of the present home of the Library at No. 8, The Fenway, and its dedication on Jan. 12, 1901, at which time the library consisted of over 33,000 volumes.

The following table shows the rate of growth at various periods from the first to the thirty-second years of the library's existence:

Years.	Total volumes.	Books.	Periodicals.	Special libraries.	Pamphlets.	Periodicals on file.
1. 1875-76	4,488	1,849	2,639			120
2. 1876-77	6,466	2,645	3,821			120
6. 1880-81	9,454	4,923	4,531		5,678	286
9. 1883-84	14,099	6,383	7,716		12,289	328
11. 1885-86	16,374	7,001	9,373		14,832	345
28. 1902-03	39,856	15,190	24,666		20,554	476
30. 1904-05	50,689	19,612	25,582	5,495	22,629	597
32. 1906-07	57,093	21,323	27,881	7,889	28,821	630

The growth of the library during the seven years in its new building has been remarkable.

There has been an increase of over 75% in the number of volumes, as the annual report for 1906-7 shows a total number of 57,093 volumes, and 28,821 unbound pamphlets. Six hundred and thirty different periodicals are received regularly and kept on file. At the close of the present library year we shall probably report accessions which will show an increase of 100% for the eight years, 1900-1 to 1907-8, inclusive.

Its value as a working library is far greater than its size would indicate, owing to the large percentage and fine selection of periodicals.

The policy of the Library Committee in regard to the admission of readers who are not members is very liberal. Physicians, medical students, professional men and any others who have a real need of the books contained in the library are welcome at any time during library hours. The only requirement is the signing of a visitors' register which is placed inside the entrance to the main reading room. The library hours are as follows: 9.30 A.M. to 10 P.M. daily, except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays; Saturdays until 6 P.M.; with the exception of the summer months, when the Library closes at 5 P.M. daily, except Saturdays, when it closes at 12 M.

The officers for 1907-8 are: President, George B. Shattuck, M.D.; Secretary, Oliver F. Wadsworth, M.D.; Librarian, John W. Farlow, M.D.; Treasurer, William H. Prescott, M.D.

The membership of the Library is composed of three classes: Fellows, Associates and Life Members. Fellows have the full privileges of the corporation, including the borrowing of books, and are entitled to vote at all meetings. The dues for Fellows for the current year, 1907-8, are ten dollars. Associates have the same privileges as Fellows, except that they cannot take

books from the library and have no vote. They pay five dollars a year. Life Members consist of all persons who pay to the Corporation two hundred dollars at any one time and who are approved by the Committee on Membership and Elections. Life Members are exempt from the payment of the annual assessment, and are entitled to all the privileges of Fellows, except that they cannot vote on the question of the annual assessment. The Chairman of the Committee on Membership is Arthur K. Stone, M.D.

At the present time the Library owns the building on the Fenway with the adjoining vacant lot of land, its library of over 57,000 volumes, a fine collection of paintings, one of the largest and best collections of medical medals in the world, a most complete collection of Holmesiana, the Martin collection on vaccination and inoculation, the Spring collection on medical biography and history, etc. Among the large number of paintings the following notable portraits may be mentioned:

Samuel Danforth, by Stuart. Oliver Wendell Holmes, by Billings. Henry J. Bigelow, J. B. S. Jackson, D. Humphreys Storer, Thomas B. Curtis, all by Vinton. Henry J. Bigelow, by Lazarus.

The Library also owns the large painting, 10 x 8 feet, of the first operation under ether at the Massachusetts General Hospital, 1846, painted by Robert Hinckley, of Washington, and a complete set of the caricatures of physicians, published with "Vanity Fair," London. The Storer collection of medical medals, tokens, etc., is one of the largest of its kind in the world, and additions are being constantly made by the donor, Dr. Horatio R. Storer, of Newport, and others. Donations to this collection will be given full acknowledgment, and badges, medals, tokens, etc.,

relating to medical and allied subjects, are solicited. The collection consists of over three thousand pieces. Among the rarities may be mentioned a set of the "touch" pieces, which is complete except for one piece.

The Chadwick collection of *Holmesiana*, consisting of the bronze bust of Dr. Holmes, by W. E. Brooks, a replica of the one in the Boston Public Library; a large collection of photographs, engravings, etc., of Dr. Holmes, at various periods of his life, a collection of all his printed works, including first editions, and a number of his medical manuscripts, and many other unique items of *Holmesiana*, supplemented by the Billings portrait, are all placed in Holmes Hall.

The library has had a rapid growth from its inception chiefly because of two factors. First, it has been gradually absorbing the other medical libraries of Boston and vicinity; and, second, owing to the indefatigable energy of the late Dr. James R. Chadwick and his inseparable companion, the "Want Book." The following societies and libraries have deposited their medical collections with our library:

1875, Boston Society for Medical Observation.
1876, Boston Dispensary. 1876, Boston Society for Medical Improvement. 1878, Gynecological Society of Boston. 1880, Roxbury Athenæum. 1883, Harvard Medical School. 1898, 1905, Boston Athenæum. 1902, Harvard University. 1903, Cambridge Public Library. 1906, Tufts College Medical School. 1906, Waltham Public Library. 1906, 1908, Boston Public Library.

The deposit from the Boston Public Library is still in process of transfer. From the foregoing statements it will be seen that the Boston Medical Library is acknowledged as the natural center for medical literature in Greater Boston

and its vicinity, and as such should be selected as the final repository for all the special collections on medical and allied subjects existing in New England. In the future this library will be the great medical reference library east of New York.

The expansion of the library has been uneven, as would naturally be expected in a collection whose growth has been achieved largely by means of donation and exchange. It has been only within the last few years that any considerable number of modern books has been acquired by purchase, as, prior to this time, there had been no available funds for this purpose.

Some of our sections are very full and complete, which is largely due to the fine special collections that have been given to the Library from time to time; while others are very meager and incomplete.

In closing, it will be the endeavor of the writer to give a summary of the needs of the library in the way of books, periodicals, etc. In the first place it is well to warn against the practice of carelessly destroying material that may be of value to some library. Do not destroy anything on medical, scientific and allied subjects, no matter how worthless it may seem, until you have consulted a competent expert. If you find a lot of medical or scientific books, periodicals, pamphlets, etc., stored in the garret, closets or elsewhere, do not throw them away, or give them to the junk man, but send them to the Boston Medical Library, 8, The Fenway, Boston, Mass. If the shelves in your office and library are filled with books, periodicals, pamphlets, etc., that are never used, why not send them to the Library where they will be accessible to the medical profession at large? Again, if you have more than one

edition of a work, why not keep the latest edition and let the Library have any others? If in Boston, a postal card, or telephone call, Back Bay 1617, will bring a boy or team. If outside of Boston, and a large lot, send by freight, if small by express, at the expense of the Library. The Library will be glad to receive any donation, no matter how small or how large it may be.

The Library is particularly in need of the following mentioned classes of material:

1. Publications in living languages other than English, French or German.

2. Modern books, monographs, etc., in all languages, published during the period 1880-1890.

3. Pamphlets, reprints, theses and inaugural dissertations.

4. Material relating to the medical history and sanitary evolution of Boston and vicinity, Massachusetts and New England. Any printed matter, as well as manuscripts, diaries, note and account books, scrap-books, clippings, letters, pictures, relics, mementos, etc., will be gladly received and proper acknowledgment made.

5. Non-medical publications of physicians. This class of material should include all of the writings of the physician who, in addition to practising his profession, leads an active life in other circles; as well as of the physician who early abandons the profession of medicine and becomes famous in some other field of endeavor. Of this last named class we should like any biographies, sketches, etc., as well as all of their works. The following is a partial list of the names of such physicians:

John Arbuthnot, John Brown of Edinburgh, Thomas H. Chivers, Erasmus Darwin, Oliver

Goldsmith, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles Lever, Linacre, John Locke, Thomas Lodge, Marat, S. Weir Mitchell, Molière, Count Rumford, Schiller, Albert Smith, Tobias Smollett, John Wolcott, Thomas Young, etc.

6. Novels, tales, plays and poetry relating to medicine or to medical subjects. The following list of titles will give an idea of this class of material. Couvreur, "Le mal nécessaire"; Everts, "The Cliffords"; Fenn, "Nurse Elisia"; MacDonald, "Paul Faber, Surgeon"; Ouida, "Toxin"; Zola, "Dr. Pascal" and "Lourdes"; Hichens, "Felix," etc. Also works of fiction that contain character sketches of physicians or descriptions of medical scenes, viz.: Thackeray, "Pendennis" and "Adventures of Philip"; Dickens, "Bleak House"; Charlotte Brontë, "Villette"; Mrs. Gaskell, "Wives and Daughters"; Miss Martineau, "Deerbrook"; George Eliot, "Middlemarch"; Ian Maclaren, "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," etc.

7. Medical, dental and other allied professional school catalogues, announcements and other publications; hospital reports; reports of boards of health and vital statistics; registration, sewerage and water boards; and state and national documents relating to medical and allied subjects in any language.

8. Books, periodicals, etc., on dentistry, veterinary medicine and surgery, comparative anatomy, pathology and physiology.

9. Very old medical publications.

10. Material relating to vaccination, vivisection and other controversial subjects.

11. Sets or volumes of the "Index Medicus" and "Index Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, U. S. Army."

12. Transactions of general scientific societies,

such as the "Royal Society," London; the "Société de science de Paris"; the "Royal Dublin Society," etc.

13. General scientific periodicals, such as "Nature," London; "Revue scientifique," Paris; "Science," Lancaster, Pa., etc.

Many articles of value to the student, research worker, physician and biologist appear in these general scientific publications, and every large medical library should have complete files of the more important sets.

14. General biographical works, viz.: "National Dictionary of Biography," London; "Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography," New York; "Nouvelle biographie générale," Paris, 1852-1883; "Biographie universelle," Paris, 1811-1862, etc.

The Library is particularly desirous of obtaining special collections on any subject in medicine or cognate sciences, and more especially as regards the following named divisions, in which any number of volumes will be gladly received.

General and medical bibliography and biography and the history of medicine; general biology and its subdivisions of morphology, anthropology and psychology; chemistry (general, medical and pharmaceutical); homeopathy and eclecticism; Christian science and osteopathy; radiotherapy, Röntgen rays and electricity; pharmacy and foreign pharmacopeias; tropical diseases; statistics; pediatrics; ophthalmology and otology; public hygiene and sanitary science; military and naval medicine; medical jurisprudence, handwriting and toxicology; nervous and mental diseases.

