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16th-Century Medicine

First Mention of Eyeglasses

1. BERNARD OF GORDON. *Practica Gordonii. Praxis omnibus Medicine studiosis maxime utilis...Medicine lilium nuncupata...* Text in double columns. Woodcut initials & woodcut device on last page. 124 leaves. Folio, modern binding using old vellum boards with new spine, corners, & endpapers (several small diminishing wormholes in the first few leaves, lower blank corner of title-page damaged & neatly restored). Venice: Giunta, 1521.

\$6950.00

Sixth edition (the first five are all incunables) of the *Practica* or *Lilium medicinae*, the principal work of one of the medical luminaries of the Middle Ages. Bernard of Gordon (ca. 1258-1318), of Scottish descent but born in France, was a professor at Montpellier from 1283 to 1307. He spent his entire teaching career at Montpellier and contributed greatly to the university's fame as the outstanding medical school in Europe. He completed the *Lilium* in 1305.

The founding of the medical school at Salerno in the eleventh century began to breathe new life into European medicine, which in the Middle Ages had been entirely in the hands of the Jewish and Arabian physicians. The *Lilium* preserves the Arabic tradition, but also contains much original material, and is one of the works which laid the foundations of medical literature in the fourteenth century, from the schools of Montpellier, Paris, Bologna, and Padua. It contains, *inter alia*, the first description of a modern truss, the first mention of eyeglasses (*oculus berellinus*), and the suggestion that muscles move due a mechanical action of the nerves. Modern studies have been made of Bernard's treatises on epilepsy, marasmus, smallpox, and urology.

The *Lilium* was translated in the Middle Ages into French, German, Hebrew, Irish, French and Spanish, but never into English, although Bernard is mentioned in the prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Demaitre says of Bernard (p. 169): "It would be difficult to find a more worthy representatives of Montpellier's claim to fame, of the academic tradition, and of the medical profession around 1300 than Bernard of Gordon."

A fine and fresh copy. Stamp on first and last page of Dr. Aldo Frugoni. Bookplate of Piergiorgio Borio.

• Stillwell, *The Awakening Interest in Science*, III, 312–(1st ed. of 1480). Luke E. Demaitre,

Doctor Bernard de Gordon: Professor and Practitioner (Toronto: 1980) includes a list of the eleven editions printed from 1480 to 1617.

2. FERRARI, Ognibene. *De Arte Medica Infantium Aphorismorum, Particulae Tres*. Woodcut printer's device on title. 10, [1] leaves. Small 4to, attractive antique half-calf & marbled boards, spine gilt, red morocco lettering piece on spine. Brescia: F. & P.M. de Marchetti, 1577. \$2250.00

First edition of this collection of aphorisms on pediatric subjects by Ferrari, a physician who practiced medicine in Verona. It is a companion piece — and sometimes bound with — his important *De Arte Medica Infantium, Libri Quatuor*, published in the same year.

“His aphorisms are based partly on Hippocrates and Galen, but partly also on much more recent writers, as can be seen from the quaint mixture of the more modern superstitions with ancient teaching and some sound common sense.”—Still, *The History of Paediatrics*, pp. 147-51.

Fine copy.

• Durling 1496.

An American Wonder Drug; One of the First Published Patient Narratives

3. HUTTEN, Ulrich von. *Of the Wood Called Guaiacum, that healeth the frenche pockes, and also helpeth the goute in the feete, the stone, palsey, lepre, dropsy, fallyinge euyll, and other diseases*. Made in latyn by Ulrich Hutten knyght, and translated in to englysh by Thomas Paynel. 4 p.l. (4th leaf a blank), 58 leaves. 4to, 17th cent. calf (neatly rebaked & recorned), spine gilt, red morocco lettering piece on spine. London: T. Berthelet, 1540. \$35,000.00

An early Tudor translation of an important early medical work on the curative properties of the American wood known as “guaiacum,” a text first published in Latin in 1519 as *De Guaiaci Medicina et Morbo Gallico* by the German scholar, poet and reformation thinker Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523). Hutten's treatise, which was quickly translated into several languages, popularized the use of guaiacum to treat several conditions, especially the scourge of syphilis, and accelerated the importation of this medicinal agent from the Caribbean. Indeed, the work likely convinced the Fugger banking family of Augsburg to seek a monopoly on the import of the drug from the Americas, a concession they later secured from the Spanish crown in exchange for a loan. In this work, Hutten gives a full account of the appearance of syphilis in Europe along with its various treatments. Hutten also recounts in detail his own struggle with the affliction (at one point, a friend counsels him to commit suicide) and the various therapeutic (and sometimes gruesome) regimens to which he was subjected, making the treatise one of the earliest patient narratives published.

“This tract had enormous resonance in 16th-century medical circles... Hutten was the first significant publicist for the Guaiac treatment... Hutten's descriptions of the therapy are the most accurate of the period, and the account of the qualities of Guaiac is worthy of any modern pharmacopoeia...it remained influential into the 18th century.”—L. Jillings, “The Aggression of the Cured Syphilitic: Ulrich von Hutten's Projection of his Disease as Metaphor,” *German Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (1995), p. 5.

The present work was translated into English by Thomas Paynel, who recounts in his preface the genesis of the publication (English editions, all now very rare, appeared in 1533, 1536, 1539, and 1540). He describes visiting the printer Thomas Berthelet in London to discuss the intellectual and commercial success of their recent collaboration (the medical

compendium *Regimen sanitatis Salerni*) and being urged to undertake Hutten's treatise for the good of Tudor England. Paynel closes with a disclaimer that patients should not take guaiacum without first consulting a physician.

A fine and fresh copy. Final three leaves with minor marginal spotting.

4. PARACELUSUS. *Etliche tractaten vor in Truck nie ausskommen. Vom Podagra und seinen speciebus. Vom Schlag. Von der Fallender sücht. Von der Daubsücht oder unsinnigkeit. Vom Kaltenwehe. Von der Colica. Von dem Bauchreissen. Von der Wassersücht. Vom Schwinen oder Aridura. Vom Schwinen oder Schwindsücht hectica. Von Farbsüchten. Von Würmen. Vom Stüllauff.* Woodcut coat-of-arms of Paracelsus on verso of title. 4 p.l., 167 pp. 4to, attractive antique calf (minor browning), gilt. Cologne: Heirs of A. Birckmann, 1564. \$7500.00

First edition of this rare collection of thirteen of the most important medical tracts by Paracelsus on various diseases and their treatments. They include one of the author's most thorough discussions of gout (Paracelsus was the first to suggest the possibility of a chemical as opposed to a humoral causation for gout), an important contribution to his theories regarding the treatment of epilepsy, and descriptions of colic, rheumatism, dropsy, consumption, etc.

Fine copy. This is a rare book.

♣ Sudhoff 63. Temkin, *The Falling Sickness*, pp. 170-77.

St. John's Worts

5. PARACELUSUS. *Aphorismorum aliquot Hippocratis genuinus sensus & vera interpretatio. Das ist Eygendtlicher verstandt, und warhafftige gegriindte erklerung, uber etliche kurtze hauptspriich Hippocratis, als nemlich uber alle XXV. Aphorismos primae sectionis, und uber die ersten VI. Aphorismos secundae sectionis. Neben dreyen hochnützlichen tractaten, von sonderlicher verborgner kraft und würckung Coraliorum, Hyperici, & Persicariae.* Title printed in red & black. 103 unnumbered leaves, one blank leaf. Small 8vo, modern vellum over boards. [Colophon]: Augsburg: M. Franck for G. Willer, [1568]. \$9500.00

First edition of a Paracelsian rarity. Paracelsus' commentaries on the first five of Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* had been published the previous year in Cologne. The present edition comprises his commentaries on all 25 aphorisms of the first section, and on six of the second. They are followed by treatises on the medical uses of corals and the herbs *hypericum* (St. John's worts) and *persicaria* (peachwort). A slightly different version of the section on *hypericum* was published in the same year by Adam von Bodenstein (Sudhoff 95).

In his preface the anonymous editor gives what he calls an impartial discussion of Paracelsian ideas. He points out that Paracelsus' rude and aggressive style of writing and his personal conduct might have been regrettable, but now, 33 years after his death, the controversy should moderate since there is not such a chasm between the old medical school (Hippocrates and Galen) and iatrochemistry.

Fine copy.

♣ Sudhoff 100.

6. PERSON, Christian. *Kurtzer Bericht, von der Natur und eigenschafft des Röchlitzer Steinmarcks, und wie dasselbe zu der Artzney nützlich zu gebrauchen, Beschrieben und an tag geben...* Woodcut of Saxon coat-of-arms on verso of title. 24 unnumbered leaves (final two leaves

blank). Small 8vo, attractive antique calf-backed paste-paper boards, spine gilt, red morocco lettering piece on spine. Wittenberg: G. Müller for P. Hellwicks, 1596. \$3500.00

First edition of a most interesting book in which Person, the longtime city doctor of Rochlitz, gives a scientific description of the local stone — Rochlitzer porphyry — which has been mined on the Rochlitzer Berg for many centuries and used for building (bricks, facades, and tiles) and sculptures but also as a constituent of many medicines. Person describes numerous recipes using the stone to cure colic, leprosy, syphilis, dysentery, diseases of the blood and lungs, bloody noses, fevers, and the plague. Rochlitzer porphyry could also be pulverized and made into casts for broken limbs.

Fine large copy. WorldCat locates no copy in North America.

♣Hirsch, IV, p. 563.

7. SPREMBERGER, Johann [Agricola der]. *Ein kurtzer und gründlicher Bericht, Rath und Hülff, wider die pestilentischen Kranckheit...* 20 unnumbered leaves. Small 4to, attractive antique calf-backed marbled boards, spine gilt, red morocco lettering piece on spine, many lower edges uncut. Breslau: C. Scharffenberg, 1555. \$2500.00

First edition and very rare; WorldCat lists only the NLM copy outside of Germany (and it is rare inside Germany). Spremberger (1511-77), took his degree at Wittenberg and served as personal physician to the provincial governor in Spremberg.

Breslau suffered frequently from plagues in the 16th century. Spremberger provides a history of the various plagues and describes the most recent plague of 1553 in great detail. He makes a number of recommendations on how to isolate and suppress the disease. He describes a preventative diet, and provides a number of pharmaceutical recipes.

Lightly browned but a fine copy with many lower edges uncut.

♣ Durling 4252.

8. VESALIUS, Andreas. *De Humani Corporis Fabrica Libri Septem*. Printer's woodcut device on title, 20 full-page & about 130 smaller anatomical woodcuts in the text. 6 p.l., 510, [46] pp. Folio, early 18th-cent. mottled sheep, spine gilt. Venice: F. Franceschi & J. Criegher, 1568. \$27,500.00

Fourth edition (the third to be illustrated), posthumously published. It is well-printed on durable paper and set up with marginal notes exactly as in the Basel 1555 edition. The woodcuts are slightly reduced. "The new woodcuts for the illustrations, however, were so well executed that the engraver might almost have passed for the same person who in Venice at the behest of Vesalius had cut the original blocks for the larger work."—Cushing p. 92.

A nice crisp copy in attractive condition of a book which has become scarce. Bookplates of Piergiorgio Borio, M.D.

♣ Cushing VI.A.-4.

The Waters of Wildbad

9. WIDMANN (called MECHINGER), Johannes. *Ain nützlichs Büchlin von dem Wildpad, gelegen imm fürstenthumb Wirtenberg, gemacht von dem Berümpften Doctor Johann Mechinger*. [8] leaves (the last is blank). Small 4to, modern limp vellum (light dampstaining at foot). [Tübingen: T. Anshelm, 1513]. \$5000.00

First edition of this early and rare balneological work which describes the mineral baths

at Wildbad and their benefits. Wildbad is a watering place in Württemberg, situated in the Enz gorge in the Black Forest. Its thermal alkaline springs have a temperature of 90-100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Widmann (1440-1524), took his master of arts degree at Heidelberg and then went to Italy where he studied medicine at Pavia, Padua, and Ferrara. He received his medical degree at Ulm. Later, Widmann held a series of posts, including physician to Margrave Christoph von Baden and Duke Eberhard von Württemberg, city physician at Basel, Strasbourg, and Ulm, and professor of medicine at Tübingen. His tract on syphilis, published in 1497, is considered to be one of the best written in the 15th century.

In this work, Widmann describes the medical uses the waters of Wildbad provide in treating gout, rheumatism, and neuralgia.

Fine copy.

♣ Durling 4728. Hirsch, V, pp. 925-26.

The "Bloody Flux"

10. WITTICH, Johann. *Ein einfeltiger und gantz kurtzer Bericht, von der jetzigen giftigen einfallenden ansteckenden Röthen Ruhr...* 16 unnumbered leaves. Small 4to, attractive antique calf-backed marbled boards (lightly browned), spine gilt, red morocco lettering piece on spine. Mulhouse: A. Hantzsch for O. von Riswick, 1596. \$2500.00

First edition of this rare work on dysentery; WorldCat locates only the NLM copy in North America. Wittich (1537-96), was court and city physician to the counts of Schwarzburg in Arnstadt. He wrote many other medical books.

In this work, Wittich provides a careful description of the syndrome. He makes numerous recommendations regarding diet and drink. There are several chapters regarding the treatment of children who have dysentery. The final 12 pages contain pharmaceutical recipes.

Fine copy.

♣ Durling 4762. Hirsch, V, p. 974.

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