AN ACCOUNT OF SOME OLD BOOKS IN THE COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

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Some months ago I was looking at some books which the librarian of
the College was sorting and saw several which from their antiquity
appeared to be of interest. It occurred to me that a notice of the
more ancient of these might be of interest to officers of the
Royal Army Medical Corps, and accordingly, with the sanction of the
Director-General, and of the Commandant of the College, I have ventured
to write some description of the books, and their contents.

I cannot pretend to have carried my bibliographical research to any
great depth, and the notes on the authors and their friends have been
compiled chiefly from the National History of Biography, and Eloy's
Dictionnaire Historique de la Médecine Ancienne et Moderne.

I have to thank the Librarian of the Royal Society of Medicine, and
Dr. Thompson of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, for advice
and assistance.

I.

PAMBOTANOLOGIA, / SIVE / ENCHIRIDION BOTANICUM / OR
A COMPLEAT HERBALL, / Containing the Summe of Ancient and /
Moderne Authors, both Galenical and Chymical, touching Trees, Shrubs,
Plants, Fruits / Flowers, &c. In an Alphabetical order: / wherein all that
are not in the Physick Garden at Oxford, are noted in Asterisks. / Showing
their Place, Time, Names, / Kinds, Temperature, Vertues, Use, / Dose,
Danger and Antidotes. / Together with / An / Introduction to Herbarisme,
&c. / Appendix of Exoticks. / Universal Index of Plants: / shewing what

1 In Greek Capitals.
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Four blank pages: Title page (as above): Pages numbered 3 to 84 ISAGOGIC PHYTOLOGICA / OR, / An Introduction to HERBARISME. / The actual herbal: pages numbered 1 to 672. Pages 673 and 674 omitted. Page 675 gives a list of errata. Catalogue of Books printed for and to be sold by Richard Davis, Oxon. Six pages unnumbered.

Robert Lovell was born at Lapworth, Warwickshire, about 1630, the younger son of Benjamin Lovell the Rector of that parish, and brother of Sir Salathiel Lovell a well-known lawyer. Studied at Christ Church College, Oxford. Returned to Coventry and had a fair practice there. Died 1690 and was buried in Holy Trinity, Coventry.

The first edition of his Pambotanologia was brought out in 1659, the second in 1665. There are copies of the first edition at the British Museum and College of Physicians Libraries, and the former has also the second edition, to which that in our library belongs.

Lovell also brought out a Pantozyktologia in 1661.

He seems to have been a pedantical person as shown by the fact that he prints the main title of his works in the Greek character, and appends, in the same character, the terrible word Theologiatronomos to his name. This epithet he must have been at pains to construct for himself apparently: it is not recognized by Liddell and Scott. As Dr. Johnson might have said, "Sir, it is not an epithet, it is an insult."

The actual Herbal itself is a careful piece of work, and evidently represents a tremendous amount of reading. The language is clear, and to the point, however erroneous that point may seem to be to us now.

It is much otherwise with his introduction, or Isagoge Phytologica. This begins hopefully (from the reader’s point of view) as follows: "Courteous Reader, Avoiding the Perplexity and tediousness of a Proemial Discourse (brevity being here intended) thou mayest first consider the Quid sit of Phytologie." Thereupon ensues upwards of eighty pages of intolerable verbiage. The introduction is divided and sub-divided into heads, like the firstly, secondly, etc., of an old Scots sermon. The headings are almost unintelligible words constructed from Greek. A few samples may suffice—Aratick, Rypptic, Leptyntic, Bechick, Aloiosiogy, Pepeirology, Protergasiology, Dropologie (which has no connexion with drops), Chresiology. He mercifully gives the real meaning in each case: and having got this it is still no easy matter to be sure of the etymology, even with the aid of Messrs. Liddell and Scott. They are as follows: Rarefying, Cleansing, Attenuating, Helping the cough, Disposition, Age, Operations of the first four qualities, Manner of gathering, Use. Several pages are given up to a consideration of Astrology, the connexions between Planets and Con-

1 In Greek Characters.
stellations on the one hand, and Diseases and Vegetable Remedies on the other.

In one particular Lovell is merciful. He gives the vernacular instead of the scientific names of the plants; the country expressions have the feeling of a breath of fresh air on coming out of a stuffy lecture room after the horrible nomenclature of the Isagoge.

The list of authors referred to by Lovell in the course of his work contains more than 250 names. The mere labour of collecting references must have been enormous in those days. It is hardly likely that he possessed copies of all these in his own library, or that any were available in Coventry, or indeed any nearer than at Oxford. One can only regret with Pulteney in his "Sketches of the Progress of Botany," "the mis-application of talents which demonstrate an extensive knowledge of books, a wonderful industry in the collection of his materials and not less judgment in arrangement." Sir Salathiel Lovell, Robert's elder brother, merits at least a line. He died at the age of 95, having been appointed fifth Baron of the Exchequer at the age of 90. He appears to have been distinguished mostly by his want of memory, and his title of Recorder was changed by the wits to Obliviscor of London.

II.

AROMATUM ET SIMPLICIUM ALIQUOT MEDICAMENTORUM APUD INDOS NASCENTIUM HISTORIA: Primum quidem in Lusitanica lingua per Dialogos conscripta, a D. GARCIA AB HORTO Prorogis Indiae Medico Deinde Latino Sermo in Epitomen contracta et iconibus ad vivum expressis, locupletioribus, annotationibus illustrata a CAROLO CLUSIO Atrebate Tertia Editio ANTVERPIAE Ex officina Christophori Plantini Architypographi Regii fo Io. LXXIX.

On reverse of title page is a "Summa Privilegii" from Philip, King of Spain (Philip II) and Duke of Brabant, forbidding anyone, without the sanction of Christopher Plantin, and for the space of four years, to print, or import, or expose for sale, a copy of this book.

Pages numbered to 217 (including title page) followed by six pages of index unnumbered.

Carolus Clusius, the author, was born in 1526 at Arras. Studied at Louvain and elsewhere, and finally at Montpelier, where he came under the influence of Guillaume Rondelet: was converted by Melanchthon, and became an ardent Protestant: suffered persecution and lost several relatives by martyrdom. Having been deprived of his property he led a nomad life, working as a literary hack, and as a private tutor, under the patronage of Dodoens, Rondelet and Plantin. He was in England in 1581 and 1582, and there met Sir Francis Drake, with whom and other members of his family, and also with other companions of his great voyage, Clusius seems to have become fairly intimate. He acknowledges his indebtedness to these
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for information on botanical matters, acquired during their voyages. He had a good knowledge of science as known in those days, and his wandering career made him a good linguist.

His chief bent was, however, in the direction of botany and horticulture. The Princesse de Chimay called him "père de tous les beaux jardins de ce pays." More usefully still he introduced the potato into Germany and Austria. According to Cuvier, Clusius added 600 to the number of known plants, and did not, as was common in those days, confine his attention to flowering species only. There are eighty water-colour drawings of fungi in the library of the University at Leyden, drawn under his direction, to the order of Count Balthasar of Batthyany.

A word may also be said here of the publisher of this book. Christopher Plantin was born in 1514 and studied the art of printing in Touraine. He migrated later to Antwerp, in 1550, and after trying to make a livelihood at bookbinding, took to printing and publishing. He was himself a well-read man, and evidently had large and generous ideas. The publishing business passed, with his daughter, to his chief assistant, but continued under the name of the Maison Plantin till 1876. The old house, which had remained almost unchanged, was then converted into the Musée Plantin, which still exists.

Garcias ab Orto (sometimes referred to as de Horto) was a Portuguese, and studied at Lisbon in 1534. He became first medical officer to the Count de Redondo, Viceroy of the Indies. Whilst in India he took up the study of botany, both at Goa and in Bombay, where he had a garden, in which he cultivated rare trees. He published his memoirs, under the title Colloquios dos simples o drogas da India, in quarto, in 1563. These were translated into Italian, French and English. The present volume is an abbreviation, and adaptation, of the original.

On the title-page of the book, some previous owner, probably the first, has written "In manib, Domini fortis meae 11 July 1585."

The book opens with the usual letter addressed "Benevolo Lectori" detailing the circumstances under which Clusius undertook the translation of the work from the Spanish (in which Garcias, "amicorum efflagitationibus vicitus," had originally written it) into the more generally familiar Latin of the time. In addition he epitomized the work, rejecting what seemed to him irrelevant matter. Garcias had apparently written his work in the form of a dialogue, entailing a good deal of repetition, and Clusius rejected this form of presentation, not unwisely. He also added notes of his own, taken from his own experience, and the writings of other authors, principally Avicenna. The introductory epistle concludes with a short elegiac copy of verses, three couplets, written by a certain "Joan. Posthius Germ. Med." in praise of Garcias as the original writer, and Clusius as the translator, prophesying that their fame will last as long as India sends us drugs from her fertile fields. Probably the introduction of tar-derivatives is the cause why their fame has not lasted as long as the worthy John
evidently expected. As to the book itself it is impossible to speak too highly. I have read it from cover to cover with the greatest enjoyment, and can compare it only to Herodotus, for clearness of style, and variety of information, not omitting those delightful digressions into side issues which characterize the old Greek.

As for his style I will quote his description of the symptoms of cholera, a model of clear and accurate statement. "Pulse weak and thready (concisus) respiration difficult; externally a cold sweat, but internally burning heat, and thirst, eyes almost closed, sleeplessness tortures the patient, frequent vomiting and passage of motions, until at length the explosive powers altogether fail, and there follow cramps and tenseness of the muscles." His treatment also is not unreasonable. He begins with an emetic, a common practice not so very long ago, and washes out the lower bowel with an emollient clyster, rubs the body all over and anoints with warm oil. For nourishment he orders chicken broth, from which the fat has been removed. He mentions the native form of treatment: Internally a watery decoction of rice with pepper and cummin, the application of the cauntery to the feet, and of pepper to the eyes. The cramps were dealt with by tight bandaging of the arms and legs.

As a specimen of his digressions, the following is typical. A certain person of the name of Gerard had made some statement about the correct name of a plant, with which statement our author disagrees. He remarks that this fellow (he calls him "aliquis") did not know Arabic, and then goes on to say that the true Arabic, in which Avicenna wrote, is spoken by the Syrians, Mesopotamians, Persians and Tartars "amongst whom Avicenna is believed to have been born, at Bussora (which some people think to be Babylon, but I have ascertained that it is not Babylon, of which no remains now exist, but only in the vicinity thereof)." He places Bussora in the Uzbek province, which leads to a few words about the Uzbeks, their strength and skill in archery, and a conjecture that they are identical with the Parthians who gave so much trouble to the Romans. Then back to the Arabic language, and the variety of it spoken by the Moors, called "Magaraby" of which he gives the etymology. All of which supplies a pleasant interlude in a lengthy discourse on the nature, virtues and uses of asa-fotida, in the Arabic tongue, Altikht. As regards the uses of this fragrant plant, he gives the following interesting detail. "The Indians are in the habit of placing it in hollow teeth, as a cure for toothache; which property is also ascribed to it by Dioscorides, lib., 3, cap. 76, although Pliny, lib. 22, cap. 23, thinks otherwise, by reason of the case of a man who after thus using it threw himself from a precipice. But it is possible that the patient suffered from cachexia, and the drug acted too violently on the humour which were involved in this complaint." This extract is illustrative of another peculiarity (or rather characteristic, for our author is not peculiar in the matter) which is the great reliance still reposed at that time (A.D. 1579) on the classical writers. The date
of Dioscorides is about A.D. 100, that of Pliny somewhat earlier. A millennium and a half is about as close to immortality, as most writers are likely to attain: In addition to the above, Galen, Rhases, and Avicenna, are the authorities most often quoted.

Some of the digressions are of more importance than those above given, in particular some which refer to the introduction of Syphilis into Europe. The reference is in connexion with the description of a root termed Radix Chineæ, and is worth detailing at some length. (This plant also called Tuber Chineæ, and American China Root, is a species of smilax and a native of Japan and China, as well as some eastern islands; it occurs also in Assam, Sikkim and Nepal. In India and China it is still held in repute for the relief of rheumatic and syphilitic complaints, and as an aphrodisiac. According to Polak the tubers are consumed by Turcomans and Mongols as food. The root acquired a celebrity in Europe, in consequence of its having been used in the treatment of the gout from which the Emperor Charles V suffered, and was much used at the end of the seventeenth century as an alterative and sudorific.)

"This root grows in the extensive region of China, which is believed to extend as far as Muscovy. Through practically the whole of this province, and also in Japan, the lues venerea rages: which disease some call the Neopolitan sickness, others the French, we the Spanish itch, the Persians Bade-Frangi (or even in brief Frinqui), which means French sickness: therefore the Almighty has revealed to the inhabitants of this country the use of a root which grows amongst them, and can give them help in this ailment. In the same way in the New World he revealed the use of Guaiacum since that part of the world has been infected with this disease, beyond all memory of man. The Spaniards contracting the illness there, brought it into Europe in the year of man's salvation 1493. The use of this root began to be known to us after the year 1535, being brought here (sc. Goa) by certain Chinese, who were infected by the disease, and cured themselves by its use, during their stay with us." He proceeds to relate that up till that time Guaiacum was the drug in ordinary use, but owing to a failure in the supply from Portugal, the China root was adopted instead. The drug came into great favour since it was not necessary to observe, whilst going through the prescribed course of treatment, the strict regimen appointed for those under Guaiacum. "Add to this," he says, "that the inhabitants of this country owing to their indolent habits are great gluttons, . . . From that time Guaiacum fell into disrepute, and was abandoned in India, except in the case of a certain Spaniard who desired to kill the natives with starvation." There was just about this time no love lost between the Spaniards and Portuguese, and doubtless the last remark had a certain national bias behind it. He gives a full account of the method of administration, and remarks that the drug is particularly useful in obstinate cases with large tumours and malignant ulcers (gummata and nodes). He adds a useful hint, which had perhaps
be better left in its original Latin. "Intelligo eos qui hoc decoctum utuntur, mulierum, conspectu vehementer ad libidinem accendi. Quare consultum videtur, ut per curas tempus nullae ad aegros mulieres admittantur." A precaution not inadvisable on other grounds than those which he gives. He winds up his account of the China root with one of his usual Herodotean digressions, as follows: "Since in these commentaries I shall frequently have to refer to the Chinese it will not be contrary to the scheme of my work if I insert under this head a few items of information which I have acquired concerning them, from trustworthy individuals. The Chinese, then, are Asiatic Scythians, who although they are considered a race of barbarians, are nevertheless remarkably active both in trade and in manufactures. Neither do they yield in repute to any other race in the matter of literary knowledge. They have a written code of laws closely resembling those of the Empire, as can be seen from a copy of their laws which is preserved by the Indians. One of these I may quote for an example: It is not allowed for a man to marry a woman, after the death of her husband, if he have committed adultery with her during the lifetime of the husband. I understand that among them rank and rewards are distributed according to learning: the control of the throne, and of the whole kingdom is indeed in the hands of learned men. The art of printing is so ancient amongst them that the memory of man goeth not to the contrary, and they believe that it has always been in use amongst them." Clusius adds a footnote to the chapter saying that the use of the China root had by the time of translation been quite superseded by that of sarsaparilla.

I have spent so much time and space on the China root that I can only just touch on one more point, and that is a delightful account of the mongcose and the manner in which it fights the cobra, which comes in apropos to a description of "Lignum Colubrinum." "In the island of Ceylon there is a serpent distinguished by a diadem, called the Cobra de Capello, very poisonous. There is in addition an animal the size of a ferret called Quil or Quirpele, very hostile to this snake. Whenever this little beast meets with the snake it bites off a piece of this root, which projects above the ground. Having done this it spits on its fore-paws; then rubs first its head and, after, the rest of its body with the saliva; it then attacks the serpent, and holding on to it, firmly, kills it. If at the first attack it is unable to overcome the snake it has again recourse to the root, rubs itself against it and returns to the combat, and thus slays the serpent with its teeth. The Cingalese (that is the inhabitants of Ceylon) have learnt from this spectacle that this root is an antidote to the snake's venom. Encounters of this kind have been seen by many of the Portuguese, for they are accustomed to keep animals like this as pets in their houses, in the first place to kill mice, which they hunt very keenly, and also to fight with Cobras which strolling beggars, called 'Iogues' bring round. These men cover themselves with ashes, and pass them-
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selves off to the vulgar as objects of veneration. Some of them carry about cobras which they have deprived of their fangs, so that they are harmless, and these they stroke and place round their necks pretending to the vulgar that they have tamed them by incantations.” In this respect at least India has changed but little. Our author’s love for digression also leads him from his prime subject of spices to say a few words about precious stones, excusing himself on the grounds that he has already wandered as far as to speak of that mysterious stone, found in the stomachs of certain goats, called “Bezar.” He dwells mostly on the Diamond. He states that the native physicians are in the habit of injecting it into the bladder to break up calculi, an expensive method of lithotrity. The internal use of this stone has, he says, been discontinued, owing to an ignorant apprehension on the part of the vulgar that owing to its penetrating power it might cause perforation, “an opinion shared of late by certain medical men. But the idea is absurd” (vana est persuasio). For I have known the negro slaves of jewellers to swallow diamonds, and to confess after having been soundly thrashed that they had done so. The stones have later passed out with the excrement, without doing any harm. This I can testify to.” He is also very sceptical as to the efficacy of pounded diamonds as a mechanical poison. On the subject of diamonds Clusius adds a footnote to the effect that they had been found in the Severn three miles above Bristol, some of which had been given him by a person described as “Dr. Georgius Norgius Northum.”

He mentions, only to reject, the fable that ships of Calicut are built with wooden instead of iron nails, for fear that the latter might be drawn out of the ship by the attraction of Magnetic Mountains, as indeed occurred I have always understood to Sinbad on one of his voyages. There is an interesting chapter, “De quibusdam Indiae Regibus,” giving a short review of the history of India. The transliteration of names renders this somewhat difficult to understand. Rajputs is written “Reisbuti”: Shah Alum is represented by “Xa-holam.”

The book is illustrated by excellently executed woodcuts, twenty-seven in number.

III.

Three years later Clusius brought out an additional volume, entitled CAROLI/CLUSII ATREB./ALIQUOT NOTAE/IN/GARCIAE/Aromatium Historian/Ejusdem/Descriptiones nonnullarum Stirpium, & aliarum/exoticarum rerum, quae a Generoso viro FRAN./CISCO DRAKE Equite Anglo, & his observatae sunt, qui eum in longa illa Navigatione, qua proximisannis universum orbem circumvivit, & comitati sunt: & quorundam peregrinorum fructuum quos Londini ab amicis accepit. ANTVERPIAE/Ex officina Christophori Plantini, M.D.LXXXII. Pages numbered to 43 including title page. Three blank pages at end. On reverse of forty

On title page of this book, and also of the previous one, there is a small inset cut showing a hand with compasses proceeding from a cloud, and describing a circle on a flat surface. The words "LABORE ET CONSTANTIA" are inscribed on an encircling band, with a slight floral decoration.

This supplementary volume opens with an introductory letter addressed to the Illustrious and Magnificent Lord Balthasar de Batthyany, hereditary chief of the Royal Dapifers in Hungary, etc., as follows:—

"I presume that your Magnificence has heard that a noble Englishman has in these three years circumnavigated the entire globe; for the fame of his return was spread everywhere. That fame induced me last year when I was in England to effect a certain acquaintanceship with those who accompanied him, desiring to learn somewhat of the things, which they had observed in their long voyage: and not only was this brought about by the efforts of some of my friends, but in addition I obtained access to their leader Sir Francis Drake who in the kindest manner communicated many things to me. Many things also very pleasant to hear I learnt from a certain gentleman of the name of Eliot who was of his company, and also other members of the Drake family: but especially grateful were those things appertaining to Botany which I learnt from them."

The information in the book is chiefly botanical. There is an interesting account of the Cacao bean, and of the "grateful and comforting" beverage made from it. I do not think however that Clusius would have been asked to furnish advertisement material for that substance at the present day. This is what he says:—

"When about to make a beverage from the bean they dry it before a fire in an earthenware vessel. It is then broken up by means of the grindstones which are used for making bread, and poured into dishes, made out of a sort of cucumber which grows throughout the Indies. The crushed bean is then slowly mixed with water, and after being flavoured with a little pepper, is ready for consumption. It more resembles hogwash than a drink fit for human beings. During my wanderings in that country for over a year I shuddered at having to drink such filth. But when the time came that I had run short of wine, to avoid having to drink nothing but water I learnt to imitate others. The stuff has a somewhat bitter taste; refreshes the body and produces a sense of satiety, and in addition slightly intoxicating. It is the chiefest and most expensive article of commerce in those parts, nor do the Indians esteem anything above it. Thus far Benzo." (This is the name of Clusius' informant, a soldier who had served many years in the various provinces of the Indies.) Clusius himself adds that the stuff has a bitter and unpleasant taste "and I do not at all wonder that those who have tasted it, at first
shrink with disgust from the beverage manufactured from it. Personally I would much prefer pure water.”

Amongst the companions of Drake that Clusius mentions is William Winter, who he states was the commander of the ship that turned back at the Straits of Magellan. Readers of “Westward Ho!” will remember the abuse that the hero, Amyas Leigh, pours on the head of this gentleman. According to the “History of National Biography,” both Clusius and Kingsley have mistaken their man. The renegade was not William Winter but John, his son. William commanded the fleet outside Smerwick in 1560 and is supposed to be the man who originated the idea of sending in fireships against the Armada on the 28th July, 1588.

(To be continued.)