

Isaac Newton's Library for Sale

Bibliography

By JAMES STOKLEY

The library of Sir Isaac Newton, greatest of English-speaking scientists, is now for sale in London, and British men of science are wondering what its ultimate fate may be. Will it cross the Atlantic to the United States, as so many of England's literary treasures have done in recent years, or will it find an appropriate resting place in the Royal Society's library or at Newton's *alma mater*, Trinity College, Cambridge? Though no definite price has been set so far, it is not likely that the books will be sold for less than \$100,000. The present owner will only sell the library as a complete unit, so there is no danger of it being scattered.

Until the recent discovery of these books by Col. R. de Villamil, the whereabouts of Newton's library was a mystery of many years' standing. Because of his outstanding eminence in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was obvious that Newton must have had a large library, but none of the biographies mentioned it. Until 1920 it was thought that the library had completely vanished.

In that year an old mansion at Thame Park, in Oxfordshire, was sold at auction by the owner, a Mr. Wykeham-Musgrave, who owned another home at Barnsley Park, in Gloucestershire. To this sale were sent a lot of old books from the latter house. The books were not known to be of

any particular value, and were sold as rubbish, even though a few bore the autograph "Js. Newton". The entire lot went for about \$500. A few of the purchasers discovered that they had books from Newton's library; these were eventually sold in London by a large dealer in old scientific works, but a considerable number of the books were sent to the pulp mill and irretrievably lost. Of those sold, many were bought for American libraries. Many brought prices as high as several hundred dollars, and one, the copy of Euclid that Newton used as a student at Cambridge, was listed at \$3,000.

In 1927, at the time of the tercentenary of Newton's death, Col. de Villamil wrote an account of "The Tragedy of Sir Isaac Newton's Library" in *The Bookman*. This came to the attention of Mr. Wykeham-Musgrave, who finally invited Col. de Villamil to visit his Barnsley Park home to see a few books that still remained. He had previously discovered a catalog of the library, made about 1760, showing that it had contained 1,896 books.

"I went," he said, "expecting to see, probably, 15 or 20 books, but found I could count at least 300 or 400, and I guessed there might be 600. I have catalogued them, and have actually found 860, which, out of 1,896, is more than what one would call a residue."

All these books had been stuck away in cupboards and corners where their owner did not even know of their existence, otherwise they would probably have been sold at Thame Park and lost.

Col. de Villamil has now worked out the complete history of the library. After Newton's death it was sold to his neighbor, John Huggins, warden of the Fleet Prison. He gave the books to his son, Charles Huggins, rector of Chinnor. When he died, about 1750, his successor, Dr. James Musgrave, bought it from the estate for 400 pounds, and pasted his own bookplate in the books, over the Huggins bookplate. The Musgrave plate consisted of his arms combined with the Huggins arms, for he had married Charles Huggins' niece. Underneath was the Latin motto, "Philosophemur". This bookplate is still in the books, together with the numbers Dr. Musgrave put in them when he catalogued the library, about 1760. It is this catalog that Col. de Villamil found.

Dr. Musgrave died in 1778, and the library passed to his son, who took it to Barnsley Park. There it was recatalogued and renumbered. Though the original owner was then recognized, the Newton tradition was finally forgotten, and they were stuck away as old books of no particular value. There they remained until discovered by Col. de Villamil.

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Plenty of Potash

Chemistry

The survey now being conducted by the United States Bureau of Mines and the U. S. Geological Survey has disclosed the fact that we have in the Permian basin a sufficient reserve of potash to make the nation independent in any future emergency such as that which arose in 1910, when German legislation voided all American potash contracts. It will be necessary to solve certain problems of transportation, marketing, and mining engineering before the potash is available for commercial use, but these problems are now being attacked by federal, state, and private agencies.

The area in which the potash-bearing salts have been found occupies about 22 counties in Texas and New Mexico. Altogether it covers about 40,000 square miles.

Science News-Letter, August 17, 1929

Zeppelin Brought Cancer Culture

Medicine

The Graf Zeppelin on its speedy trip from Germany brought to the Cancer Research Laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania cultures of cancer cells of a special rat sarcoma type that would not have survived the long steamer voyage across the Atlantic.

"The cultures must be transplanted every few days and the Graf Zeppelin offered a quick method of transportation so that they may be transplanted on their arrival here," explained Dr. Ellice McDonald, director of the Cancer Research Laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Medicine, to whom the valuable cancer cultures were consigned. "It is almost impossible to carry the necessary laboratory apparatus to make these transplantations on board a steamship."

The growing cancer cells came from

the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute für Biologie in Berlin through arrangements made by Dr. Raymond Parker of Dr. McDonald's staff and Prof. William Seifriz of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Parker has been studying this year with Prof. Albert Fischer of the Berlin institution.

Although not the same kind of cancer that affects human beings, the rat strain when safely established in its new American home will prove useful in the laboratory's study of mitosis or cell division. It is also expected that the cancer cultures will throw new light upon the possibility of the modification of the rate of growth or cell division by various chemicals and it is possible that such experiments may prove to be the starting point of new knowledge of the human disease.

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