K26  Kedzie, Robert Clark, 1823-1902

Shadows from the walls of death being arsenical wall papers, gathered by R.C. Kedzie. Presented by the State board of health of Michigan. n.p., n.pub. (1874.)

2 1. 86 samples wall paper.

49x39 cm.
Historic greens in comparison to 19th century arsenical greens. Vergaut is arsenic-based and malachite and verdigris are both copper-based. The 19th century greens are compounds of arsenic and copper. *Courtesy Kristi Wright*
SHADOWS
FROM THE
WALLS OF DEATH;
BEING
ARSENICAL WALL PAPERS,
GATHERED BY R. C. KEDZIE,
Member of State Board of Health.

Presented by the State Board of Health of Michigan.
SHADOWS
FROM THE
WALLS OF DEATH;
BEING
ARSENICAL WALL PAPERS.
GATHERED BY R. C. KEDZIE,
Member of State Board of Health.

[Handwritten notes on page]
Lansing, Nov., 1874.

By direction of the State Board of Health, I send you by this mail a Book of Specimens of Poisonous Papers.

These papers have been collected in this State by Prof. R. C. Kedzie, a member of the State Board of Health. Each sample has been examined by him and found to contain arsenic.

These books of Specimens are distributed to the leading public libraries throughout this State, in the hope that by so doing the people will be more effectually warned of this source of danger to health, which is believed to be more general than is usually understood by the people.

By giving this book a prominent place in your library, you will further the objects which the Board have in view.

The poisonous nature of the paper of which this book is made will suggest to you the propriety of not allowing it to be handled by children.

Very Respectfully,

HENRY B. BAKER, M. D.,
Secretary.
THREE GREAT-GRAND-DAUGHTERS of Dr. R. C. Kedzie examine a copy of his book of samples of arsenical wallpapers, Shadows from the Walls of Death. Left to right: Mrs. Faith Dutton, her sister, Mrs. Katheryn Isbell, and her cousin, Mrs. Margaret Thorp.
As soon as Brian suited up, he unpacked an assortment of swabs, wipes and bottles, collected baseline samples, and measured the dimensions of the room and the scanner.

Based on the size (42 cm), ease of “openability” and overall condition of the book, we decided to use a book2net Cobra A2 V-Cradle scanner to capture the page images. A “V” shaped glass would be lowered onto each pair of opened pages to secure them for scanning.

Once Brian had provided me with an over-shoulder suction device that would sample the air I was breathing throughout the project, I placed the book in the scanner cradle and began the capture operation.

Page after page, the colors revealed why the wallpaper had become so popular. It was an experience to spend time with this famous book. Alluring and lethal—what a combination!

Prudently protected, Brian and I were probably the first persons in decades to come into close proximity with patterns containing combinations of vibrant indigo, buttercup yellow, luminous pink, ruby red, and stunning neon green ("Scheele’s green," named for the Swedish chemist Carl Scheele, who used copper arsenite to brighten it).
WALLS OF DEATH;

ARSENCIAL WATER PLTS.

GATHERED BY R. C. McDIE.

Translated.

SHADE

Name of Street

[Text continues below the image]
SHADOWS
FROM THE
WALLS OF DEATH;
BEING
ARSENCAL WALL PAPERS
DANGER

This material contains arsenic, which can be harmful if inhaled or ingested. Use gloves and wash your hands after handling.

Fresh Gloves
Dispose of after use

NOLO
BUILDING USE ONLY

Paper has arsenic in it—use gloves or wash your hands.

Dispose of gloves after handling.
SHADOWS FROM THE
ARSENICAL WALL PAPERS
GATHERED BY
R. C. KEDZIE
"SHADOWS FROM THE WALLS OF DEATH;"

Facts and Influences Producing a Bank of Specimens of
ARSENICAL WALL PAPERS,
Gathered by R. C. Kedzie,
Member of State Board of Health.

Presented by the State Board of Health, of Michigan.

LANSING:
W. S. George & Co., Printers and Binders.
1874.
A Case Study of a Book of Arsenical Wallpaper
A. Kendra Greene
Harvard Library Innovation Lab Fellow
akendragreene@gmail.com

Shadows From the Walls of Death
Available in PDF from the National Library of Medicine at:

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