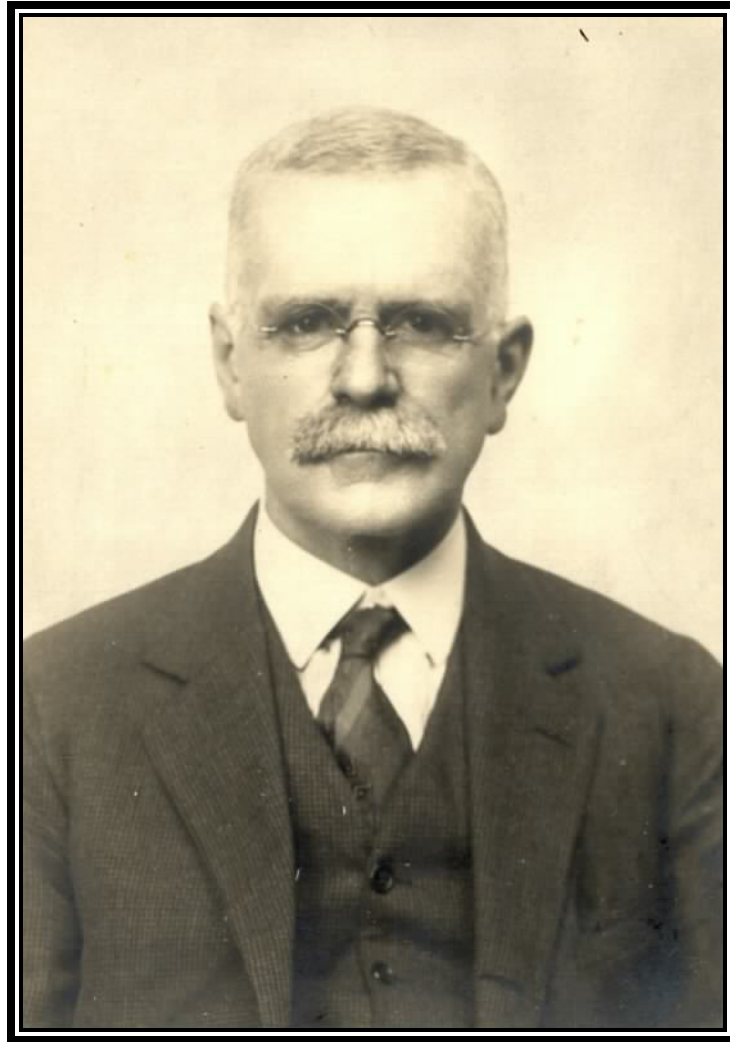


JAMES DOUGLAS BRUCE,
1862 – 1923



Photograph of Dr. J. Douglas Bruce that once resided in the office of Dr. John C. Hodges, where it sat on a desk that had belonged to Dr. Bruce.

Kenneth Curry, in his *English at Tennessee, 1794-1988* (Knoxville, Tenn.: Dept. of English, University of Tennessee, 1989), describes Dr. J. Douglas Bruce: “A Virginia aristocrat, born on a large plantation into one of the First Families of Virginia, he commanded awe and respect, if not always affection.” He goes on to quote the remarks of a student who commented on Dr. Bruce’s gift for reading poetry (which he particularly loved), “He could take some such poem as Beowulf written in Anglo Saxon . . ., and as he read it you could hear the clang of battle axe on shield, the whistle of arrows; the slither of sword on sword; the shouts of the victors; the groans of the wounded. A fidgety, uninterested and hostile class would sit motionless and almost breathless while he read.” [p. 21]. Students would report disliking him, but later in life identify him as a professor who had had the most profound influence to their benefit.

The program for the study of medieval literature in the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Department of English was initially formed by Dr. Bruce and has remained largely intact. His sudden and unexpected death in 1923 brought the remarkable bequest of his personal library of over 6,000 volumes to the University Libraries. Many of these books, particularly those bearing Dr. Bruce’s marginalia, have been preserved in the rare book collection of the Special Collections Library.

What follows is a listing of the manuscript and book holdings of the Special Collections Library relating to this distinguished University faculty member. We hope that students and faculty interested in the history of medieval studies at the University of Tennessee will find these materials intriguing and illuminating.

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