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Addresses.*

OSLER AS A BIBLIOPHILE.

By EDWARD C. STREETER, M.D., BOSTON.

IN attempting to take a level of the affections of Dr. Osler we will doubtless find that next to the love of men with him came love of books. Throughout his life he revealed the most amazingly vital concern for both—viewing with an equal eye the achievements of the past, and the promise of things of incomparable value and worth in the living present. A measure of the charm which he exerted over living men came from his converse with the dead. He strove mightily to reconcile the prodigals of the present with the forgiving Fathers of medicine—to turn them from husks to their former meat and the paternal blessing. In him the love of good books was a flame, never idle, as in those who have only a vain and prodigal humor for this sort of furniture, never idle for a moment, but was used as a Promethean torch to reillumine the light of old authors, in present danger of failing and passing out. A conflict between the past and the present was inconceivable to him. All that is, is Greek; or, at least, all that is, is derived. This is the ultimate irreducible

reality. Acting on this conviction, “without fraud, cozen or delay,” he happily brought every student with whom he came in touch into a proper system of relations with the achieving minds, the heroic inquiring spirits of past ages. Early in his course as teacher he faced this august relationship squarely. He became, like Boerhaave, one of the greatest exemplars of the historical method of medical teaching that ever has been. In establishing this method in America he did the impossible, for this is an unending, laborious method, little suited to the genius of our people.

Osler had an instinct for revival and the renewal of grace and force in everything that he touched. His range in ordering the topics discussed in the Book and Journal Club was wide indeed—Assyrian Medicine down to the last faintest foot-falls on Cathedral Street. He transmuted and touched to higher issues the choice estrays of medicine, recalled forgotten worthies like Richard Morton and Dover, and regrouped and shrewdly rearranged some of the figures in the old medical hierarchy. He re-invested all his favored ones with historic reality, launched them from his humanity as genuine forces in the world of science, no longer lying in bonds in the imagination of the studious, merely, but redelivered, given voice again in the land of the living. He shared

* Delivered at a memorial meeting for Dr. Osler held by the Harvard Medical Society, January 20, 1920.

Browning's power, "the life in him abolished the death in things." Servetus reasserted himself through him; Linaere, Fracastorius, Leonicens and the entire group of humanists, all the master spirits of medicine, Vesalius, Harvey, Hunter, reappareled, "bright-harnessed and in order serviceable." Here was a new way to pay old debts, on a convivial plan, by adopting your creditor, giving him tenant-rights in the very house of life in which you live.

Every English-speaking worker in the medical sciences today has been, in a sense, a student of William Osler, so much so that it will appear the height of folly to attempt to calculate the good which will ultimately come from his revival of the historical method. Neglect of the sources was to him unspeakably shocking. "The beggarly recognition or base indifference" meted out to the men whose minds have fertilized science in every direction in times past, touched him to the quick as an act of ingratitude. Last year in May he shamed the "Greats" in Oxford on this score, using the old clarion tones which he had used with students in Baltimore. He brought the world to book—to a realizing sense of the evolutionary process behind all the swift revolutions of medical doctrine. An evolutionist can no more neglect sources, the original texts and documents relating to discoveries and advances in the science and art of medicine, than a just and loyal soul made perfect could reject the fathers of his fathers. Osler's school deals with the Founders in a spirit of gratitude and loyalty; but only "one whose best friends have been the old humanists," like himself, could link arms and walk away thus familiarly with departed heroes. How tenderly they requited him, their Daysman, we know from his blithe whimsical account of such walks with the great. He speaks of them quite simply—as though he had but walked down Monument Street with President Gilman or Dr. Kelly. Sir William's acquaintance with the medical classics extended over fifty years; in that time he had come to know every primary contribution; every precious accent in the rich and varied utterance.

A "doctor sine libris," such as old Fuller describes, was anomalous indeed; a Caliban in the eyes of this Prospero. "Books are tools, doctors are craftsmen," insisted Osler. "A

physician who does not need a library sinks to the level of a cross-counter prescriber." "To study the phenomena of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, while to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all." Such was his attitude toward texts in general, the ordinary hand-apparatus of the practitioner, and the vast, limitless library of modern contributions, current accumulations, which he publicly aided so many centres to amass and privately aided so many students to use. "Only a maker of books can appreciate the labors of others at their true value." On the same occasion on which Osler said this (the dedication of the Boston Medical Library), he also said, "I should like to see in each library a select company of Immortals set apart for special adoration." In fact this short address on "Books and Men" is the key speech of his campaign to quicken the study of the classics of medicine. His devotion to this alcove in our libraries was intense enough to have satisfied the quaint author of the "Philobiblion." Osler's high pleadings for the "Princes of the blood," the books born within the purple, are singularly happy products of his mind. "Nay, they do preserve as in a vial," as Milton would say, "the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them." Here he was the marrow of persuasion, as fresh and clear, as witty and winning, as Holmes at his best.

Nor were conditions in this country adverse or hopeless in respect to the gentle art of book-collecting when Osler first came among us. Chadwick, Holmes, Hunt, Treadwell, Bowditch, and others in New England were well launched in this library movement, while in the southern tier of states were Gross, Lewis, Weir Mitchell, Kelly, Keen, Jacobs; in New York, Jacobi and Pilcher. Mightiest book hunter of all was Billings at the head of our National Medical Library, the Surgeon-General's of today.

Many of these men had amassed great store of *rarissimi* and choicest examples of the medical classics, even before Osler made his first tour of study to Boston in 1876. Dr. Kelly says that when he first met Osler in Philadelphia "He stayed to dine in Norris Square, and was particularly interested in my collection of old medical books." What a zest and high appetite for the written record of great minds in

all ages was in his guest, not even Dr. Kelly could have pointed out that night. It was quite impossible that anyone who had the tincture of old letters in him, could fail to share Osler's enthusiasm, his inveterate and almost dangerous exaltation in the presence of rare volumes. He had Petrarch's reverence for great books. He loved to see them in reverent hands, in fair estate and comely, yet he loved the "ragged veterans" as well as Lamb did.

The range of his taste at this period, like the breadth of his learning, was astounding. He could say with his mentor, Sir Thomas Browne, "I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things." His province as a collector lay somewhere between the early manuscript period and the literature on anesthesia—an illimitable expanse—but his day was by no means at the meridian when he began to beat its bounds. He soon laid Europe under tribute. From Poland and Spain and the boot of Italy, and little-searched corners, unknown to those who tramp the main-travelled ways of bookdom, Sir William received his corded bales of Gothic, Bastard, and Black-letter with mysterious regularity. At the same time that he thus eluded the German booksellers, who had cornered the old book market abroad, he let them know his "desiderata," as though it went against the grain to keep his peculiar wants from them. The result was that he often bought of Baer, the Rosenthals, Halle, and Hiersemann, as well as from Rahir, Voynich, and Olschki. He knew them all, even snuffy old Symnes, the expatriated Englishman, whose cramped *boutique*, Rue des Beaux Arts in Paris yielded him material undiscoverable to other eyes than his. Needless to say that he maintained close relations with all the London and Provincial booksellers. These connections were not made for the supplying of his own needs purely. By these means he largely catered to the lean and hungry medical libraries of our country. His gifts to them are past numbering. Fortunately, no recording angel keeps account of the wicked prices men pay for the books which they give to libraries or necessitous scholars, and to their friends. Acquisition for selfish ends is another matter—outraged spirits in heaven keep a double-entry going against such bibliomaniacs, for the heavens are set against hoarding. "*Non mihi sed aliis*," not for me but for use of others, might

have been etched upon Osler's book-plate—it was Savigny's devise but it fits Sir William. And I fancy that the man who had care, up to the outbreak of the war, of Sir William's library at Norham Gardens, Oxford, had all that he could do in just keeping the books together, for the owner had a habit of allocating his best possessions where they could be best used, on the principle that books belong to those who prize them most. You would say that a general thaw and dissolution of his library was in process, but no, quite the reverse. Through this kind of loss comes increase.

His collection of the works of the Founders of British medicine had "reached a large degree of perfection" in 1901, and in the Franklin Street house in Baltimore were richest stores of source-books, association books and classics, Greek and Latin—waiting for the evaluation which the Chief would put upon them Saturday evening. But this library was a modest one, we are told, when compared with the one that he gathered around him after his removal to Oxford.

His old Baltimore pupils and friends, returning home from the pilgrimage to No. 13 Norham Gardens, told strange tales of wondrous new accessions to thronged shelves. The library, grown too great for the lower floors, had mounted the groaning stairs and bid fair to have the run of the rooms above. Books everywhere, invading all the premises. So much for the mass, which, after all, need not detain us, for Queens, All Souls, and Christs are near by, and the Tarpeian mass of books in the Bodley, fifteen hundred thousand of them, is a silencer in this matter. As for quality, there were items, a number of them, in Sir William's collection, aside from his manuscripts, which would make Pollard or Nicholson catch their breath—editions not to be found in the Bodleian or British Museum—and when we've said that, we've said all as to the rarity of a printed volume. But behind all the particular excellencies and fascinating bays and sub-divisions in this particular library, is that ever fresh, radiant, sustained conception, the great plan, fundamentally adhered to throughout half a century of collecting, on which the master's library was formed. To contrive to bring together under one roof-tree the whole array of creators, interpreters, and transmitters of the medical and physical sciences, represented in

first editions, is an enormous undertaking. Expand this plan to embrace the idea of the inter-relation of all the sciences and then again expand it to a decorous and necessary purview of all philosophy, history, and the humanities, insofar as, for spiritual purposes, they are seen to be working with a common aim with the sciences, and we have reached a point with Osler from which to view the pregnant sources of the old order from which issue the new. Nothing short of these Pisgah-sights would quite satisfy him. We have the prediction from one who knows, that we will never cease to admire the noble plan on which this library was predetermined and consciously formed. Indeed, one of the unique monuments in the field of medical bibliography will be Sir William's catalogue raisonné of his library. This, if we are privileged to see it in print at some future time, will far surpass anything else of the kind. Sir William had been working on this for some time, and despite a thousand interruptions, portions of it were complete at the time of his death. He had already issued that part which relates to his vast collection on anesthesia, in the Proceedings of the Royal Society. Carried out in that manner, the remaining sections of his catalogue "would have been the most attractive and informing contributions ever made to medical bibliography, bar none." Most bibliographers have, in a supreme degree, "the gift of infrigidation," if I may use a quotation made by him in a recent address in the Bodleian. Only by a big human touch, an all-embracing sympathy, can a mere census of books stir even the modern caddice-worm at work in a library. We can well imagine that Osler's catalogue of his beloved books will be a new revelation, in rich and novel form, of his great humanizing aims and universal sympathies.

OSLER AS HIS STUDENTS KNEW HIM.

BY JOSEPH H. PRATT, M.D., BOSTON.

Most men held in popular estimation are greatest at a distance, but Sir William Osler was one of those rare spirits who are found to grow in greatness the nearer they are approached. No medical man ever received more tributes of affection and regard from his professional brethren during his lifetime than did Dr. Osler and certainly the death of none was

ever mourned so sincerely by such a host of friends. He was a many sided man with many ties and affiliations. In him the medical profession in Canada, in the United States and in Great Britain has a common bond.

When he left Montreal for Philadelphia he was only thirty-five, but he was held in such affectionate remembrance by the teachers and students of McGill that his first door plate was obtained and placed among other treasures in the college building. He went to Philadelphia a stranger, but to alter slightly the words of S. Weir Mitchell's poem, he found there a second home, and in the practice of life's happiest art, he little guessed how readily he won the added friendship of an open heart.

When he went to England to become Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford he left behind him a "continent of friends". Five hundred medical men from all parts of the country gathered at Delmonico's to sit with him at a farewell dinner.

He was at Johns Hopkins when that hospital was opened, then the medical wonder of the New World, and studied the first patient admitted to the wards. Here he developed one of the best medical clinics in existence and introduced far better methods of practical instruction than the German clinics afforded, for up to that time first-class clinics in the modern sense were found only in Germany. He was thirty-nine years old when he went to Baltimore and here came to full fruition the seed that had been planted in his fertile brain during the previous twenty years. In 1892 he published the first edition of that text-book which has been ever since the standard work of medical practice. Eagerly he must have awaited that first class of undergraduate students in the fall of 1905. For six years he had had to content himself with what he called the "dry husks" of graduate teaching.

The picture of Osler as he appeared to a student of the early years has been faithfully drawn by Thomas R. Brown, a member of the pioneer class at the Johns Hopkins Medical School. That was as he says a truly golden age to those whose good fortune it was to belong to one of the early classes that received inspiration and instruction for mind, heart and soul from this great teacher. Dr. Osler made his class feel that he was a fellow student; or as he himself styles it in one of his essays "a