OSLER AS A HUMANIST

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PREFACE

The writer wishes to acknowledge the kindness and consideration of the late Professor A.S. Noad, without whose help this work would never have been undertaken. In spite of the many demands on his time, he was ever ready to render assistance to his students, and he will always be remembered by them for his qualities as a scholar and as a noble Christian gentleman.

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OSLER AS A HUMANIST

In every generation since the Renaissance there have been worthy disciples of those men who rediscovered the ancient world of Greece and Rome, with its intellectual freedom and courage and warm love of life, and who prized the Greek and Latin classics for their humanizing influence even more than for their intrinsic beauty. Petrarch and his followers found exemplified in the bodies of the statutes and the minds of the writers of the Graeco-Roman world a new ideal of individual life lived at its greatest intensity. They were stirred by the spirit of free inquiry, the fresh and lively originality, the intense interest in man and in nature, and the optimistic outlook of the ancients. With the vision of greater intellectual and spiritual freedom came emancipation from the dogmatism of the Middle Ages and the idea of "an organic, perfecting harmony" rather than "a static, changeless perfection".[1] Gradually the enthusiasm for the classics, or literae humaniores, spread, and the philosophy of humanism captured even the universities, which had at first opposed it strongly.

Douglas Bush, in his study entitled The Renaissance and English Humanism,[2] divides humanists into two groups "according

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[1]Lothrop Stoddard, Scientific Humanism (New York, 1926) page 165.

[2]Douglas Bush, The Renaissance and English Humanism (Toronto, 1939), page 40.

as their preoccupations are literary or philosophic". "On the one side we have enthusiastic collectors of books, elegant stylists, studious readers, and, as learning becomes critical, 'pure scholars' in the modern sense of the phrase."[3] More important spiritually and intellectually, in his estimation, are the "philosophic humanists", who regarded the classics as a means rather than an end, who sought to apply classical wisdom to the uses of education and life, and who looked on humanism as a cultural ideal and discipline. The Graeco-Roman culture which they studied was fundamentally changed by the forces of Christianity, so that the springs of western humanism are both classical and Christian. Humanists asserted the fundamental dignity of man, and to the ancient virtues of justice, wisdom, temperance, and courage, added the Christian ones of faith, hope, and charity. Their aim was to produce citizens trained in the knowledge of virtue and letters, men with many-sided personalities and of harmonious character, and humane studies were regarded as those having to do with life and conduct. The early humanists were, on the whole, open-minded and tolerant, opposed to the forces of ignorance, superstition, and bigotry. Their ideal was a "harmonious, Humanistic civilization, combining the genius of antiquity with the Christian spirit and inspired by a true blend of idealism and reason".[4] As Stoddard remarks, this was an ideal and a method capable of producing

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[3]Bush, page. 40.
[4]Stoddard, page. 166.

the happiest results. "Erasmus and his fellow Humanists saw, as few men of any age have seen, that the path of true progress lies, not through overthrowing an old by a new dogmatism but in freeing the mind and spirit, thereby opening them to the influence of reason and thus ridding men not merely of a particular dogmatism but of the dogmatic habit as well."[5]

The character of English humanism is illustrated by such men as Grocyn, Colet, Linacre, Latimer, Lily, and More. "Linacre, while less actively devout than Colet and More, was a great exemplar of both philological and scientific humanism. Almost all the men of this circle were able Grecians as well as Latinists, and most of them, like Erasmus, studied Greek in order to have the key to the new Testament, to drink of the unadulterated fountain of Christianity. Linacre's motto was also 'ad fontes'. His Greek scholarship (like that of Rabelais some years later) was applied to purifying the great works of classical science and medicine from medieval accretions."[6]

The Greeks had brought the world to the threshold of modern science, but with the establishment of Christianity the normal development of physical science was arrested for over fifteen hundred years. The general belief derived from the New Testament Scriptures was that the end of the world was at hand, and that since all existing physical nature was soon to be destroyed,

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[5]Stoddard, page 171.
[6]Bush, page 72.

seeking in nature for truth was futile. The great work of Aristotle was under eclipse. The early Christian thinkers gave little attention to it, and that little was devoted to transforming it into something absolutely opposed to his whole spirit and method; in place of it they developed the Physiologus and the Bestiaries, mingling scriptural statements, legends of the saints and fanciful inventions with pious intent and childlike simplicity. The conviction grew that science and religion are enemies and the Church generally poured contempt upon all investigators into a science of Nature, and insisted that everything except the saving of souls was folly. A very little science crept into Europe by 1200 from the Arabs, mainly in astronomy and chemistry, but the astronomy was mostly astrology, and chemistry was little more than a search for the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life, a drink to make man immortal. Both astrologers and alchemists mingled their studies with magic incantations and were generally believed to have sold their souls to the Devil in return for forbidden knowledge. Probably many men attempted to study the secrets of nature in a scientific way by experiment. The greatest man of this kind before 1300 was Roger Bacon, an English Franciscan who tried to teach true scientific principles and spent fourteen years in dungeons for his beliefs. Terror of magic and witchcraft took possession of popular minds. The widespread persecution of magicians and the atmosphere created by this was deadly to any open beginning of experimental science. It came to be the accepted

idea that as soon as man conceived a wish to study the works of God, his first step must be a league with Satan.[7] Petrarch felt that the new modes of scientific thought were "destructive of Christian faith, ethics and culture, and he was reasserting the universal claims of religious and humane values".[8] The great aim of education was regarded as virtuous discipline, the knowledge of virtue which makes a good man, and the emphasis was on moral and philosophic substance, on values immediately applicable to life. Unfortunately, the humanities became invested with a superstitious veneration as containing in themselves a unique cultural significance. To question the theological view of physical science was, even long after the Middle Ages, exceedingly perilous, and science met difficulties even after the Renaissance had undermined old beliefs. Christianity had a profound influence on English humanism, and because of the filtration of classical knowledge through religious channels, to which the aims of science seemed to be directly opposed, the gulf between science and the so-called humanities continued to broaden.

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[7]Andrew Dickson White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom (London, 1900), pages 385-386.

[8]Bush, page. 53.

I

A Short Biography of Sir William Osler

In 1849, into an age which was to see rapid progress in the field of science, there was born a man who not only made notable contributions to the study of medicine, but who was "a well-nigh perfect example ofthe union of science and the humanities"[9] in a day when these studies seemed irreconcileable. Sir William Osler, who was to become "the best-balanced, best-equipped, most sagacious and most lovable of all modern physicians",[10] began life in Bond Head, Ontario, one of nine children of a missionary clergyman and his courageous and unselfish wife. In the unfinished introduction to the printed catalogue raisonné of the library which he left to McGill, Sir William remarks that a country parson's house in the fifties or sixties in the wilds of Canada had rarely a literary atmosphere. His father's library was chiefly theological. There were a few old books, a "Breeches Bible", and an early Stow's Chronicle. "Having been at sea, he was found of books of travel, of Layard, of Rawlinson, of Livingstone. Sunday reading is remembered as a trial . . . . George Borrow was a delight. As a missionary his books could not be hurtful, even on a Sunday, and The Bible in Spain, Gipsies in Spain, and even Lavengro were not taboo."[11]

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[9]Frederick Kenyon, "Introduction" to The Old Humanities and the New Science (Boston, 1920), page xvi.

[10]See "Preface" to Osler, The Evolution of Modern Medicine, edited by Fielding H. Garrison (Yale, 1921.)

[11]Quoted in an unpublished address, Montreal, 1935, by William W. Francis, "Sir William Osler as a Literary Man", p. 4.

"No little pride was taken in the books of my father's eldest brother, Edward, a surgeon in Truro, whose Life of Exmouth, Church and King, and volume of poems seemed to confer a literary flavour on the family; and at church what a pleasure to see his name opposite certain well-known hymns."[12] This was the first introduction to literature for the man who was to claim the old humanists as his best friends.

In 1857, since educational facilities in the Bond Head community were limited, the Osler children were sent to Dundas Grammer school, where William led a perfectly normal boyhood. Impish and mischievous, he was the leader in every conceivable prank, and it is difficult to decide which one of his many escapades led to his dismissal from the school. Truth, honour, and generosity were prominent in his affectionate nature, and while he was at boarding school in Barrie, where he became first boy, and later at Trinity College School in Weston, Ontario, all were attracted by his kindness and friendliness. Edith Gittings Reid relates that a fellow pupil of the Weston school wrote:

> A spirit of the highest refinement, culture, and straightforward manliness prevailed everywhere, true in the school and in the general life of all. It was easily recognized that this elevated tone was due to the influence of a small group of older boys, and of these, Osler, then seventeen, stood markedly the leader. His personality was so strong that his influence extended to every department, and his consistent high qualities were such that in every

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[12]Quoted by Francis, p. 4.

> scope of activity he was recognized without bitterness or jealousy of any kind, as the head. This applies not alone to scholarship and sports of every kind, but his strong independence and clear positive character stood out in everything. I do not think his elevating influence in the school can be exaggerated, and it was such that when he went from school to college the effect of his personality remained and was unquestionably a strong element in giving character to the school for many years.[13]

At Weston William Osler came in contact with two men who profoundly influenced his life, the Rev. W.A. Johnson, warden and founder of Trinity College School, and Dr. James Bovell, the school's medical director. Father Johnson, as the boys called him, gave Osler his first opportunity to see scientific books, and with the help of this naturalist and nature-lover the boy first learned to observe and to record natural phenomena. It was Father Johnson's custom to read aloud to the boys in his parsonage, and among the selections which he chose were extracts from the Religio Medici of Sir Thomas Browne, a book which was to be cherished by Osler throughout his life. Dr. Bovell was at this time a frequent weekend visitor at the school, and, accompanied by Dr. Johnson and his young friends, he collected, stained, and mounted miscroscopical specimens. How fascinating and refreshing Osler found this type of study in comparison with Latin and Greek! Many years later he wrote,

> Ten years with really able Trinity College, Dublin, and Oxford teachers left me with no more real knowledge of Greek and Latin than of Chinese, and without the free use of the languages as keys to

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[13] Edith Gittings Reid, The Great Physician (London, 1931), page 8.

> great literatures. Imagine the delight of an inquisitive nature to meet a man who cared nothing about words, but who knew about things -- who knew the stars in their courses and could tell us their names -- who delighted in the woods in springtime, and told us about the frog-spawn and caddis worm, and who read us, in the evenings, Gilbert White -- and Kingsley's Glaucus, who showed us with the microscope the marvels of a drop of dirty pond water, and who on Saturday excursions up the river could talk of the Trilobites and Orthoceratites and explain the formation of the earth's crust. No more dry husks for me after such a diet, and early in my college life I kicked over the traces and exchanged the classics with 'divvers' as represented by Pearson, Browne, and Hooker, for Hunter, Lyell and Huxley. My experience was that of thousands, yet, as I remember, we were athirst for good literature. What a delight it would have been to have had Chapman's Odyssey read to us, or Plato's Phaedo on a Sunday evening, or the Vera Historia! What a tragedy to climb Parnassus in a fog! How I have cursed the memory of Protagoras since finding that he introduced grammar into the cold formalism of words! How different now that Montaigne and Milton and Locke and Petty have come into their own, and are recognized as men of sense in the matter of training youth.[14]

William Osler was considered a fine all-round athlete and a good student. At this time he fully intended to enter the ministry, and in the autumn of 1867, at the age of eighteen, having gained the Dixon prize for scholarship, he went to Trinity College in Toronto. This college was organized abng the lines of a divinity school, and most of the teachers in the Arts course were clergymen. Dr. Bovell held the Chair of Natural Theology here, and was also on the faculty of the Toronto medical school. The friendship between Osler and the older man continued to

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[14]Quoted in Reid, page 12.

flourish, and he was a frequent visitor at Dr. Bovell's home, where many hours were spent in putting up preparations for the microscope. During the summer months Osler eagerly searched for specimens of fresh-water algae, and although he returned to Trinity College for a second year in Arts, he soon forsook this for the medical school. His interest in divinity, however, showed clearly in his writings and addresses throughout his life. Of Dr. Bovell's influence Osler wrote,

> It has been remarked that for a young man the privilege of browsing in a large and varied library is the best introduction to a general education. My opportunity came to me in the winter of '69-'70. Having sent his family to the West Indies, Dr. Bovell took consulting rooms on Spadina Avenue not far away from Mrs. Barwich, with whom he lived....Having catholic and extravagant tastes, he had filled the room with a choice and varied collection of books. After a review of the work of the day came the long evening for browsing, and that winter (1869-70) gave me a good first-hand acquaintance with the original works of many of the great masters.--The diet was too rich and varied, and contributed possibly to the development of my somewhat splintery and illogical mind; but the experience was valuable and aroused an enduring interest in books.[15]

Osler expressed his appreciation of the help Dr. Bovell had given him with the words, "Books and the Man!--the best the human mind has afforded was on his shelves and in him all that one could desire in a teacher -- a clear head and a loving heart. Infected with the Aesculapian spirit he made me realize the truth of these memorable words in the Hippocratic oath, 'I will honour as my father the man who teaches me the Art'."[16]

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[15]Reid, page 1.
[16]Reid, page 16.

No career, as Edith Reid points out, would have satisfied Osler that had not human beings for its first aim. "He was a born physician, the friend of man".[17] Father Johnson and Dr. Bovell released his scientific interests, but they also brought into his life "a spiritual, religious and mystical atmosphere that had always thereafter to be reckoned with".[18]

Since clinical opportunities at McGill so far exceeded those at Toronto, Osler went there to continue his studies. Here he came under the influence of Dr. Howard, Professor of Medicine, a man to whom "the study and teaching of medicine were an absorbing passion".[19] Though a gay, fun-loving youth, William Osler was nevertheless a keen student and a hard worker. From the very beginning he seemed to have the ability to bring out the very best in his fellow men, to awaken latent capacities, and by his encouragement to incite fellow workers and students to the best possible efforts. Though his eyesight was acute in the service of science, he always overlooked the faults of his fellow men. Though Dr. Osler often said that his only talent was industry, others realized that his real power lay in inspiration over those with whom he came in contact.

After obtaining his medical degree, the young doctor sailed for Europe to spend two years at foreign universities, and when

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[17]Reid, page. 17.
[18]Reid, page 18.
[19]Osler, "The Student Life", Aequanimitas, with Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1906), page. 440.

he returned to Canada, it was with an enlarged outlook that enabled him to take his place as a leader in a new era for medicine. At McGill he became Lecturer upon Institutes of Medicine, and the moving spirit in the renaissance which began at this time. His lectures sparkled with anecdotes and simple illustrations of the most difficult theories so that no student went away from them without receiving benefit. From the very beginning he urged his students to adopt the rules of life to which he himself always adhered. He encouraged them to seek a lifelong education, to treat the man as well as the disease, to consider the poor and humble beyond all others, and to never approach the temple of science with the soul of a money-changer. He told his students to keep in close and friendly contact with physicians, cooperating with them, writing frequently for the medical journals and attending meetings of the medical societies.

Young Dr. Osler was pathologist to the smallpox hospital in Montreal during the outbreak of the dreaded disease in 1876. During the year 1876-1877 there were one hundred autopsies worked up. In his passion for scientific work his love of humanity was not suppressed.[20] The Christmas of 1876 was spent visiting an old physician, Dr. James Hamilton. "On my visits home", he writes, "I had been in the habit of calling on the dear old man. I have always loved old men -- and I enjoyed hearing anecdotes about Edinboro".[21]

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[20]See Reid, pages 17-39.
[21]Reid, page 54.

As Physician to the Montreal General Hospital Osler demonstrated a lesson in treatment, and"'to the astonishment of everyone, the chronic beds, instead of being emptied by disaster, were emptied rapidly through recovery. Under his stimulating and encouraging influence the old cases nearly all disappeared, the new cases stayed but a short time. The revolution was wonderful'".[22] It has been said that Osler's face released a spirit wholly irresistible, and that the effect of his radiant vitality, ready banter, quick step and debonair manner were like oxygen in a sick room. Dr. Howard had described him as a "potent ferment", and through his personal magnetism he inspired many to action.

One of Osler's important medical papers, read before the New York Pathological Society in 1882, was on Ulcerative Endocarditis. It was the first important paper on the subject in America. In the same year he was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in London, and two years later he was offered the Chair of Clinical Medicine in Philadelphia.

Dr. Howard Kelly writes that Osler brought to Philadelphia fresh and invigorating currents of life, and that new activities began at once to manifest themselves in the medical teachings which had formerly been so stereotyped. "Osler breezes were felt everywhere in the old conservative medical center."[23]

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[22]Reid, page 59.
[23]Quoted in Reid, page 72.

There was very soon no part of the medical life in Philadelphia in which the great leader did not take an active interest. Such was his understanding and love of both the old and the young that he received little opposition from either quarter. He continually acknowledged the debt of the present generation to the old men of the profession, and expressed his personal gratitude for what he had learnt from them. His was an unique genius for creating enthusiasm and inspiring men to undertake great tasks, though they might involve much hard and dull work.

While in Philadelphia, Osler published thirty-nine papers covering almost every phase of clinical medicine. His most valuable work on endocarditis was described in the Goulstonian lectures in London in the spring of 1885, and Osler was praised not only for his exposition of the pathology, clinical picture, and diagnosis of endocarditis, but also for the matchless style in which the lectures were written.

With the opening of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore in the year 1889, a new era in medical education in the United States had its beginning; for the first time in an English-speaking country a hospital was organized in units, each one in charge of a head or chief. Since the new university was entirely independent, Dr. Osler saw the opportunity to realize his ideals of what a medical school should be, and when he took the chair of medicine at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1889, the way lay open to him to establish a clinic such as he had

long hoped for. Dr. Welch called it "the first medical clinic in any English-speaking country worthy of the name",[24] and Osler himself wrote: "If I have done anything to promote the growth of clinical medicine, it has been in this direction, in the formation of a large clinic with well organized series of assistants and house physicians and with proper laboratories in which to work at the intricate problems that confront us in internal medicine."[25]

The teaching at the Johns Hopkins became a model for the whole medical world, and "without the least touch of diplomacy but with great sympathy" Osler "drew all into the general advance".[26] He was active, too, in organizing societies, and in starting such clubs as the Journal Club, which was similar to the foreign periodical clubs founded in Philadelphia and Montreal. He also organized an Historical Club and was an active member of the Library Committee. He constantly encouraged his associates and assistants to work together in harmony for the good of all, brought to life the latent abilities of many of his students, and inspired them with his own high ideals. As a bedside teacher, Osler was probably without parallel, and he became famous for his work with students in the hospital wards. His adoring students spent many an informal evening in the warm and hospitable atmosphere of Osler's home,

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[24]Quoted in Reid, page 115.
[25]Quoted in Reid, page 115.
[26]Reid, page 115.

discussing the great men and books of all times.

Osler had long realized the need of a new textbook for medical students, and while in Baltimore he wrote The Practice of Medicine, a book praised for its fine literary qualities as well as for the broad scientific knowledge which it contained. It was not only published in many English editions but was translated into French, German, Spanish, and Chinese as well. The book caught the attention of Mr. Rockefeller, who was impressed by its lucidity, and was indirectly responsible for the creation of the Rockefeller Institute for scientific research. Indirectly, too, it rescued the Johns Hopkins Hospital from its financial crisis after the Baltimore fire.

Few men have been so universally loved as Osler, and with his marriage to Grace Revere, and the birth of their son, his happiness was complete. Their home in Baltimore became a haven for students and medical men from all over the world, and scarcely a day passed without some visitor sharing its happy atmosphere.

Osler had become so much a part of the medical school and of Baltimore in general that even many of his closest friends were surprised when he accepted the position as Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University, but the demands on his time had greatly increased with the passing years, and no human being could continue at such a pace. His passion for books had grown stronger, and, with the less exacting duties which would be his

in England, he saw the opportunity for giving more attention to his avocation. Then, too, he hoped to have his son Revere trained under the English school system. No man, however, was more truly a part of all that he had met, and "even before he landed in England his tentacles were stretching out to the friends he had left behind, suggesting improvement in their work, encouraging those who needed encouragement, writing obituaries for those who had fallen out of line, sending checks large and small to the needy, carrying, as was his custom, all his past with him as he stepped into a new environment".[27]

As in Canada and the United States, Osler brought a vitalizing influence to England when he became Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford in 1905. He "had covered the whole field; he knew medical schools as a musician knows the keys of his piano; and his many years of clinical teaching, with its foundation of scientific knowledge, his humanity and magnetic personality, made him an ideal physician".[28] He continued to strive for harmony between the academic and the practical side of medicine, and to make the knowledge of public health measures more widespread. He brought life to the Radcliffe Scientific Library, which expanded under his influence, and stimulated the growth of the Bibliographical Society. He inspired his friends and his associates so that advances were made in medical work and in the field of medical history as a direct result of his

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[27]Reid, page 181.
[28]Reid, page 183.

suggestions. But the "currents into which Dr. Osler's life gathered the greatest strength after going to England were history and collecting incunabula, with which he enriched his own library and made valuable additions to medical libraries throughout Great Britain, Canada and the States. His avocation had become a very important vocation, it had always run a very close second to his practical clinical work; but now he could indulge this taste to the full. When in November 1905 he was elected a delegate of the University Press, he was put in touch with all current work; and the Bodleian was an inexhaustible storehouse for a bibliophile".[29] In 1906 he was made a Curator of the Bodleian, and among his other activities in connection with it he was instrumental in securing an original copy of the first folio of Shakespeare for Oxford.

When the new building of the Maryland Medical and Chirurgical Faculty was opened, it was recognized that this was almost entirely due to Dr. Osler's work during his years in Baltimore; it was also Osler who had interested Mr. Phipps in the building of a Psychiatric section at the Johns Hopkins, where, for the first time in the history of American medicine, insane patients were given quarters comparable to those provided for patients with other diseases. Thus Osler's influence for good continued in the United States long after he had taken up residence in England.

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[29]Reid, page 189.

When, in 1911, Dr. Osler was made a baronet, the whole medical world rejoiced, and letters and telegrams expressed the happiness felt by all with the news of such a well-deserved honour.

In 1913 Sir William visited the United States and delivered the Silliman Lectures at Yale. He spoke on the "Evolution of Modern Medicine". Of these lectures the editor, Colonel Fielding H. Garrison, wrote: "They are in effect a sweeping panoramic survey of the whole vast field, covering wide areas at a rapid pace with an extraordinary wealth of detail." He added that the editors had no hesitation in "presenting these lectures to the profession and to the reading public as one of the most characteristic productions of the best-balanced, best-equipped, most sagacious and most lovable of all modern physicians".[30]

When the war broke out in 1914, Osler's name headed the list of those appointed by the War Emergency Committee, and he was made Honorary Colonel of the Oxfordshire Regiment, as well as consulting physician to a hospital in Devon and to a Canadian hospital. To all he brought light and hope, and though he hated everything about war, he devoted himself to the work of the military hospitals, and sought relief in his books. The idea of a Bibliotheca Osleriana was now elaborated, and the cataloguing of his constantly growing library became his chief interest. When he suffered his life's greatest sorrow in the

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[30]See "Introduction" to Osler, The Evolution of Modern Medicine, ed. Fielding H. Garrison (Yale, 1921).

death of his only son, his work, his books, and his love for children were his solace. He established at the Johns Hopkins University an Edward Revere Osler Memorial Fund to encourage the study of English Literature of the Tudor and Stuart periods, and all of his son's books, as well as many of his own from the general literature section of his library, were given to that university. When peace came Sir William was the first to bring the conditions in Vienna before the public and to begin the relief work.

In 1919 Osler received a very great honour, and one which afforded him much pleasure, when he was elected to the Presidency of the Classical Association. In the same year his seventieth birthday was celebrated throughout the English-speaking world-- medical journals published special articles and newspapers praised his splendid services. The librarian of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore prepared a bibliography which included seven hundred and thirty of Osler's writings.[31] This birthday, which was greeted with such a spontaneous outburst of affection from all sources, was his last. Sir William died as the year drew to a close. Perhaps his most original contribution to the science of medicine was made as one of the earliest investigators of the blood platelets. In addition he wrote monographs on such subjects as cerebral palsies of children and angina pectoris, and did some valuable work in connection with malignant endocarditis. The most

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[31]Miss Blogg's bibliography of Osler's writings appeared in the Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin for July, 1919.

dominant quality in his personality was his humanity -- his extraordinary interest in and love for his fellow men -- and from this all his power seemed to spring.

> Think of those years at Johns Hopkins when Osler revolutionized the teaching of medicine and of clinical medicine in a community of seventy millions. Think of the influence wielded by his text-book, not merely among English-speaking people, but the world over, even to China and Japan. There is no physician who during his lifetime has had so profound an influence upon so great a number; no one individual who has done so much to advance the practice of scientific medicine, no one whose personal intimacy with his fellows in the profession has covered so wide an area--Canada, the United States, Great and Greater Britain and the leaders in medicine the world over; no one, in short, who has combined in the same degree the study, practice, and teaching -- the science and the art of medicine.[32]

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[32] J. George Adami, "The Last Days", Sir William Osler Memorial Number, Bulletin. International Association of Medical Museums and Journal of Technical Methods, No. 9 (Privately issued in Montreal, 1926) p. - hereafter referred to as Osler Memorial Number.

II

Osler as a Lover of Humankind, as Illustrated in his Life and Writings

Of all that humanism has come to mean in its broadest sense -- the love of humankind -- no more perfect example is to be found than in the life of Sir William Osler. He was the possessor to a marked degree of the pagan virtues of wisdom, temperance, courage, and justice, as well as the Christian ones of faith, hope, and charity, and his great gifts were ever utilized in the service of his fellow men. The men to whom Bush refers as "the philosophic humanists" believed that the force labelled humanism would be a very vital element in the moulding of citizens of strong character, and there is little doubt that his extensive reading broadened Osler's understanding of humanity in all its aspects.

From the very beginning Osler displayed an intense interest in his fellow creatures, and he possessed the power of rousing latent abilities and of inspiring ideals. Dr. Palmer Howard described Osler's quickening power as a "potent ferment," and many a student has attributed his success to Osler's influence. Although he seldom spoke of religion, his deep-rooted faith in Christianity was clearly illustrated in the life which he led. Many who knew Osler felt his likeness to Christ, and it is not uncommon to find such tributes as that of Marian Osborne, who affirms that her intimate association with the great physician as guide, philosopher, and friend, from her earliest years until his death, leads her to the belief that he was of all men

the most Christ-like in his life and the most God-like in his attributes.[33]

In an age when pure science was the new god, Osler popularized the study of the whole man -- mind, body, environment -- and ever told his students to care more for the individual than for the special features of the disease. Because it deals with men, he knew that medicine could never be a pure science. He was instrumental, too, in taking the study of medicine into the sick wards. Whereas medical students had previously received most of their knowledge from books and lectures, Osler took his classes to the patients' bedsides, and developed a clinical system of teaching in hospitals which was a model for all the medical world.

The emphasis on the individual man which began anew with the Renaissance and Humanism was a dominant note in the personality of Sir William. Osler's greatness as a doctor is often obscured by the memory of his charm as a man, and many of today's medical men express a personal admiration for him approaching hero-worship. His whole being overflowed with kindness, a kindness which was mirrored in his vivid features, and no one who had once met him ever forgot him. Osler would never permit anyone in his presence to speak ill of another, and when he entered a room, all gossip ceased. He urged the practice of St. Augustine, "of whom it is told in the Golden Legend that he had these verses written at his table:

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[33]Marian Osborne, "Recollections of Sir William Osler," Osler Memorial Number, page 174.

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,
Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi.[34]

What adverse criticisms he had to make were given to the man himself, and such was his charm that they usually remained friends. Reid stresses the fact that Dr. Osler never gave complete characterizations of the people he met and cared for; his acute eye was deliberately closed to the faults of his fellow men, for he was "always resolute to take human nature at its best and to seize every occasion for kindness which the day might offer."[35]

One of Osler's many roles was that of peace-maker. He brought order out of chaos in the medical profession of the various cities in which he lived, "a task effected by his own kindly personality, his insight into human nature, and the genuine affection he ever felt for all men who could in any way be won over to lay aside bitterness and strife for the higher good of suffering humanity."[36]

Everywhere he went he took with him joy and hope and all-embracing love. During the first world war, though his official area was in Oxfordshire, his services were called for in every section of the country, and to hospital staffs and patients his visits were like rays of sunshine. He was largely responsible for the efficiency of those with whom he came in contact. Burdens were made lighter by his sympathy and enthusiasm. He

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[34]Osler, "Chauvinism in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 104

[35]Harvey Cushing, The Life of Sir William Osler (Oxford, 1925), II, 207

[36]Howard A Kelly, "Osler as I knew him in Philadelphia and in the Hopkins," Osler Memorial Number, p. 261.

became the practical head of every Canadian hospital in England, and everywhere lives were touched by the power of his love and the charm of his presence. When his heart was broken by the death of his only son, he was without bitterness or thoughts of revenge, and went on advising, cheering, and encouraging without apparent effort. In the hospitals he bacame known as the "Consoler-General" because of the thoughtful notes which he wrote to parents and relatives of the dying men in his attempt to alleviate suffering, just as, when a very young doctor in Montreal, he had written to the English father of a smallpox victim to tell him of his son's death and to give him a very sympathetic account of the young man's last hours. Then, when the strife was over, Sir William brought the conditions in Vienna before the public and sought to have food supplies sent to the starving people. He wrote to Professor Wenckebach, who, before the outbreak of the war, had been called from Holland to assume the premier Chair of Medicine in the Vienna School, and inquired about food conditions in the city. As soon as he received Wenckebach's reply, he phoned to one of the Secretaries of the Foreign Office and urged him to have food rushed through. In the meantime Osler tried to arrange with friends to have supplies sent directly. A special committee was formed to meet the Minister of Foreign affairs, and copies of the letter were sent to the Foreign Office and influential persons. In spite of much criticism, Osler organized a town meeting in Oxford to solicit local contributions. He spoke of the desirability of the dispatch of medical help, pleading for the children when

many still thought of Austria as the enemy, and governments were arguing over peace terms.

Osler had an all-pervading sympathy, and ever saw the underlying tragedy of life, but like Sterne's Uncle Toby, he whistled that he might not weep. His was a thorough understanding of and interest in human nature, and he "like Abou-ben-Adhem, loved his fellow men despite faults and frailties, toward which he was always willing to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear. At the same time, in a very tactful way and from some text thus furnished, he preached many a lay sermon which had a lasting effect for good on the patient, or the group of medical students and assistants, or the medical or lay audience, as the case might be, to whom it happened to be addressed."[37]

One of Osler's charms was his humility and his avoidance of the spotlight. Yet he was forever smoothing the path for others, and few men have been more active in getting up testimonial dinners or in celebrating anniversaries of friends and colleagues in some such way, or by having their portraits painted. An example of his enthusiastic appreciation of all who had made a contribution to the world of medicine, is the article which he wrote and voluntarily sent to the Journal of the Outdoor Life in 1910, when this publication was given over to a series of testimonials to Edward Livingston Trudeau. "Now and then," Osler wrote, "men are fortunate enough to overcome the worst foes encountered in the battle of life -- chronic ill

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[37] J.M.T. Finney, "A Personal Appreciation of Sir William Osler," Osler Memorial Number, p. 274.

health, and an enforced residence in a paralysing environment. The attitude of mind so splendidly expressed in Henley's verse, 'Out of the night that covers me', scoffs at the menace of the years, and unafraid, with unbowed head, the happy possessor of the unconquerable soul of this sort feels that

> It matters not how strait the gate
> How charged with punishment the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

And this is the lesson of Edward Trudeau's life--the lesson of a long and successfully fought campaign....Of an unselfish, sympathetic disposition, he secured the devotion of his patients, to whom he was at once a tower of strength and a splendid example."[38]

The story is often told of how Osler, then a young man in Montreal, was asked by a beggar for money to buy a drink with which to make his burden lighter. Osler smilingly gave him the money, and a moment later ran after him, telling him that he might drink himself to death if he wished, but that he would not have him freeze to death. He thereupon took off his overcoat and presented it to the man, with the words that the only good thing about him was his "hobnailed liver". Shortly afterwards the man died, willing his "hobnailed liver" and his overcoat to his "good friend William Osler".[39] At another time, in Baltimore, Osler ran back blocks just to tell a deaf woman that his wife had not noticed that she was deaf.[40] Little

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[38]Quoted in Cushing, II, 225.
[39]See Reid, pp. 55-56.
[40]See Reid, p. 84.

incidents like these helped to make Osler greatly beloved, and throughout his life his charity prevailed in thought and word and deed. No one was ever turned away without help, and much of Sir William's money went in charities, in donations of books to his beloved libraries, in worthy causes for needy children, and in helping to rebuild institutions which had been damaged by fire. Frequently, too, he employed his efforts to interest wealthy men in charitable causes. When the Johns Hopkins suffered great losses through fire in February, 1904, Osler offered to contribute his salary for five years to aid in the restoration.

The author of Abroad with Jane refers to Sir William under the name of Sir Richard Holter. "There was Sir Richard Holter whom Jane and I visited over Sunday at Oxford. I would not dare assume that Sir Richard has delusions about anything, but whatever he thinks, he gives out that he is a professor in Oxford University. Well, he is; but his great line is the direction of human life. I went about with him for a day and a half, and wherever he went he was always directing human life, and wherever he touched it it seemed to go lighter and more blithely."[41]

Another of Osler's charms sprang from the fact that, for the moment, he was always of the same age as the man with whom he spoke. Differences of years meant little to him, and he instinctively took the other's point of view, and was truly

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[41]E.S. Martin, Abroad with Jane (New York, 1914), p. 111.

interested in the things which absorbed the other's attention. "He had a catholicity of social instinct which enabled him to say the right thing to the youngest freshman and to the oldest Don alike."[42] He felt, however, that it was the young men of the world who would make the important contributions, and his inspirational power led his students and young associates to many fine accomplishments in the fields of medicine and literature. His elevating influence touched all and roused latent abilities. Cushing quotes an article from The Times which lauds Sir William as not only a great student but as a great man. "This has been illustrated especially in his dealings with the younger generation of doctors. Many a young man owes his success and the success of his ideas to a discernment which saw the gold among the dross at a time when other eyes missed it, and to a friendliness and warmth of heart which have never been stinted."[43] Hopkins graduates published more than five hundred scientific papers in eight years, and Osler was often the godfather of these papers, although he took no credit. Not infrequently, research papers which students had submitted to Osler for his approval or careful revision, won wide acclaim for their authors upon publication.

When writing of Osler's many accomplishments, Cushing points out that while the great physician advanced the science of medicine, and enriched literature and the humanities, yet "individually he had a greater power." "He became the friend

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[42]Quoted in Cushing, II, 407.
[43]Quoted in Cushing, II, 629. (From The Times (January 14,1919).

of all he met--he knew the workings of the human heart metaphorically as well as physically. He joyed with the joys and wept with the sorrows of those who were proud to be his pupils. He stooped to lift them up to the place of his royal friendship, and the magic touchstone of his generous personality helped many a desponder in the rugged paths of life. He achieved many honours and many dignities, but the proudest of all was his unwritten title, 'the Young Man's Friend.'"[44]

Osler's love for and sympathy with the old men of the world is nowhere better illustrated than in the serious way in which, as ex-officio Master of the ancient Alms-house at Ewelme, he entered into his duties. Previous Regius Professors of Oxford had not been overly concerned with the Alms-house, and had made only a rare visit to the place. The Ewelme Alms-house, now five hundred years old, had been built and endowed by Alice of Suffolk in the fifteenth century, and provided a home for thirteen elderly men. Although there was a surgeon to attend to their needs, Osler visited the men once a week, and won from them a deep affection. "This particular duty was delightful to him--the Ancient Alms-house--the old men--how clearly you see him in these surroundings!" [45] Reid tells how a physician from the Middle West visited Ewelme with Osler, and found himself wiping his eyes to make sure that there was no other life. "Dr. Osler went from one to the other of the old men, playfully pulling the toe of one, or seriously sitting

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[44]Cushing, II, 685-686
[45]Reid, pp. 184-185

down by the side of another, and talking their language. You felt that they must all have come from the same childhood home; the atmosphere he brought to each was so real and individual that all the rest of the world seemed a long way off. I shall never forget it, the ancient house, the contented old men and Dr. Osler!"[46]

Throughout his life, many of Osler's spare moments were devoted to children, and their appeal grew stronger as the years went on. Quite frequently he made house-to-house visits among the children of his neighbourhood, and "he was invariably the youngest and most hilarious person in a succession of neighbouring nurseries."[47] He played with the little girls' dolls and turned illness into a game, and always entered into the spirit of the children's play. One mother tells of how Osler visited her little Janet twice every day from the middle of October until her death a month later, and of how these visits were looked forward to with a pathetic eagerness and joy. "There would be a little tap, low down on the door which would be pushed open and a crouching figure playing goblin would come in, and in a high-pitched voice would ask if the fairy godmother was at home and could he have a bit of tea. Instantly the sick-room was turned into a fairyland, and in fairy language he would talk about the flowers, the birds, and the dolls who sat at the foot of the bed were always greeted with 'Well, all ye loves.' In the course of this he would manage to find out all

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[46]Reid, p. 185
[47]Cushing, II, 511.

he wanted to know about the little patient."[48]

Osler's understanding of childhood is shown in his many letters to children, for with those he loved he kept up a wide correspondence. Most of these letters were written between 1884 and 1889 while Osler was in Philadelphia. Many were from the cats who wandered about his rooms in Philadelphia to the kittens of the Francis children, and signed "Katamount, King of Kats" or "Your distant friend Tommie Catte." Birthdays were never forgotten and in between there were presents of books and clothes and toys from that person who sometimes signed his name as "Doccie O" or as "Mailliw Relso, D.M.", or in a dozen other original ways which the children loved. "You are a gay old codger," he writes Jack Francis. "I wish I were near enough to pounce on you. Do you see this $1.00 bill? That's a fine old lady, is she not? She is fat, fatter than grandmother and can stand the cold; so I do not mind sending her north."[49] Often his letters were in a more serious vein, as when his "little doctur", William Francis, had been sick with typhoid. "I think whenever you feel very badly you you should send me a postal card, and say so, because it is very shocking for me to hear that you have been ill and not to have sent you a line and said that the light was too strong for my eyes, but I expect by this time that you are doing well, but please do not work hard, and don't mind about old general proficiency. Let some other fellow have it this year. Don't be a hog. You have got enough

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[48]Cushing, II, p. 620.
[49]Quoted in Reid, p. 102. (No date given).

of those things, and had better stop it."[50]

Sir William was known and loved by hundreds of children, and he gained their complete confidence for he could talk to them at their own level. "Only Dickens could have measured comprehendingly the sweetness and tenderness of the great heart of a child in the brilliant man, making all his rich endowment merely a setting for his humanity."[51]

In every address he ever gave, Osler's love for his fellows shone forth, and his guiding principle was ever Charity. He constantly urged his pupils that they should be students of men as well as of scientific theory. "The strength of a student of men," he said, "is to travel--to study men, their habits, character, mode of life, their behaviour under various conditions, their vices, virtues, and peculiarities. Begin with a careful observation of your fellow students and of your teachers; then, every patient you see is much more than the malady from which he suffers."[52] Over and over again, from a heart filled with love, he urged tolerance and charity towards our fellow men, and his students listened and attempted to attain the high goal he had set for them, for they felt that Osler was the personification of all those ideal virtues. He advised them that by seeking their own interests and by making a sordid business of a high and sacred calling, and by regarding their fellow creatures as mere tools of their trade, they might gain riches, but

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[50] Quoted in Reid, p. 104. (No date given).
[51] Reid, p. 106.
[52] Osler. "The Student Life," Aequanimitas, p. 425.

in the process they would have "bartered away the birthright of a noble heritage, traduced the physician's well-deserved title of the Friend of Man, and falsified the best traditions of an ancient and honourable Guild."[53]

Many of the phrases which expressed Osler's belief in the brotherhood of man were reflections of his reading of the Bible and of the works of one of his favourites among the English humanists, Sir Thomas Browne. He reminded his followers that the more closely we study the little foibles of others "the more surely is the conviction borne in upon us of the likeness of their weakness to our own--the need of an infinite patience and of an ever-tender charity toward these fellow-creatures; have they not to exercise the same toward us?"[54] He constantly praised the grace of humility for, "when to the sessions of sweet silent thought you summon up the remembrance of your own imperfections, the faults of your brothers will seem less grievous, and, in the quaint language of Sir Thomas Browne, you will allow one eye for what is laudable in them."[55]

In an address delivered before the Canadian Medical Association in 1902, Osler spoke against a spirit of intolerance, "conceived in distrust and bred in ignorance, that makes the mental attitude perenially antagonistic, even bitterly antagonistic to everything foreign, that subordinated everywhere the race to the nation, forgetting the higher claims of human

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[53]Osler, "Teacher and Student," Aequanimitas, p. 42.
[54]Osler, "Aequanimitas," Aequanimitas, p. 7.
[55]Osler, "Teacher and Student," Aequanimitas, p. 40

brotherhood."[56] He went on to say that personal, first-hand intercourse with men of different lands, when the mind is young and plastic, is the best vaccination against the disease.

Always loyal to his friendships, Osler visited as often as possible the cities where he had lived and worked, and gratefully remembered the associations which he had made. In an address at McGill in 1899 he told of his feelings about the friendships he had formed in Montreal. "After ten years of hard work I left this city a rich man not in this world's goods, for such I have the misfortune--or the good fortune--lightly to esteem, but rich in the goods which neither rust nor moth fellowship, and in the treasures of widened experience and a fuller knowledge of men and manners which contact with the bright minds in the profession ensures. My heart, or a good bit of it at least, has stayed with those who bestowed on me these treasures."[57]

Sir William felt that more than any other, the practitioner of medicine may illustrate the great lesson that we are here not to get all we can out of life for ourselves, but to try to make the lives of others happier. "The law of the higher life," he said, "is only fulfilled by love."[58] Again and again in his addresses, he, like the Christ with Whom he was so frequently compared, advocated the broadest charity towards all mankind. He urged his students to cultivate a humanity that would show

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[56]Osler, "Chauvinism in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 286.
[57]Osler, "After Twenty-five Years," Aequanimitas, p. 204.
[58]Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine, Aequanimitas, p. 386

in their daily lives, "tenderness and consideration to the weak, infinite pity to the suffering, and broad charity to all."[59] He closed his address, Unity, Peace, and Concord with these words: "I give a single word as my parting commandment;--But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it--Charity."[60]

Thus, because of his intense love for and interest in his fellow men, and the tremendous influence which he exerted, Osler must be classed as an ideal humanist in the broader sense of the term, as a lover of humankind. In an age when pure science was to the fore, and doctors were inclined to treat certain diseases in prescribed ways, he concentrated on the individual man first, believing that only when the patient's character was understood, could the cure for physical or mental ills be undertaken. Dr. Adami put into words the feelings of many when he wrote: "When we pass in review the great physicians, those who by their lives, their practice, their teaching, and their writings, have exercised the greatest influence over the greatest number of their fellows, putting together all those powers which make the complete physician, Osler must be awarded the first place."[61] In the foreword to A Physician's Anthology of English and American Poetry Dr. Garrison refers to Osler as "the essential humanist of modern medicine" because of "his wonderful genius for friendship toward all and sundry and, consequent upon this

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[59]Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 388
[60]Osler, "Unity, Peace, and Concord," Aequanimitas, p. 465
[61]Adami, p. 424.

trait, his large cosmopolitan spirit, his power of composing disputes and differences, of making peace upon the high places, of bringing about Unity, Peace, and Concord among his professional colleagues." Dr. Garrison quotes one of Osler's best pupils as saying that the charm of the great physician's personality brought men together; "for the good in all men he saw, and, as friends of Osler, all men met in peace."[62]

Admirable as an artist, stimulating as a thinker, lovable as a man, Sir William Osler was an almost perfect example of that humanist ideal, the harmonious life of the well-balanced man. "Sir William was a man first--a physician and scholar afterward; and beneath his high spirits, his love of fun, lay an infinite compassion and tenderness toward his humankind. 'Write me as one who loves his fellow men.'"[63]

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[62]Quoted in Cushing, II, 74

[63]Harvey Cushing, from the "Preface" to Osler, The Old Humanities and the New Science (Boston, 1920), p. XX.

III

Osler's Interest in the Humanities and his Relationship to the Renaissance Humanists

In 1919, when Osler was loved and revered as one of the truly great physicians of all time, he was elected president of the British Classical Association, the first occasion on which a medical man had been chosen for this high honour. After hearing the presidential address, Professor William Welch, one of Osler's greatest friends, remarked that that was Osler at his best, and later Welch wrote: "There have been physicians, especially in England, well known for their attainments as classical scholars, but I am not aware that since Linacre there has come to a member of the medical profession distinction in this field comparable to Osler's election to the presidency of the British Classical Association."[64]

It is interesting that literature and literary pursuits have always held an attraction for men of medicine. Perhaps it is because the human element plays such a prominent part in both professions. Doctors in every generation have been family confidants because of their understanding of the human heart, and not a few have endeavoured to put on paper their interpretations of human life. Osler "belonged to that small but attractive group of physicians, represented in all ages, who

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[64]Quoted in Cushing's "Preface" to Osler, The Old Humanities and the New Science (Boston, 1920) p. xvii

combined the broadest humanism with the best science of their day."[65] He was a true disciple of those scholars of the Renaissance who felt that the study of the classics was the best road to the goal of a well-balanced life lived at its greatest intensity. Only by companionship with the great minds of the past could one have the broadest outlook and approach the ideal character. "By the neglect of the study of the humanities," Osler said, "the profession loses a very precious quality."[66] He felt that "medicine is seen at its best in men whose faculties have had the highest and most harmonious culture,"[67] and that many physicians have influenced the profession "less by their special work than by exemplifying those graces of life and refinements of heart which make up character."[68] Although a physician "may possess the science of Harvey and the art of Sydenham," there may be lacking in him "those finer qualities of heart and head which count for so much in life."[69]

It seems to have been the opinion of Sir William, as it was the opinion of Sir Richard Livingstone, the great educator, that the habitual vision of greatness, and constant living with the best things in the world, give us standards and a vision of the goal and help to develop character and the will to achieve that goal. Those men who created humanism as a cultural ideal

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[65]William Welch, "Foreward" to Osler Memorial Number, p.iii.

[66]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain," Aequanimitas, p. 175.

[67]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain," Aequanimitas, p. 175.

[68]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain," Aequanimitas, p. 175.

[69]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain," Aequanimitas, p. 175.

and discipline, and who sought to apply classical wisdom to the uses of education and life, felt that the aim of education was the knowledge of virtue which makes a good man. The clear wisdom of Greece and the religious and ethical vision of Christianity which are the heritage of our Western civilization could, it was believed, lead to the formation of citizens in the humanistic tradition. Osler, like the Renaissance humanists, felt that in great literature there is a vision of the world and of life, a vision of what is first-rate in human nature, and that character may be trained through contact with the great personalities of the past and their spirit of courage and persistence, desire for wisdom and devotion to good. In a day when there was such a seemingly wide gap between science and the humanities, it was most unusual for a man famous in the field of science to proclaim that to infect a man with the "spirit of the Humanities is the greatest single gift in education."[70] Sir William frequently mentioned the great debt of Western civilization to the past. "One of the marvels, so commonplace that it has ceased to be marvellous, is the deep-rooting of our civilization in Greece and Rome--much of our dogmatic religion, practically all the philosophies, the models of our literature, the ideals of our democratic freedom, the fine and the technical arts, the fundamentals of science, and the basis of our law. The Humanities bring the student into contact with the master minds who gave us these things--with the dead who never die, with those

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[70]Osler, The Old Humanities and the New Science, (Boston, 1920) pp. 33-34.

immortal lives "not of now nor of yesterday, but which always were."[71] Sir William urged that the past is a good nurse, and that men should seek a higher education which would combine "intellectual pre-eminence with nobility of character."[72] Like the English humanists of the Renaissance, he felt that this could be accomplished by "the silent influence of character on character," and in no way more potently than in the "contemplation of the lives of the great and good of the past, and in no way more than in "the touch divine of noble natures gone."[73] "The all-important thing," he told some of his students, " is to get a relish for the good company of the race in a daily intercourse with some of the great minds of all ages. Now, in the spring-time of life, pick your intimates among them, and begin a systematic cultivation of their works."[74]

Sir William looked upon the authors of the books which he cherished as old friends, and he claimed among the best of friends the old humanists, As a physician, he looked back in grateful admiration to such great medical humanists as Caius and Rabelais. He felt that the true bibliophile cares not so much for the book as for the man whose life and mind are illustrated in it.

In his presidential address before the British Classical Association--The Old Humanities and the New Science--May,16,

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[71]Osler, The Old Humanities and the New Science, p. 29.
[72]Osler, "Books and Men" Aequanimitas, p. 224.
[73]Osler, "Books and Men," Aequanimitas, p. 224.
[74]Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 384.

1919, Osler stressed that the story of the free cities of Greece shows how a "love of the higher and brighter things in life may thrive in a democracy."[75] With Osler the individual was all-important; he felt that the Greek message to modern democracy was the need for individual reconstruction. He quoted Plato, "States are as the men are, they grow out of human characters," and pointed out that the great philosopher realized, as the dream-republic approached completion,"that after all, the true State is within, of which each one of us is the founder."[76]

Although Osler praised the school of Literae Humaniores, and the value of the humanities in science not less than in general culture, he made it clear that he liked to think of the "pleasant-flavoured word" humanism "as embracing all the knowledge of the ancient classical world--what man knew of nature as well as what he knew of himself,"[77]and lamented the breach between Science and the Humanities, for he felt that "the moving forces which have made the modern world"[78]are all part and parcel of the Humanities in the true sense. "Twin berries on one stem, grievous damage has been done to both in regarding the Humanities and Science in any other light than complemental. Perhaps the anomalous position of science in our philosophical school is due to the necessary filtration, indeed the preservation, of our classical knowledge through ecclesiastical channels."[79] He

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[75]Osler, The Old Humanities and the New Science, p. 59--hereafter referred to as The Old Humanities.
[76]Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 62.
[77]Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 27.
[78]Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 36.
[79]Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 36.

regretted the "scant treatment of the Ionian philosophers,"[80] and felt that the students of the so-called Humanities should realize such truths as "why Hippocrates[81] is a living force to-day, and why a modern scientific physician would feel more at home with Erasistratus[82] and Herophilus[83] at Alexandria, than at any period in our story up to, say, Harvey. Except as a delineator of character, what does the Oxford scholar know of Theophrastus,[84] the founder of modern botany, and a living force to-day in one of the two departments of biology."[85] Osler said

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[80] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 38.

[81] A collection of medical writings, the oldest of which belong to the beginning of the fifth century, has come down to us under the name of the Hippocratic school, though several different schools are represented in the collection. "Not all the treatises in the collection are of equal value, but the best of them show a fine blend of science and humanity, while two or three are among the highest products of Greek culture." (Benjamin Farrington, Greek Science (Middlesex, England, 1949), 1, 63.)

[82] Farrington points out that Erasistratus, a younger contemporary of Herophilus, extended the observations of Herophilus on the lacteals to a point beyond which no advance was made before Gasparo Aselli (1581-1626), and that if Herophilus is to be called the founder of anatomy, then Erasistratus is the founder of physiology. (Farrington, 11, 66.)

[83] Herophilus came from Chalcedon in Bithynia and lived about 300 B.C. "He was the first to get a general picture of the nervous system and to effect the distinction of the motor from the sensory nerves." (Farrington, 11, 66.)

[84] Theophrastus, 373-288 B.C., separated the animal from the vegetable kingdom, and established "the science of botany at a level above which it was not destined to rise till modern times." (Farrington, 11, 24.)

[85] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 38.

that every student should know the story of Archimedes,[86] of Hero,[87] of Aristarchus,[88] men whose methods had "exorcised vagaries and superstitions from the human mind and pointed to a clear knowledge of the laws of nature."[89] He thought, too, that since "Aristotle speaks for the first time the language of modern science," and since his natural history studies influenced profoundly his sociology, his psychology, and his philosophy in general, more attention should be given to the biological works which "form the very foundations of discoveries that have turned our philosophies topsy-turvy."[90] In a recent work Benjamin Farrington writes of the numerous and intimate connections between Aristotle's views on nature and his views on society?[91] He points out, too, that it was in biology that Aristotle made his great contribution to science. "It has been called the greatest

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[86] Archimedes, 287-212 B.C., is generally regarded not only as the greatest mathematician but as the greatest engineer of antiquity. (Farrington, 11, 73.)

[87] "Among the surviving works of Greek science a prominent place is occupied by the Pneumatics of Hero of Alexandria, a work which dates in all probability from the first century of our era. In the opening pages of this text-book is contained a scientific theory of the nature of the vacuum of an obviously advanced kind." (Farrington, 11, 91.)

[88] Aristarchus of Samos, whose probable dates are 310-230 B.C., was the first of the great Alexandrian astronomers. He was the first to put forward the heliocentric hypothesis. (Farrington, 11, 79.)

[89] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 40.

[90] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 42.

[91] Farrington, 1, 111.

contribution to science ever made by an individual."[92]

Osler declared that nothing revealed the unfortunate break in the Humanities more clearly than the treatment of the greatest nature-poet in literature, "a man who had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness unabashed, the man who united, as no one else has ever done, the functions and temper and achievement of science and poetry. The golden work of Lucretius is indeed recognized--but anything like adequate consideration from the scientific side is to be sought in vain. Unmatched among the ancients or moderns is the vision by Lucretius of continuity in the workings of Nature--not less of le silence eternel de ces espaces infinis which so affrighted Pascal, than of the long, limitless age of days, the age of all time that has gone by!"[93] Farrington refers to this poem, sometimes described as a versified text-book of atomic physics, as an analysis of human history and society, which, in the mind of Lucretius, were continuous with the history of the physical universe.[94]

Sir William emphasized the fact that a large number of students approach philosophical study from other sides than classical literature and history,[95] and remarked that no man is cultivated up to the standard of his generation who has not an appreciation of how the greatest achievements of the human mind

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[92] Farrington, I, 111.
[93] Osler, The Old Humanities, pp. 42-43.
[94] Farrington, II, 119.
[95] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 45.

have been revealed.[96] Osler stressed that our every-day existence depends on the practical application of discoveries in pure science by men who had no other motives than a search for knowledge of Nature's laws.[97] This disinterestedness has been claimed to be the distinctive gift of Hellas to humanity.

On the other hand, Osler regretted that the only visit many students pay to Parnassus is to get an intelligible label for a fact or form newly discovered. For him the salvation of science lay in "the recognition of a new philosophy--the scienta scientiarum of which Plato speaks, "'Now when all these studies reach the point of intercommunion and connection with one another and can be considered in their mutual affinities, then, I think, and not till then, will the pursuit of them have a value!"[98] Sir William felt that if the principles of philosophy were dealt with in relation to the sciences and literary and historical studies, the student would gain a knowledge of the evolution of modern scientific thought. He spoke of George Sarton[99] and of his belief that there was but one bridge between the old humanist and the scientist for the formation of a "new humanism", and that that bridge was the history of science. Sarton had suggested, however, that this study of history be limited to the modern period. Osler, who ever believed in going to the origin of things, thought that this would

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[96] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 46.
[97] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 48.
[98] Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 54.
[99] George Sarton, born Ghent, Belgium, 1884. In 1912 he was the founder and editor of Isis, an international review devoted to the history and the philosophy of science.

be a grave error, and that "the scientific student should go to the sources and in some way be taught the connection of Democritus with Dalton, of Archimedes with Kelvin, of Aristarchus with Newton, of Galen with John Hunter, and of Plato and Aristotle with them all."[100] He advocated, too, that the glories of Greek science and the knowledge of its advances be opened in a sympathetic way to students of the humanities. It is interesting that a few years after Osler's death, Sarton published a book entitled History of Science and The New Humanism, in which he wrote that the student could best be taught the cultural value of science, which far transcends all its applications, by bringing him into contact with its entire history.[101] He said that we must humanize knowledge, and that this is preeminently the historian's task, "for how else could we evidence the deep humanity of science, if not by explaining its concrete and lowly origins and the endless vicissitudes of its development? It is also the historian's privilege to make younger people appreciate the value of the earlier efforts, however crude they may seem, and to implant admiration and reverence into their minds".[102] For example, he pointed out that the Greek god of healing, Asclepius, was but a descendant of the Egyptian one, Imhotep, "and the history of the latter can be traced back to a real personality, that of a learned physician who flourished probably at the beginning of

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[100]Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 55.

[101]George Sarton, History of Science and The New Humanism (New York, 1931), p. 72.

[102]Sarton, p. 135.

the thirtieth century."[103] He said that the Athenian humanists did not capriciously exclude this or that; they realized the unity of science and took the whole of knowledge as their province.[104]

Osler's eloquent address to the members of the Classical Association contained valuable suggestions for the interconnection of science and the humanities, and many an apt quotation illustrated his remarks. The very description in biological terms of the function of the members of the Association seemed to emphasize his belief in the essential unity of the two branches of study. "Now the men of your guild secrete materials which do for society at large what the thyroid gland does for the individual."[105] The whole is pervaded by his love of humanity and his desire to see the forces of nature used only for the common good. Even Osler's most intimate friends must have marvelled at the breadth of outlook and the vast knowledge of literature and of every field of learning displayed in this remarkable address, though they well knew the insatiable curiosity and boundless energy which led to the attainment of such knowledge and vision. The address was the very embodiment of the ideal which he urged his listeners to adopt, an ideal perfectly exemplified in his own life. Not only had he an intense interest in and sympathy with the work of students of the classics, but he had mastered the historical and bibliographical aspects of classical scholarship, and he continually acknowledged the contribution of the ancients to the development of modern science and culture.

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[103]Sarton, p. 84.
[104]Sarton, p. 71.
[105]Osler, The Old Humanities, p. 26.

IV

i

Osler's Love of Books and Libraries: His Book Collections

The literary humanists of the Renaissance were enthusiastic collectors of books, and Sir William Osler was true disciple of this group. In the words of Dr. Cushing, no one can think of the man without recalling his love for books and their authors. Osler continually urged his students to have a hobby. His was the collection of books, especially first editions, and these he would exhibit with great delight in the study of his home or share with the members of the Historical society. Often at these meetings he gave a biography of the author of the book which he was discussing, and he appraised its literary or scientific value.

"He could talk of a rare old volume in a way that would reduce you to tears and even though you did not care at all for the things, you felt that you, too, must possess it."[106] Among Osler's posthumous papers was found the rough draft of an article in which he had described the characteristics of the true bibliomaniac.

> In the final stage of the malady, sung of so sweetly by John Ferriar,[107] and described so minutely

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[106]Reid, p. 149.

[107]John Ferriar, 1761-1815, physician, author of "The Bibliomania, an Epistle to Richard Heber, Eq." which appeared in a book entitled Illustrations of Sterne: with other Essays and Verses, 2nd ed. (Warrington, 1812).

> by Dibdin,[108] the bibliomaniac haunts the auction rooms and notes with envious eyes the precious volumes as they are handed about for inspection, or chortles with joy as he hears the bids rise higher and higher for some precious treasure already in his possession. Of this final enthraldom, the chief symptom, not mentioned indeed by Dibdin, is the daily perusal of the catalogues of auction sales. Like the secret drinker with a full bottle by his side and the kettle on the trivet the victim in his last stage indulges his passion alone....Though the spirit of the gambler is upon him there is method in his mania, for he makes his calculations with shrewdness and knows the prices which his favourite books have brought. He is never disappointed for he has a strong conviction that the world is one big auction room in which the gods sell everything to the man who can wait. If he loses today tomorrow may bring luck, and this element of uncertainty gives zest to the dispute.

Into this final state, Osler confessed he had lapsed. He declared that the true bibliophile is not an indiscriminate buyer, seeking incunabula and editions deluxe with equal avidity, but his guiding principle is deep interest in an author, and this "limits the range of his desires and keeps his library within the limits of his house and purse".[109] He felt that the great difficulty is to keep the passion within bounds, so fascinating and so numerous is the company into which it leads a man. "Any one of the elect may absorb his energies for months. Charles Lamb says that he lived on Landor's little poem Rose Aylmer for a week. After

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[108]Thomas Frognall Dibdin, 1776-1847, English bibliographer and author of Bibliophobia, (1832).

[109]Quoted in Cushing, I, 579-580.

first finding Fuller I lived on him for six months; and when hungry or thirsty after the mental labours of the day, I find refreshment in the Worthies or in any page of the Holy and Profane State".[110] Before this happy stage is reached, however, Sir William felt that one had to know the author, that biography should accompany the study of a man's work, and that "to get on terms of refreshing intimacy you must love the man as a friend and know the phases of his mind as expressed in his writings".[111] "To be supremely happy", he concluded, "to the instinct of the collector must be added the mental attitude of the student". "Either alone lacks completeness; the one supplements the other. I can read with pleasure a classic, such as Rasselas, though issued in penny dreadful form by Mr. Stead, (but) feel nearer to the immortal Samuel when I hold the original in my hand. It is all a matter of sentiment, and as I feel towards my blood relations--or some of them--and to my intimate friends in the flesh, so I feel to these friends in the spirit with whom I am in communion through the medium of the printed word".[112]

Friends tell of how they would see Sir William emerging from a bookshop with a volume clasped in his arms and his face wearing "that peculiar expression of mingled pride of possession

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[110]Quoted in Cushing, I, 580. In May and June of 1902 Futler's Worthies is mentioned.
[111]Quoted in Cushing, I, 580.
[112]Quoted in Cushing, I, 580.

and happiness common to collectors who are rejoicing in une trouvaille".[113] In his letters one continually notes the delight with which he told his friends of some exceptional find. He spent much of his time in libraries, and when he travelled in Europe in the years 1908 and 1909 and in Egypt in 1911 he derived great pleasure from his visits to famous libraries. From Vienna in April of 1908 he wrote that the Hofbibliothek was unusually rich in manuscripts and early printed books. "I was anxious to see the copy of Christianismi Restitutio of Michael Servetus, 1553, in which for the first time the lesser circulation is described.---The other work that I was most anxious to see was the famous manuscript of Dioscorides, prepared at the end of the fifth century for Julia, daughter of the Emperor Flavius."[114] His pocket note-books give evidence of many hours of browsing in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de Médicine, and other libraries in Paris. He wrote to William Welch on January 11, 1909, telling him of some of the most interesting of the papers and books which he had seen in the medical library in Paris. "Bichat's lecture notes & the MS. of the Genl. Path., Laennec's lecture notes, private letters of Broussais, & the whole story of the surgical war of 500 years are to be seen in the papers. The most extraordinary are the well known Faculty Commentaires, the annual reports of the Dean, 1395, to the Revolution - an uninterrupted series."[115]

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[113] John Ruhrah, "Osler's Influence on Medical Libraries in America", Osler Memorial Number, p. 341.
[114] Quoted in Cushing, II, 121-122.
[115] Quoted in Cushing, II, 157.

Typical of his notes of trimph is the following: " I have been getting a few good things, a final edition of Avenbrugger[116] which I have been after for some years, and a Gilbert's Magnet;[117] the first great scientific book published in England."[118] At the Vatican Library, which he considered very wonderful, though for old manuscripts not as rich as the Medici Library in Florence, he saw some ancient Hippocrates and Galen manuscripts. He visited the Biblioteca Lancisiana, went over the Lancisi manuscript, and made many fragmentary notes, such as "7 books published before 1480; there is no copy of the De Motu Cordis, 1628; one of 1652 Religio Medici; none of Caius, one only of Linacre."[119] To Leonard Mackall on March 3, 1909, he wrote, "Rome has been delightful. I have enjoyed everything ---Several of the Book-shops are A-1. I got a splendid Aristotle (Venice) 1476-de animalium partibus, and several good sets relating to Medical History--de Renzi's School of Salernum &c. I got a fine Gesner--Dictionary Greek & Latin. A wonderful man! well called the German Pliny--Bibliography, Philology, Medicine, Chemistry, Natural History--& above all a most lovable soul."[120] The Laurentian Library in Florence seemed to him to be "just too splendid for words."[121] He wrote with enthusiasm of the seven

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[116]Leopold Von Avenbrug, 1722-1809, an Austrian physician and discoverer of percussion in medical diagnosis.

[117]William Gilbert, 1540-1603, English physician and natural philosopher. He did outstanding work in the fields of electricity and magnetism, and in 1600 published De Magnete, a book in which experimental evidence is insisted upon.

[118]Quoted in Cushing, II, 146.

[119]Quoted in Cushing, II, 165.

[120]Quoted in Cushing, II, 166.

[121]Quoted in Cushing, II, 167.

thousand chained manuscripts, all in the putei or cases designed by Michael Angelo. Osler's pocket note-book gives evidence of a visit to the library of the university in Padua in March of 1909. He noted that the 1543 edition of the De humani corpus of Fabricius was well worn, and that at the lower right hand margin is "Fabricius sibi & suis".[122] Osler thought it probable that the copy had belonged to Fabricius.

Note after note illustrates Osler's intense interest in books and libraries, and his friends never ceased to marvel at the breadth and depth of his knowledge in this field. They were continually amazed that a famous physician who was so active in every aspect of medicine should yet find time to devote to such a demanding avocation. Osler was interested not only in the great medical classics and books on the history of medicine, but also in more purely literary works, including poems and novels by medical men, and general literature which shed light on the state of medicine and the position occupied by doctors in any particular society. With what delight he wrote of every acquired treasure--rare editions of Plato and Aristotle, of Copernicus and Celsus, the first authorized edition of the Religio Medici, the first edition of Browning's Paracelsus, a presentation copy to Frederick George Stephens from Dante Gabriel Rosetti, and countless others! Sometimes friends made him gifts of the precious volumes from which they knew he would receive the keenest joy, as in the case of a copy of La Henriade, bound by Padeloup

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[122]Cushing, II, 171.

and inscribed with a presentation verse from Voltaire to his friend J.B. Silva, physician to Louis xv.

Nor was Osler's interest in books limited to the acquisition of a collection of his own. He was also interested in book-making. When the great Oxford Dictionary was in progress at the Clarendon Press, "the workers, from James Murray down through the thirty sub-editors and their helpers, were kept cheered and amused in their stupendous task by the frequent visits of the Regius Professor of Medicine, whose pranks, as one of them recalls, made him the life of the place".[123] Osler was an active delegate to the Clarendon Press, and regularly attended the weekly meetings at which it was discussed which books should be printed or reprinted. "A copy of practically every book printed by the Press came to his house by right of his position and he would quaintly call these 'the delicacies of the Press'".[124] In 1909 a new edition of the Religio Medici with Digby's Observations was printed from copies lent by him. Osler distributed many copies of this book and wrote an accompanying note to explain that it was printed with a form of type designed by Bishop Fell in 1660. This is perhaps the oldest form of type in use in England.

Among Osler's unfinished articles was one entitled The College of the Book, in which he suggests that there be established at Oxford, in connection with the Clarendon Press and the Bodleian, a training school for the library workers throughout

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[123]Cushing, II, 199.

[124]Archibald Malloch, "Sir William Osler at Oxford", Osler Memorial Number, p. 368.

Great Britain. The experience of these workers was at that time acquired in a haphazard way as apprentices, with no preliminary training in the fundamentals of library practice. Osler felt that there should be "a college where men could learn everything relating to the Book, from the preparation of manuscript and the whole mystery of authorship, to the art of binding; everything from the manufacture of paper to the type with which the book is printed; everything relating to the press and to the mart; everything about the history of printing from Gutenberg to Hoe; everything about the precursors of the printed book; the papyrus, the rolls, the parchment and the vellum, even about the old writing on the burnt bricks of Nineveh; everything about the care of books, the Library lore, how to stack and store books; how to catalogue, how to distribute them; how to make them vital living units in a community; everything that the student should know about the use of books, his skilled tools in the building of his mind".[125] Osler proceeds to speak of the four great departments of the College: the School of Library Economics, the School of Bibliography, the School of Publication, and the School of Printing. He adds a lecture list to cover four prospective courses on ancient and modern libraries, on the book itself and its make-up, and another to cover such subjects as copyrighting, publication, reviewing, selling, and auctions. To effect such a scheme, Osler suggests that it would be necessary to build a separate fireproof building

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[125]Quoted in Cushing, II, 81.

in underground communication with the existing ones, and that this building should be used for administration, reading, department and teaching rooms.

In one of the most widely quoted passages from any of Osler's addresses, he said, "It is hard for me to speak of the value of libraries in terms which would not seem exaggerated".[126] "Books have been my delight these thirty years, and from them I have received incalculable benefits. 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."[127] Sir Williams's interest in libraries was cumulative, and once a contact was made it was never subsequently lost. "---the library at McGill, that of the Surgeon-General in Washington, of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, of this Maryland Faculty, and many others which he perhaps knew less intimately, all continued to profit by his unflagging support--moral and often financial."[128] It has been pointed out that he always retained his zeal for the libraries and librarians known to his earlier days. To Osler credit is largely due for the formation of the Medical Library Association in America, and "wherever he happened to be his interest in the medical library was paramount",[129] and his influence touched them all. During his years in Montreal, the McGill library was

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[126]Osler, "Books and Men", Aequanimitas, p. 220.
[127]Osler, "Books and Men", Aequanimitas, p. 220.
[128]Cushing, I, 344.
[129]Ruhrah, p. 340.

stirred into greater activity; in Philadelphia he was elected to the Library Committee of the College of Physicians, and did much valuable work in this connection. "An "important engagement" often was kept with old favourites on the library shelves."[130] "So well did he get to know the library's contents, that he was able to write from Baltimore several years later as to just where to find some duplicate odd volumes of the Transactions of the Philadelphia Pathological Society that he wanted for the Library of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty."[131] Osler presented many books to the library in Philadelphia, and these covered a wide range of subjects from incunabula and editiones principes, to five items by Sir Thomas Browne, and some modern works.

When Sir William Osler went to Baltimore, he discovered that the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty was relatively inactive and that it possessed several hundred old volumes which had been deposited in the basement of the Maryland Historical Society. Osler's interest and activity led to the revival of the society, and as a member of the library committee he was a potent element in its renaissance. During his residence in Baltimore, the library was expanded to a collection of almost fifteen thousand volumes, and Osler succeeded, too, in having a trained librarian appointed. He took great interest in the Library of the Johns Hopkins Hospital as well, and was ever on the outlook, both in America and abroad, for books which he might add to the

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[130]E.B. Krumbhaar, "Osler's Connection with the Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia", Osler Memorial Number, p. 238.

[131]Krumbhaar, p. 238.

collection. Each week he went over all the newly acquired books. He used the library a great deal himself and encouraged his students to use it and to go to original sources for their information. Sir William was also instrumental in acquiring gifts of famous book collections for the library.

While in Baltimore, Osler founded the Book and Journal Club, and a hundred men were induced to join. The dues of five dollars a year proved low in comparison to the delight which was derived from the meetings by all true book lovers. "Most of the money went to the use of the Library, but a portion of it, aided very generously from Osler's own purse, went to two or three meetings a year at which many of the best medical minds of the country contributed to the intellectual side; and Dr. Osler's human instincts saw to it that the inner man was not forgot."[132]

Osler transferred to the Bodleian the same active interest which he had shown in the Library of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia and in that of the Maryland Faculty in Baltimore. Ex officio he was one of the eight Curators of the Bodleian Library, and was soon made a member of the Standing Committee which met once a week. Soon after taking up residence in Oxford, Osler was instrumental in acquiring once more for the Bodleian a first folio Shakespeare which had disappeared from the library about the years 1663 or 1664. Under an agreement made with them by Sir Thomas Bodley in 1610-1611, the Company of Stationers sent to the Bodleian in 1623 or 1624 a copy of the newly published

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[132]Ruhrah, p. 342.

first collected edition. When the book returned from the Oxford binder, it was chained to the shelves and remained there until 1664. By 1674 it had disappeared from the catalogue. It seems that the Bodleian Statutes then in force contained a clause which allowed the Curators, if unanimous, to consign books to be changed for others of a better edition, or to be removed as superfluous. The First Folio was probably gotten rid of between September of 1663 and September of 1664 among a number of superfluous Library Books. Nothing more is known of its history until it was acquired by Mr. Richard Turbutt sometime before 1759, and it remained in the family until 1905, when the great-great grandson of the original owner offered it for sale at the price of three thousand pounds. The Librarian of the Bodleian was frantic, as it seemed almost impossible to raise this sum, and it looked as if the folio would go to an American buyer. Osler not only subscribed generously to the fund himself, but secured still larger contributions from Lord Mount Stephen and from Mr. Henry Phipps. As the deadline for the sale drew near, however, the required sum of money had not been raised. Just as the folio seemed lost, Lord Strathcona sent a welcome telegram in answer to Osler's appeal. The librarian of the Bodleian, E.W.B. Nicholson, was overcome with joy and, giving credit where it was due, told Dr. Osler that he deserved a statue in the Bodleian quadrangle.[133]

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[133]See Cushing, II, 45.

As one of the Radcliffe Trustees, Osler was instrumental in guiding the policy in matters concerning the Radcliffe Library, which houses most of the modern scientific books of the University; he took a keen interest in the upkeep and improvement of the Radcliffe Camera, where the modern books of the Bodleian Library may be read; he was one of a committee responsible for the choice of the Radcliffe Travelling Fellows. Dr. Osler was also largely responsible for the Underground Bookstore, a huge storehouse for thousands of books built underneath the grassy stretch which separates the Camera from the Bodleian Library. Scarcely a day passed when Osler did not visit the Bodleian in an unofficial capacity, and he was soon a friend of each member of the staff, from the Librarian to the boy lowest on the pay list.

In his research for his articles and addresses, Osler browsed through the libraries in his vicinity, and in his pursuit of a subject went as often as possible to original sources, and did much collateral reading. He encouraged his students to use libraries by giving them references to articles and monographs, and taught them to consult the literature of the world, French and German as well as English. Osler felt that every medical man should have a well-used library to aid him in his lifelong education.

In an article entitled "Books and Men", delivered before the members of the Boston Medical Library in 1901, Osler expressed his belief that there should be connected with every library, a

"corps of instructors in the art of reading, who would, as a labour of love, teach the young idea how to read". "An old writer says there are four sorts of readers: 'Sponges which attract all without distinguishing; Howre-glasses which receive and pour out as fast; Bagges which only retain the dregges of the spices and let the wine escape, and Sives which retain the best only'."[134] Sir William remarked that a man wastes a great many years before he reaches the 'Sive' stage.

An incident which must have caused Sir William and his cousin Dr. Francis a delight akin to that felt by the humanists of the Renaissance upon the discovery of ancient manuscripts, was the finding of a collection, in the summer of 1906, of documents of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries in an old, long-closed safe in a room of the Alms-house at Ewelme. One of the earliest of the documents, dated 1359, was a grant of various manors in England to Thomas de la Pole by the Abbots and Monks of a convent in Normandy. There were also ancient title-deeds, indentures, court rolls, some of them in Norman French, and the original charter with the great seal of Henry vi attached, endowing the Alms-house at Ewelme with the manors of Marsh, Connock, and Ramridge. An extremely interesting find was a parchment roll of receipts, undated but apparently oldest of all, with directions for making what has since been called gunpowder. These documents Osler had bound in a huge folio and labelled Ewelme Muniments. They were replaced in the Alms-house at

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[134]Osler, "Books and Men", Aequanimitas, p. 221.

Ewelme so that all who visited the place might seem them.[135]

In connection with books, as with so many other interests, Osler's memory was unbelievable. He knew the dates of hundreds of first editions, could tell in which library or in whose private possession they were, and was quite frequently able to say which was the best edition, and to trace the wanderings of rare ones.[136]

Sir William was interested in all libraries, and willing and eager to help in any way possible. After the great San Francisco fire, for example, he wrote to friends in America to urge that a committee be organized to collect books for the San Francisco Library, adding that he and others in England could gather together many interesting columes to help out.

To the libraries with which he had been associated, Osler gave many gifts of books and money, and he interested wealthy men in their behalf. To the Toronto library he donated many books, including some rare items and incunabula, and also established a fund in honour of his old teacher, Dr. James Bovell, the interest from which was to purchase books on medicine, physiology, or pathology. Similarly, the Library of Physicians and Surgeons in Philadelphia received many valuable items from him. So many of the treasured books of the Maryland Medical and Chirurgical Faculty library were acquired through the interest of Sir William and so great were his services in every way, that

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[135]See Cushing, II, 58.
[136]Malloch, p. 369.

the new hall opened May 13, 1909 was named Osler Hall in his honour. Johns Hopkins University received Revere Osler's collection of books after his death, along with many of his father's non-medical ones, such as his Shelleys and his Miltons. Sir William's own collection was bequeathed to McGill, arranged and catalogued in the manner which appealed to him--a combination of biography with bibliography, so that beside the book is a picture of the man who wrote it, sketched by a sympathetic hand.

Miss Noyes, a librarian who knew Dr. Osler well, declared that no man has so left his imprint on the libraries of two continents, and another friend has told of how, in his home, Sir William was always close to his books, "for his library flowed over the house, invading the sleeping-rooms and even the dining-room. His library was a library used, in a way I have never seen duplicated".[137] It has been asserted that Osler's fondness for letters was more than the mere pleasant avocation of busy teacher; that throughout his professional career it was an abiding interest that towards the end bid fair even to eclipse medicine, as his major pursuit in life. In the words of Edith Reid, Sir William did not take up book collecting as a needed relaxation; it was his delight. "He did not read up about the old physicians and medical history in order to write about them, he read because he must and wrote from an overflow of knowledge absorbingly gained. There have been many bibliophiles but never one that we know of so cheery as he; not a solitary thinker, but

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[137]Henry Viets, "Glimpses of Osler During the War", Osler Memorial Number, pp. 404-405.

gathering into his net all who came his way, sharing every find."[138]

ii

The Osler Library

Sir William Osler's collection of books was sent to McGill University, and is housed in a beautiful room in the Medical building. The gigantic task of compiling and preparing for publication the unfinished Catalogue was undertaken by Dr. W.W. Francis, Librarian of the Osler Library, R.H. Hill, then at the Bodleian, and Dr. Archibald Malloch, afterwards Librarian at the New York Academy of Medicine Library. Ten years after the collector's death, the Catalogue was completed.

The sections of the library into which the books are grouped is as follows: I Bibliotheca Prima; II Bibliotheca Secunda; III Bibliotheca Litteraria; IV Bibliotheca Biographica; V Bibliotheca Bibliographica; VI Bibliotheca Historica; VII Incunbula; VIII Manuscripts; XI Addenda.

The Bibliotheca Prima consists of milestones in the evolution of knowledge in science and medicine and includes men of the first rank. "The Chronological position of an author, in the modern centuries, is determined by the original date of issue of his chief contribution".[139] "That particular work (if

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[138]Reid, p. 266.

[139]From the "Introduction" to the Catalogue Raisonné of the Osler Library, p. xi

in the collection) and those directly bearing upon it are placed first, then his other works, followed by commentaries, biographies, and bibiliographies. Manuscripts and incunabula relating to Prima authors are catalogued here and not in their own sections".[140] Plato was placed in this section as the founder of psychology, while Lucretius came under the same section because of his vision "and for the atomic presentation and for the natural man view de rerum natura".[141]

The Bibliotheca Secunda is the largest section and contains medical and scientific works of authors not of the first importance. This section is arranged alphabetically under authors with secondary author headings in smaller type.

The Bibliotheca Literaria contains medical and philosophical poems in addition to the literary works of physicians. Works which would normally belong here but which have reference to authors in the previous sections are catalogued in these sections.

The Bibliotheca Biographica contains individual lives under their subjects.

The Bibliotheca Historica includes historical and retrospective works and any literature on medical institutions arranged either under authors or under geographical names.

In the Incunabula section are one hundred and six books

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[140]From the "Introduction" to the Catalogue Raisonne of the Osler Library, p. xi.

[141]See Cushing, II, 557. (From a letter to J.A. Nixon, Feb. 7, 1917.)

printed before 1501, with cross-references to thirty others catalogued in the Prima section.

The Bodleian's Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts was taken as model for the Manuscripts section.

A supplementary section of Addenda contains items classified or received too late.

The Osler Library contains many valuable first editions, some of them excessively rare. There is a 1621 edition of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, a 1543 Copernicus, a 1513 edition of Plato from the Aldine press. The very rare first edition of Averraes, the most famous of Arabian philosphers, is included in the collection. Also to be found here is the first collected edition of the first four books of Rabelais, and the first with the title "Oeuvres". Another item is a medical tablet which was found at Assur and which dates back to 700 B.C. A priceless item is a work on materia medica by a Moorish physician in Spain, Al-Ghafiki. The manuscript is Arabic and is dated A.D. 1256. The three hundred and sixty-seven coloured drawings of plants and animals which accompany the manuscript are truly remarkable.

V

i

Osler's Interest in Historical Societies and his Reverence for the Past

Osler's great reverence for the past is clearly illustrated in the intense interest which he took in historical societies, always with the stress on the human side, on the lives of the men who had made possible the great changes in science and the world at large. He felt that "the true bibliophile cares not so much for the book as for the man whose life and mind are illustrated in it". "There are men of noble life and high character, every scrap of whose writings should be precious to us, and such men are not rare. The works are not always of any special value to-day, nor even of any intrinsic interest, but they appeal to us through the sympathy and even the affection stirred in us by the story of the man's life. It is, I know, a not uncommon feeling--a feeling which pervades No. xxxii of Shakespeare's Sonnets and so beautifully expressed in the concluding line. 'Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'"[142]

Sir William continually pleaded for the historical method of approach to the study of medicine, and pointed out that impossibility of clear vision without it. Soon after his arrival at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, an Historical Club was established,

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[142]Osler, "Some Aspects of American Medical Bibliography", Aequanimitas, p. 3211.

and the members met one Monday evening in each month. For fifteen years, unless ill or away from Baltimore, Osler regularly attended these gatherings, "which he regarded as educational agencies of great importance to the hospital and school".[143]

In "A Note on the Teaching of the History of Medicine",[144] he spoke of the effort even in the everyday ward-work to make the student get the habit of going to original sources; of his Saturday evenings with the students when, over a little "beer and baccy" he quite often gave a talk on one of the "masters of medicine". He ended with the following quotation from Fuller:[145] "History maketh a young man to be old, without either wrinkles or gray hairs; privileging him with the experience of age, without either the infirmities or inconveniences thereof: Yea, it not only maketh things past present, but inableth one to make a rational conjecture of things to come. For this world affordeth no new incidents, but in the same sense wherein we call it a new Moon, which is the old one in another shape, and yet no other what had been formerly. Old actions return again, furbished over with some new and different circumstances."[146]

Gilcreest tells us how Sir William Osler would talk for

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[143]Cushing, I, 323.

[144]Osler, "A Note on the Teaching of the History of Medicine", British Medical Journal (July 12, 1902), II, 93.

[145]Thomas Fuller, 1608-1661, author of Worthies of England and a Church History of Britain.

[146]Cushing, I, 579.

hours on the history of medicine. "No one studied and revered the lives of the fathers of medicine more than Osler. He himself had said, 'In the continual remembrance of a glorious past individuals and nations find their noblest inspiration'."[147] Dr. Osler was instrumental in founding the Section of History of Medicine at the Royal Society and acted like a magnet in gathering together a company of original members.

In giving the Silliman[148] lectures at Yale, Osler presented what he called "a sort of aeroplane flight over the history of medicine from the time of Imhotep, the first figure of a physician to stand out clearly from the mists of antiquity".[149] It is certain that Sir William possessed the historical sense to a marked degree, and he dealt with his subject in a most sympathetic manner, painting vivid pictures of the lives of the men who had played their part in the evolution of science. No history of medicine could ever be more readable nor could one be written with a deeper understanding of human nobleness and frailty, of characteristics common to men of all ages.

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[147]Edgar Lorrington Gilcreest, "Sir William Osler--Physician and Philanthropist", Osler Memorial Number, p. 410.

[148]The Silliman lectureship was established at Yale and named for Benjamin Silliman, 1779-1864, and his son of the same name, 1816-1885, both of whom occupied the chair of chemistry at Yale for a number of years, and both of whom contributed in great measure to the advancement of science in America. Each course of lectures, under the terms of the foundation, was to consist of about eight to twelve lectures, and the general tendency of each of the courses was to be such as would illustrate the presence and wisdom of God in the natural and moral world. See Cushing, II, 287.

[149]Quoted in Cushing, II, 356.

ii

Osler's Interest in Biography and his Admiration for the Great Minds of the Past as Seen in his Writings

Petrarch and his followers saw depicted in the lives of the great men of the past, examples of personal quests after truth and goodness, and they asserted the freedom of choice and initiative and proclaimed it a right and a duty for each person to develop vigorously the power of his individual personality. Many of the continental humanists and most of the early English humanists were concerned not so much with the development of scholars as of citizens; they felt that the way to do this was to encourage the study of the writings of the great men of the past. They believed that well-balanced citizens of harmonious character could be developed by contact with the best that had been written by the great philosophers of Greece and Rome. In his book entitled Greek Science Benjamin Farrington says that it was the movement of Humanism that foreshadowed the birth of biography in the modern sense.[150]

Osler's love of humanity was manifest not only in every act of his life, but in his intense admiration for the great minds of old, and in his interest in biography. He believed, as did so many of the early humanists, that only by contact with the best that had been written by men of other ages could one's character be fully rounded, and the finest citizens be trained. There are great lessons to be learned from the devoted study of

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[150]Farrington, I, 112.

human lives magnificently lived, for "in the continual remembrance of a glorious past individuals and nations find their noblest inspiration".[151] Again and again in his addresses Osler called attention to our debt to the past. "The past is a good nurse", as Lowell remarks, "particularly for the weanlings of the fold."

> 'Tis man's worst deed
> To let the things that have been, run to waste
> And in the unmeaning Present sink the Past.[152]

In his essay on "The Leaven of Science", Sir William gives us a very clear idea of his view of education. "What, after all, is education but a subtle slowly-effected change, due to the action upon us of the Externals; of the written record of the great minds of all ages, of the beautiful and harmonious surroundings of nature and of art, and of the lives, good or ill, of our fellows--these alone educate us, these alone mould the developing minds."[153]

Osler believed that the study of a man's life is necessary for the understanding of his work; and to this combination he gave the name bio-bibliography. "No one studied and revered the lives of the fathers of medicine more than Osler, but his heroes included those men who had contributed to general literature as well. He delighted in collecting books about these men, and derived even greater joy from sharing his finds with

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[151]Osler, "The Leaven of Science", Aequanimitas, p. 74
[152]Osler, "Books and Men", Aequanimitas, p. 223.
[153]Osler, "The Leaven of Science", Aequanimitas, p. 100

his students, and interpreting the personalities of whom he spoke in the light of his great love of humanity."[154] Osler frequently invited his students to be his friendly home, and there he showed them his beloved books, telling them stories about the authors and the history of the subject in a simple and yet a very vivid way. "At the Johns Hopkins Hospital Historical Club and elsewhere, he made many an old book and its author really live again."[155] Books were always living things to him, for in them he saw the lives and characters of their authors, and biography was pure delight. He taught his students reverence for the great names of medicine. W.W. Chipman, writing of Osler's great sympathy with his fellow men, said of his History of Medicine, "Osler always wrote in the light of this human love, and in this medical history his humanity constantly imbues and permeates the "humanities" of the text. We are told again of the Fathers of Medicine, and of what they achieved and then by a few deft and sympathetic strokes, these men are made to live before us; each one of them we see as a man, like unto ourselves, living and moving in his own time. The animus of Osler animates them all."[156]

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[154]William White, "The Biographical Essays of Sir William Osler and their Relation to Medical History, Bulletin of the History of Medicine, VII, No. 1 (January 1939), p. 410.

[155]Bibliographical Society of America. "Resolutions on the Death of Sir William Osler", Osler Memorial Number, p. 101.

[156]W.W. Chipman, "Osler on the Evolution of Modern Medicine", Osler Memorial Number, p. 106.

Not only did Sir William write numerous biographical essays, in many instances making almost forgotten medical men of the past live again, but he encouraged his students to do likewise. A true disciple of the Renaissance humanists in his thirst for knowledge, with his transfer to Oxford he found greater leisure to pursue his literary activities, in spite of his many other duties and interests. Dr. Archibald Malloch recalls how Sir William had jokingly said to him, "You know I came over here to get educated and read the Dictionary of National Biography", and adds that before Osler died he had read through nearly all of those sixty-three volumes and supplements.[157] Now his own name is included in the vast work.

In his essays, too, he continually acknowledged our debt to the men of old, and stressed the subtle influences for good which a careful study of their works may wield. "There are great lessons to be learned from Job and from David, from Isaiah and St. Paul. Taught by Shakespeare you may take your intellectual and moral measure with singular precision. Learn to love Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Should you be so fortunate as to be born a Platonist Jowett will introduce you to the great master through whom alone we can think in certain levels, and whose perpetual moderness startles and delights. Montaigne will teach you moderation in all things, and to be 'sealed of his tribe' is a special privilege."[158]

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[157]Malloch, p. 364.

[158]Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine", Aequanimitas, p. 384.

In July 1911, Osler was asked by Dr. J.B. Hurry, who had made a study of the ruins of a twelfth-century Benedictine monastery at Reading, a monastery founded by Henry I and destroyed by Henry viii, to unveil memorials to the first and last abbots of Reading. In his address, Dr. Osler paid tribute to the work of past generations in asserting the value of the individual. "Even those who regret most acutely the changing of the old order rejoice in a new spirit abroad in the world that has given the individual, whether child, man, or woman, a value never before possessed. The recognition of the right to live and be happy and healthy in this beautiful world is its fruit."[159] He reminded his listeners that this and much more was the work of the past, of which they were the inheritors, and that it is from this past that we draw our keenest inspiration and surest examples. To study the lives of such men as Abbot Hugh Faringdon will make us better individuals and citizens, for Osler agreed with Aristotle that the real lesson lies not in what a man has believed but in how he has behaved, and that the true value of such knowledge lies in its elevating influence. "Who cares a fig whether Abbot Hugh Faringdon assented or not to the King's supremacy? The lesson for us is his blameless life and brave death - in them we find what the poet calls the 'touch divine of noble natures gone'. Consciously, or unconsciously, everyone looking on this last scene in which the last abbot

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[159]Quoted in Cushing, II, 281.

stands at the foot of the gallows with a rope round his neck, will in his heart make an obeisance to the man who stuck to his principles even unto death and in so doing will gain strength for life's daily battle. That we live in a better and happier world is the outcome of the struggle of those of our ancestors who loved the light rather than darkness. To reverence their memory is the best inspiration for our work. We need their help, and it is through just such memorials as Dr. Hurry has here erected, that their benign influence may touch us."[160] Osler closed his address by saying that Kipling, as always, gets to the marrow of the thing in his splendid poem, Our Fathers of Old:

> If it be certain as Galen says
> And sage Hippocrates holds as much--
> That those afflicted by doubts and dismays
> Are mightily helped by a dead man's touch,
> Then be good to us, stars above,
> Then be good to us, herbs below!
> We are afflicted by what we can prove;
> We are distracted by what we know__
> So--ah, so!
> Down from your heaven or up from your mould,
> Send us the hearts of our fathers of old.

In the attitude of reverence displayed by the French towards those who had gone before, Osler discovered a feeling akin to his own. During a visit to France in the winter of 1908 he wrote an article for the Journal of the American Medical Association in which he said, "Asked the strongest single impression made on me here, I should reply: 'The extraordinary reverence of the French'. The streets, the squares, the churches, the public buildings, the schools, all tell the same

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[160]Quoted in Cushing, II, 281.

story; the books repeat it, the newspapers echo it, and with it the lecture-rooms rescund--reverence for the great men of the past. The Pantheon, with its inscription 'Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie reconnaissante', is but a great expression in stone of this universal sentiment".[161] Osler felt that to fully understand what this sentiment means to the French one would have to be present in Paris on All Saints Day, or Toussaint. This fete is kept in a way "that appeals with extraordinary sympathy to the heart of one who believes in the immanence of the mighty dead who live again in minds made better by their presence".[162]. Sir William described the scene in Paris on Toussaint as hundreds of thousands visited the tombs of the great men in the famous cemetery of Père Lachaise and spread flowers on the graves. "Here I had a special mission to see the tomb of that rare genius, Bichat, who started a revolution in medicine before he was thirty,--a wreath, fresh flowers, and several plants showed that his memory was still cherished, and I added a bunch of pansies for thoughts."[163] What Osler felt was particularly remarkable was the wides read reverence of the French. He noticed even small schoolgirls and schoolboys with their floral offerings, whereas in England, only occasionally did one find such sincere veneration displayed, as in the case of the

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[161]Quoted in Cushing, II, 152-153. Dated January 15, 1908, it was an open letter to the Journal of the American Medical Association, and appeared in this journal on February 27 and March 6.

[162]Quoted in Cushing, II, 153.

[163]Quoted in Cushing, II, 154-155.

ceremony at Reading referred to above. He expressed deep regret that the "cold-blooded Anglo-Saxons" largely miss the "moral and intellectual inspiration associated with such celebrations".[164]

Osler wrote numerous biographical and historical essays--more than a hundred in all--and in these he interpreted the living past and the lives of the long dead. "His spirit brings back to us their thoughts and loves and the wisdom of the far past, the truths that have not been invented but have always existed."[165] Dr. Francis mentioned that Sudhoff,[166] the greatest of medical historians, said that any one of Osler's biographical sketches was worth many tomes of historical erudition.[167] One receives the impression that each one of the great men of whom he wrote was a special friend, a kindred spirit, and with his keen understanding of human nature he painted a very vivid picture of these friends and their hopes and ambitions and dreams, and stressed the splendid lessons of their lives. His acute historical sense permitted him to recreate the atmosphere of the times, and his characters emerge as human and appealing. Yet hours of research lay behind the freshness and simplicity of these biographical sketches, for Osler not only read the original editions of the works of the men he wrote about but also gathered

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[164]Quoted in Cushing, II, 155.
[165]Reid, p. 83.
[166]Karl Sudhoff, 1853-1938. German historian of medicine and first professor of medicine at Leipzig.
[167]Francis, p. 13.

his information from secondary sources, including letters, periodical articles, copies of contemporary opinions of the man, in his effort to resent a complete picture of the whole man. As Dr. Francis says, his addresses "are no perfunctory effusions, but the products of ripe experience, wide reading, human sympathy, and research, literary and scientific".[168] However, as Dr. Francis also points out, with Osler's perfect understanding of human nature went an almost perverse capacity for recognizing only the good in an individual. This applied to the essays on his friends of ages past as well as to his contemporaries. Thus his essays tend to be "Idealizations of what was best in his subject, of what the man might be, not exactly what he was".[169] Thus he overlooks the weaknesses and evil behaviour of Dr. Thomas Dover, and asks his reader to do the same, remembering the man for his real contributions to humanity. In the same manner, he makes allowances for Sir Thomas Browne's belief in witches, a belief for which Sir Thomas has often been condemned. Though William Pepper, provost of the University of Pennsylvania, was quite a poseur when entering a classroom or preparing to deliver a lecture, we see nothing of this characteristic in Osler's sketch of Pepper. The fine qualities of his subjects are highlighted while the less admirable ones are shown only dimly if at all. It has been

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[168]Francis, p. 9.
[169]Reid, p. 144.

written that all Osler's efforts as a biographer concentrated either on making a forgotten man live again as in "An Alabama Student" or in exhuming a forgotten side of a man already great, as in the Locke essay.[170] Through his research for the writing of his biographical sketches, Sir William made valuable contributions to medical history, and although he did stress the medical side of his subjects, he never allowed this to overshadow the other aspects of their lives. Even the history of medicine which he composed for the Silliman lectures in 1913 was permeated with intense human sympathy and understanding, so that for those who listened to his addresses the physicians of the past became alive. Having studied his subjects in every light, he attempted to paint an all-round picture of their lives. In the collection entitled An Alabama Student and Other Biographical Essays,[171] seven of the thirteen subjects are American doctors, "one of whom he rescued from unmerited oblivion",[172] and although Keats and Locke are included as men who had an interest in medicine, Osler never forgets for a moment that their important contributions to this world were in other fields.

"An Alabama Student" was the essay which Osler himself liked best of all, and, as Edith Gittings Reid remarks,[173] perhaps in this essay he came more nearly to a complete characterization

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[170] White, p. 28.

[171] Osler, An Alabama Student and Other Biographical Essays (Oxford, 1908)--hereafter referred to as An Alabama Student.

[172] Francis, p. 13.

[173] Reid, p. 144.

than in any other of his writings, for he tended always to stress the virtues of his subjects. Osler tells how, when looking over the literature of malarial fevers in the South, he chanced upon Fenner's Southern Medical Reports, Vols. i and ii, which were issued in 1849-50 and 1850-51. He was particularly impressed by two articles by a certain John Y. Bassett in whom he recognized "a likeness to the wise below, a kindred to the great of old".[174] He proceeded to bring alive a man, who, beset by difficulties and discouragements, nevertheless courageously made the many sacrifices required of him in order to follow his ideals. Osler wrote of a man of whom he was sure very few people had ever heard, whose name was not written on the scroll of fame. Through a perusal of Dr. Bassett's letters he found a restless, non-conforming spirit, who had turned aside from the hollowness and deceit of much of the life about him. As a student, Bassett was enthusiastic about the rapid development of the science of medicine, and amid the vexations of country practice he longed to visit the great centres of learning and study under the great masters. In 1836 he left his wife and children in America and went to Paris to study under French physicians. Osler praised the papers written by Bassett, judging him to have been a man of more than ordinary gifts but among the voiceless of the profession because he had ambition without opportunities. He felt that rarely has the credo of a zealous physician been more

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[174]Osler, "An Alabama Student", An Alabama Student, p.2. (John Y. Bassett, 1805-81.)

beautifully expressed than in the following extract from Bassett's writings:

> I do not say that the study of nature, human and comparative, as far as it relates to medicine, is an easy task; let any one undertake a foreign language, and when he thinks he has mastered it, let him go into its native country and attempt to use it among the polite and well-informed; if he succeed, let him go among the illiterate and rude, where slang is correct; into the lunatic asylum, where the vernacular is babbled in broken sentences through the mouth of an idiot, and attempt to understand this; should he again succeed he may safely say that he knows the language. Let him then set down and calculate the cost, in labour, time, and talent; then square this amount and go boldly into the study of physiology; and when he has exhausted his programme, he will find himself humbly knocking at the door of the temple, and it will be opened; for diligence, like the vinegar of Hannibal, will make a way through frozen Alps; it is the open sesame of our profession. When he is satisfied with the beautiful proportions of the interior, its vast and varied dimensions, the intricate and astounding action of its machinery, obeying laws of a singular stability, whose very conflict produces harmony under the government of secondary laws--if there be anything secondary in nature!--when he is satisfied (and such are not satisfied until informed), he will be led to his ultimate object, to take his last lessons from the poor and suffering, the fevered and phrenzied, from the Jobs and Lazaruses,--into the pest houses and prisons, and here, in these magazines of misery and contagion, these Babels of disease and sin, he must not only take up his abode, but following the example of his Divine Master, he must love to dwell there this is Pathology.[175]

Osler saw in Bassett a man "wise not only with the wisdom of the schools but with that deeper knowledge of the even-balanced soul who 'saw life steadily and saw it whole'".[176] He expressed

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[175]Osler, "An Alabama Student", An Alabama Student, pp.16-17.
[176]Osler, "An Alabama Student", An Alabama Student, p. 11.

the belief that such men produce, by the power of their example, the leaven which leavens the mass of selfishness about us. "To have striven, to have made an effort, to have been true to certain ideals--this alone is worth the struggle."[177]

As Cushing points out, Osler was "forever arousing in people in different localities an interest in their local medical worthies".[178] Thus another of the great men whom he humanized in one of his essays was Elisha Bartlett,[179] a Rhode Island physician-philosopher in whom he had become greatly interested while perusing historical studies on typhoid fever, and about whom he had secured additional information through letters and family papers. He sympathized fully with Bartlett's twofold object in translating the Lives of Eminent French Physicians: "first, the delineation of distinguished professional character and attainment , and, secondly, by the influence of such high examples to awaken in the younger members of the medical body a more devoted and worthy emulation of the great masters of our art".[180] Osler believed wholeheartedly in the value of studying abroad as Bartlett had done. While paying tribute to his subject as "a distinguished teacher, an author of widespread influence and distinction, a serene philosopher",[181] he stressed that he was above all else great as a man.

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[177]Osler, "An Alabama Student", An Alabama Student, p. 18.
[178]Cushing, I, 510.
[179]Elisha Bartlett, author and physician, 1805-1855.
[180]Osler, "Elisha Bartlett: A Rhode Island Philosopher", An Alabama Student, p. 146.
[181]Osler, "Elisha Bartlett: A Rhode Island Philosopher", An Alabama Student, p. 147.

In another of his biographical sketches,[182] Dr. Osler honours William Beaumont[183] as the pioneer physiologist of America, the first to make an important and enduring contribution to this science. "His work remains a model of patient, persevering investigation, experiment, and research, and the highest praise we can give him is to say that he lived up to and fulfilled the ideals with which he set out, and which he expressed when he said: "Truth, like beauty, is "when unadorned, adorned the most", and, in prosecuting these experiments and inquiries, I believe I have been guided by its light."[184]

With Osler the man was all-important, the man as he would have been under any degree of adversity or prosperity. Like the Renaissance humanists he felt that history, teaching by concrete example, possesses great inspirational power. Powerful as was the effect of the writings of a great medical man such as Louis [185] on American medicine, he felt that it could not compare with the personal influence which he exerted through his pupils, who "caught his clear accents, learned his great

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[182]Osler, "A Backwood Physiologist", An Alabama Student.

[183]William Beaumont, 1785-1853. A United States army surgeon stationed at Michilimacinac, his observations on a Canadian voyageur who had accidentally been wounded in the side led to the most important contributions to the physiology of digestion of the century.

[184]Osler, "A Backwood Physiologist", An Alabama Student, p. 185.

[185]Pierre Charles Alexandre Louis, 1787-1872, French physician and medical writer.

language, made him their model".[186] These pupils brought from Paris "enthusiasm, faith in the future, faith in the profession of their choice, accurate methods, and a loyal love of truth".[187] Besides carrying their master's message to the world, they had become "bright ideals for all future generations of American students" because they had been "touched with those finer qualities which made Louis so lovable".[188]

William Pepper,[189] in another essay, was praised for his irresistible hopefulness which was capable of inspiring confidence in others as he served his fellow men, and Osler felt that to study his life teaches a valuable lesson which was expressed in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson,

> Contend, my soul, for moments and for hours;
> Each is with service pregnant, each reclaimed
> Is as a Kingdom conquered, where to reign.[190]

In his essay on Thomas Dover[191], Osler apty quotes from the Hydriotaphia of Sir Thomas Browne, "The iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men

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[186]Osler, "The Influence of Louis on American Medicine", An Alabama Student, p. 197.

[187]Osler, "The Influence of Louis on American Medicine", An Alabama Student, p. 210.

[188]Osler, "The Influence of Louis on American Medicine", An Alabama Student, p. 210.

[189]Osler, "William Pepper", An Alabama Student. William Pepper, 1843-1898, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, 1881-1894, and head of the medical department of that university when Osler went to Philadelphia.

[190]Osler, "William Pepper", An Alabama Student, p. 231.

[191]Osler, "Thomas Dover: Physician and Buccaneer", An Alabama Student, Thomas Dover, 1660-1742, English physician and buccaneer and inventor of Dover's powder.

without distinction to merit of perpetuity",[192] and proceeds to recreate a picture of the whole man whose ill fortune it was to drift into modern life on a powder label. Osler regrets that Thomas Dover, the Buccaneer, and discoverer of Alexander Selkirk, the original Robinson Crusoe, had been forgotten in spite of more enduring claims on our gratitude.[193] He gives an interesting account of the man's life, stressing that while we may well forget Thomas Dover's weaknesses and evil behaviour, the medical profession should remember with gratitude the student and friend of the great Sydenham, and the world at large has cause to be eternally grateful to the man who "found Robinson Crusoe".[194]

In Fracastorius[195] Sir William saw a man who should have a distinguished position in the annals of the medical world both as the man "from whom dates our first accurate knowledge of the processes of infection and contagion",[196] and as the "author of the most successful medical poem ever written".[197]

When Osler delivered the Harveian Oration at the Royal College of Physicians in London on October 18, 1906, he emphasized the importance of the individual in the history of the world. He felt that the study of history was of great importance

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[192] Osler, "Thomas Dover", An Alabama Student, p. 19.
[193] Osler, "Thomas Dover", An Alabama Student, p. 19.
[194] Osler, "Thomas Dover", An Alabama Student, p. 36.
[195] Osler, "Fracastorius", An Alabama Student. Girolamo Fracastoro, 1478-1553, Italian scholar and physician. In 1525 he wrote a poem entitled "Syphilus, Sive Morbus Gallicus", which was widely praised.
[196] Osler, "Fracastorius", An Alabama Student, p. 278.
[197] Osler, "Fracastorius", An Alabama Student, p. 278.

to the medical profession, and that great lessons could be learned from a study of the lives of the illustrious dead and "the persistency with which they waged the battle for Truth".[198] For "history is simply the biography of the mind of man; and our interest in history and its educational value to us, is directly proportionate to the completeness of our study of the individuals through whom this mind has manifested".[199] He expressed the belief that when making a departure from any settled opinion, the break with custom may come gradually and the way is usually prepared, but that the final break is made by "some one individual, the masterless man of Kipling's splendid allegory, who sees with his own eyes, and with an instinct or genius for truth, escape from the routine in which his fellows live".[200] Osler spoke of the spirit of the Renaissance, of the wave of enthusiasm for the fathers of medicine, and of the work of the medical humanists who devoted their energies to the study of the writings of the medical men of old. He pointed out that in Bayle's Biographie Medicale, "from Garbo of Bologna, surnamed the expositor, to Rabelais, more than 150 biographies and bibliographies are given, and at least one-half of these men had either translated or edited works of the Greek physicians. Leonicenus, Linacre, Gonthier, Monti, Koch, Camerarius, Caius, Fochs, Zerbi, Cornarus, and men of their stamp not only swept away Arabian

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[198] Osler, "Harvey and His Discovery", An Alabama Student, p. 296.
[199] Osler, "Harvey", An Alabama Student, p. 296.
[200] Osler, "Harvey", An Alabama Student, p. 300.

impurities from the medicine of the day, but also revived Greek ideals and introduced scientific methods".[201] Dr. Osler spoke with admiration of Caius,[202] whose career would inspire any young man with enthusiasm. He praised him as a student, a learned commentator on the works of the Fathers, the first English student of clinical medicine, a successful teacher and practitioner, a keen naturalist and a liberal patron of learning and letters, and added a characteristic touch by describing him as a tender and sympathetic friend.[203] Osler reconstructed Harvey's life with a deep understanding of its difficulties and hardships, and successfully recreated the atmosphere of those far-off days. He thought that a knowledge of the method of Harvey's work and the story of his life should prove a stimulus to students, and that this famous scientist should be honoured not less for the scientific method which he inculcated than for the admirable virtues of his character.[204]

Osler's extensive reading helped to give him a clear historical perspective and a keen appreciation of the temper of the ages which formed the background for his sketches. In writing about Bartlett and Bassett he had strengthened his knowledge of these men by reading numerous letters which he had secured from

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[201]Osler, "Harvey", An Alabama Student, pp. 302-303.

[202]John Caius, 1510-1573, English physician and scholar. Founder, in 1557, of Caius College, Cambridge. Author of critical, antiquarian, and scientific works.

[203]Osler, "Harvey", An Alabama Student, p. 304

[204]Osler, "Harvey", An Alabama Student, p. 333.

members of their families. He was well qualified to write a biographical sketch[205] of Servetus after "reading in and around the times"[206] for background material, being deeply involved with the Comité du Monument Michel Servet[207] and corresponding extensively with an American Servetian who was studying in Jena. In addition he examined in the Bibliotheque Nationale in December, 1908, one of the two known copies of the Christianismi Restitutio 1553 and searched high and low for Von Murr's 1790 reprint. As a result he painted a stirring and human picture of the life and death at the stake of a man who remained faithful always to what he believed was the Truth as revealed by the Bible.

Keats was one of Osler's favourites among the poets. He read with enthusiasm his poems and the details of his life, so that he developed a well-rounded picture of the poet as a man. On the centenary of Keats' birth, Dr. Osler gave before the Johns Hopkins Historical Club in Baltimore on October 29, 1895, an appreciative account of his life, and while speaking with interest of his training as an apothecary, nevertheless stressed

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[205]On May 10, 1909, Osler spoke on "Servetus" before the Johns Hopkins Historical Club. The address is quoted in part in Cushing, II, 174-175.

[206]Cushing, II, 147.

[207]A monument was to be erected to Michael Servetus, sixteenth-century physician, at Vienna, and Osler had offered to help raise funds for the purpose when he learned that no one in England had answered the appeal. He was made a Membre du Comite de Patronage, and wrote letters to the Lancet and the British Medical Journal. He apparently agreed to be present for the unveiling in August, 1909.

his real contribution to the world. He realized the importance to the world of the old Platonic idea of training each individual for the task in life for which he is best suited In his address, he traced Keats' early life as the son of the head ostler at the "Swan and Hoop", telling his listeners how, though "his parentage and the social atmosphere of his early years conspired to produce an ordinary, beer-loving, pugnacious cockney,------ there was fashioned one of the clearest, sweetest, and strongest singers of the century".[208] With his absorption in ideals and his passion for the beautiful, "what attraction could the career of an apothecary offer to a man already much 'travelled in the realms of gold', who was capable at twenty of writing such a sonnet as that on Chapman's Homer. So far as we know he never practised or made any effort to get established; and in 1817 he abandoned the profession, apparently not without opposition".[209] Osler discredited the popular belief that the attacks of the reviewers had largely contributed to Keats' death, and said rather that no event in the poet's life" so warmly commends him to us, or shows more clearly the genuine robustness of his mind, than his attitude in this much-discussed episode. In the first place, he had a clear, for so young a man an extraordinarily clear, perception of the limitation of his own powers and the value of his work. The preface to Endymion, one of the most

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[208]Osler, "John Keats: The Apothecary Poet", An Alabama Student (Oxford, 1895), p. 38.

[209]Osler, "John Keats: The Apothecary Poet", An Alabama Student, p. 41.

remarkable ever written, contains his own lucid judgment. He felt that his foundations were 'too sandy', that the poem was an immature feverish attempt, in which he had moved, as he says, from the leading-strongs to the go-cart. Did any critic ever sketch with firmer hand the mental condition of a young man in transition?"[210] Osler quoted Keats' claim that he had written independently without judgment and might write independently and with judgment thereafter, and that the Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man. He added, "A young man of twenty-three who could write this, whatever else he possessed, had the mens sana and could not be killed by a dozen reviews".[211] In his judgment of Keats, Osler was in advance of many of the literary critics of his day. For years it had been alleged that Keats had been killed by the vicious attacks of the reviewers, and Byron's jest about his having been "killed by one critique" and Shelley's splendid but misleading elegy supplied apparent confirmation. In A History of 19th Century Literature, published the year after Osler's address was delivered, George Saintsbury pointed out that the supposed effect of the attacks on Keats' health was wildly exaggerated by some contemporaries, especially by Byron.[212] As late as 1909, one author said, "It is often alleged that the poet's spirit and ambition were broken by these

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[210]Osler, "John Keats: The Apothecary Poet", An Alabama Student, p. 44.

[211]Osler, "John Keats: The Apothecary Poet", An Alabama Student, p. 45.

[212]George Saintsbury, A History of Nineteenth Century Literature (London, 1896), p. 87.

attacks".[213] Even after this viewpoint was generally discredited, Keats was thought of as a young man with an unbalanced personality. In a book published in 1950 it is stated that "popular estimation picutes Keats as a morbid, hysterical author".[214] Thus, in the light of his human understanding, Osler pictured Keats as a man with a better-balanced personality than he was ordinarily given credit for.

Osler remarked that there are very few indications of Keats' professional training in his letters, fewer still in his poems. He referred to several passages in the poet's letters in which he seemed undecided as to whether to return to the study of medicine. He found that allusions to or analogies drawn from medical subjects are also rare. "In one place, in writing from Devonshire, he says, 'When I think of Wordsworth's sonnet Vanguard of Liberty: Ye men of Kent (in Wordsworth at all events) the degraded race about me are publius ipecae simplex-a strong dose'."[215]

As the guest of the Students' Societies of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, on January 16, 1900, Dr. Osler spoke on a philosopher whose medical career had largely been forgotten. While searching through the British Museum and the Public Record Office, Osler had become interested

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[213]William J. Long, English Literature (Boston, 1909), p.419.

[214]A. Compton-Rickett, "The Romantic Revival: 1780-1830", The Teach Yourself History of English Literature, Vol. 4, ed. Peter Westland (London, 1950), p. 135.

[215]Osler, "John Keats: The Apothecary Poet", An Alabama Student, p. 47.

in Sydenham's contemporaries, and there had come to his attention a collection of manuscript relating to the medical career of John Locke. His address on the famous philosopher was the result. "The author of the Epistle on Toleration, the Treatise on Education, and the Constitution of Carolina, the man who pleaded for 'absolute Liberty, just and true Liberty', the man who wrote the memorable words, 'All men are naturally in a state of freedom, also of equality', must be ranked as one of the great benefactors of the race."[216] Osler spoke of the friendship between Sydenham and Locke, in the light of information gained from reading the Shaftesbury papers. He spoke, too, of Locke's surviving medical writings, "the chief interest of which today is that they are from the pen of the great philosopher".[217] As always, while shedding light on an interesting and almost forgotten facet of a great man's life, he showed no tendency to upset the balance of the personality he was attempting to recrete, but stressed his real contribution to society. "For each one of us there is still a 'touch divine' in the life and writings of John Locke. A singularly attractive personality with a sweet reasonableness of temper and a charming freedom from flaws and defects of character, he is an author whom we like at the first acquaintance, and soon love as a friend. Perhaps the greatest, certainly, as Professor Fowler says, the most characteristic,

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[216] Osler, "John Locke as a Physician", An Alabama Student, p. 68

[217] Osler, "John Locke as a Physician", An Alabama Student, p. 98.

English philosopher, we may claim Dr. Locke as a bright ornament of our profession, not so much for what he did in it, as for the methods which he inculcated and the influence which he exercised upon the English Hippocrates. He has a higher claim as a really great benefactor of humanity, one of the few who, 'reflected the human spirit always on the nobler side'."[218]

When Oliver Wendell Holmes died in October, 1894, Osler read at the following meeting of the Johns Hopkins Hospital medical society on October 15, 1894, "his much-quoted obituary address".[219] He spoke with deep feeling of the man he had long revered as "the most successful combination the world has ever seen, of the physician and the man of letters".[220] Osler remarked that although since the time of Rabelais and Linacre "no generation has lacked a physician to stand unabashed in the temple at Delos, a worshipper of worth and merit amid the votaries of Apollo",[221] yet there had been no name truly eminent in literature which was associated "in any enduring way with the work done in the science and art of medicine. Many physicians, active practitioners--Sir Thomas Browne, for example, have been and are known for the richness and variety of their literary work; but, as a rule, those who have remained in professional life have courted the 'draggle-tailed Muses' as a gentle pastime, 'to interpose a little ease' amid the worries of practice.

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[218]Osler, "John Locke as a Physician", An Alabama Student, pp. 106-107.
[219]Cushing, I, 404.
[220]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p.57.
[221]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p.56.

Few such have risen above mediocrity; fewer still have reached it. The list is a long one, for the rites of Apollo have always had a keen attraction for the men of our ranks, but the names fill at best a place in the story of the literature of the country, not a place in the hearts and lives of the people".[222] He felt that it was far otherwise with such men as Goldsmith, Crabbe, and Keats, whom the medical profession looked on with pride, but who in reality made their real contributions to the world by leaving the profession for other fields.

Osler confessed that for many years Dr. Holmes had been "sandwiched"[223] in his affections between Oliver Goldsmith and Charles Lamb. He believed that Holmes had rightfully been called the "American Goldsmith" because of his "robust humanity which has a smile for the foibles and a tear for the sorrows of his fellow creatures".[224] The English Oliver with a better schooling for a poet (had he not learned in suffering what he taught in song?), had a finer fancy and at his best a clearer note. With both writers one is at a loss to know which to love the better, the prose or the poetry."[225] Osler then compared Holmes' Autocrat of the Breakfast Table to Lamb's Essays of Elia and noted similarity in the genial humour, the refined wit, the pathos, the tender sensitiveness to the lights and shadows of life, and the fact that both authors gain the affections of

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[222]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 56.
[223]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 54.
[224]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 54.
[225]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 54.

the reader at the first sitting.

Osler spoke of how Holmes, while not a medical practitioner, had maintained the most intimate association with the profession, and had for many years occupied the chair of Anatomy. As a young man he had indeed made permanent contributions to practical medicine. In his last book, One Hundred Days in Europe, he mentions that he had sat next to Mr. Lawson Tait at dinner, and he suggests the question, "Which would give most satisfaction to a thoroughly humane and unselfish being of cultivated intelligence and lively sense--to have written all the plays which Shakespeare has left for an inheritance to mankind, or to have snatched from the jaws of death scores of suffering women and restored them to a sound and comfortable existence?"[226] Osler thought how Holmes had first roused the profession to a sense of the perils of puerperal fever as an infectious disease through his essay, "Puerperal Fever as a Private Pestilence", 1855, and felt that no one could so well answer the question as the "Autocrat" himself. He had therefore written Holmes, asking whether he would prefer to go down to posterity as the author of the classic medical essay or as the author of The Chambered Nautilus. Pleased as he was by Osler's allusion to his essay, Holmes decided that he would not answer the question put to him. "I think oftenest of The Chambered Nautilus, which is a

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[226]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 64.

favourite poem of mine, though I wrote it myself. The Essay only comes up at long intervals, the poem repeats itself in my memory and is very often spoken of by my correspondents in terms of more than ordinary praise."[227] He told Dr. Osler of the savage pleasure he had had in handling two professors who had stubbornly opposed his views. "'But in writing the poem I was filled with a better feeling, the highest state of mental exaltation and the most crystalline clairvoyance, as it seemed to me, that had ever been granted to me. I mean that lucid vision of one's thought and all forms of expression which will be at once precise and musical which is the poet's special gift, however large or small in amount or value. There is some selfish pleasure to be had out of the poem, perhaps a nobler satisfaction from the life-saving labour.'"[228]

Osler thought it fortunate that Holmes' medical essays are reprinted with his works, as several of them are enduring contributions to the questions with which they deal, and that all should be read carefully by every student of medicine He judged, moreover, that this literary physician had permanently enriched the literature of the race "with an entire absence of nonsense, with rare humour and unfailing kindness, and with that delicacy of feeling characteristic of a member of the Brahmin class".[229]

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[227] Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 65.
[228] Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, pp. 65-66.
[229] Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 66.

Two men of ages past who were both physicians and humanists and who were admired and reverenced by Osler throughout his days were Linacre and Sir Thomas Browne. Above the fireplace in Sir Henry Acland's library at Oxford[230] were three panelled portraits of Linacre, Sydenham, and Harvey, the scroll upon them reading"Litterae, Praxis, Scientia", and those Osler had long admired. Lady Osler had a copy made of the paitings, a gift which particularly delighted Dr. Osler. In an address entitled "British Medicine in Greater Britain", given before the British Medical Association of Montreal in 1897, he spoke of the great influence exercised by these three men on British medicine Of Linacre he said, "He was an indealist devoted to objects whi h the world thought of little use. Painstaking, accurate, critical, hypercritical, perhaps, he remains today the chief literary representative of British medicine".[231] Moreover, Osler felt that as the type of the literary physician, Linacre "must ever hold a unique place in the annals of our profession".[232] He recalled that to this medical humanist was due in great measure the revival of Greek thought in the sixteenth century in England, and that through him the art of Hippocrates and the science of Galen had once more become the subject of first-hand

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[230]Sir Henry Acland was Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford when Osler visited his home in August of 1894. It was then that he first saw the three panelled portraits.

[231]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p 174.

[232]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p. 174.

study, and Harvey and Sydenham had been led to the fathers of medicine. Osler voiced regret that neither in Britain nor in Greater Britain had British medical men maintained the place in the world of letters which Linacre had created, so that in critical scholarship and accurate historical studies British medicine must take a second place. Little provision had been made for these studies, and only a few medical men had worked to maintain the traditions of Linacre and to keep the profession in contact with the ancients. "By the neglect of the study of the humanities, which has been far too general, the profession loses a very precious quality."[233] Linacre's influence exerted through the universities and the Royal College of Physicians was responsible for the important place of the humanities in education, "so that they have moulded a larger section of the profession than in any other country".[234] This well-rounded education is necessary in the general shaping of a man's character and his training for life for "medicine is seen at its best in men whose faculties have had the highest and most harmonious culture".[235] Medical men frequently wield greater influence for good because of their fine personal qualities than because of their special work. Osler felt that it had been men of this stamp who had left the most enduring mark and that they had been

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[233] Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p. 175.

[234] Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p. 175.

[235] Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p. 175.

the leaven which "has raised our profession above the dead level of a business".[236]

iii

The Influence of the Writings of Sir Thomas Browne on the Life of Sir William Osler

To one literary physician of the past Osler was particularly devoted; the writings of Sir Thomas Browne had the greatest influence on his life from the time when Father Johnson, the Warden of Trinity College School, selected extracts from the Religio Medici to illustrate the beauty of the English language. As a young man of eighteen he acquired the 1862 Ticknor and Fields edition of the book - the second edition of the completed works. It was his second book purchase and his constant companion for fifty-two years. In the course of his lifetime he acquired all fifty-five editions, but the first copy was the one which lay on his coffin at the last. On the fly-leaf of the book he had written the words, "I doubt if any man can more truly say of this book 'Comes viae vitaeque'". Osler confessed that no book had had such an enduring influence on his life. "It was one of the strong influences which turned my thoughts towards medicine as a profession."[237] The value of

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[236]Osler, "British Medicine in Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p. 176.

[237]Cushing, II, p. 681.

the book to Osler could not be calculated nor its value to humanity he stated, since, had Osler not entered the medical profession, his book The Principles and Practice of Medicine would never have been written, and it was this book that was indirectly responsible for the founding of the Institute of Medical Research by John D. Rockefeller. A member of Rockefeller's staff was so fascinated by Osler's textbook that he called Mr. Rockefeller's attention to it, so that the Rockefeller Institute of Medicine had its origin in Dr. Osler's frank disclosure of the very narrow limitations of ascertained truth in medicine as it existed in 1897.

On his first visit to England, Osler visited the Cathedral at Norwich and saw what he could of the relics of his favourite. "His skull and a good painting were in the Infirmary; his tomb in the church of St. Peter Mancroft."[238]

There are few marked passages in Osler's favourite edition of the Religio Medici; these were unnecessary for he came to know the book so nearly by heart. "Two passages of the Religio are marked by stars--one of them the paragraph beginning 'Holy water and crucifix deceive not my judgment', the other the great paragraph with which the essay opens."[239] There are one or two corrections; on page 317 of "Urn Burial" where Browne says 'Plato's historian of the other world lies twelve days uncorrupted,&c, Osler has changed twelve to ten and made

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[238]Cushing, I, p. 101.
[239]Cushing, I, p. 51.

marginal reference to the Republic, Book x.

On the occasion of Osler's seventieth birthday, an article appeared in the Lancet in which the belief was expressed that of Osler's favourite authors "he probably most closely resembles the Knight of Norwich. There are few if any medical men who can give such charming addresses, full of kindly advice and graceful humour".[240] In reply to a speech by Sir Clifford Albutt on the same occasion, Osler said, "Paraphrasing my life-long mentor,--of course I refer to Sir Thomas Browne--among multiplied acknowledgement I can lift up one hand to heaven that I was born of honest parents, that modesty, humility, patience and veracity lay in the same egg, and came into the world with me".[241]

Many of Browne's thoughts became Osler's thoughts, and were continually reflected in Osler's writings. Over and over again he praised the virtues of charity, humility, tolerance, and silence, either employing the expressions of Sir Thomas Browne or paraphrasing them. In "Unity, Peace, and Concord" he spoke of uncharitableness as the most prevalent of modern sins. "Moses broke the tables without breaking the law; but where charity is broke the law itself is shattered."[242] In "The Army Surgeon", he advised his readers to avoid placing an undue estimate on their own individual powers and position. "As Sir

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[240]Cushing, II, p. 658.
[241]Quoted in part in Cushing, II, 660.
[242]Osler, "Unity, Peace and Concord", Aequanimitas, p. 463.

Thomas Browne says, 'it is the nimbler and conceited heads that never looked a degree beyond their nests that tower and plume themselves on light attainments', but 'heads of capacity and such as are not full with a handful or easy measure of knowledge think they know nothing till they know all'".[243] In discussing science and warfare, Osler acknowledged that "to one who is by temperament and education a Brunonian and free from the 'common antipathies' and 'national repugnances' one sad sequel of the war will be, for this generation at least, the death of international science".[244]

Osler very frequently referred to or quoted from the writings of his "mentor"; he knew his works practically from memory, so often had he read them through. In 1905 he visited Norwich for the unveiling of a statue of Sir Thomas Browne. The ceremonies opened with a meeting in the museum of the local hospital "to express to Professor Osler the thanks of the institution for the handsome casket and pedestal for the reception of the skull of Sir Thomas Browne".[245] Osler's reply to one of the many toasts which were proposed at the luncheon which followed the unveiling has been partly recorded and quoted in Cushing's biography. In this reply he said that there are three lessons to be learned from the life of Sir Thomas Browne, all of them of value to us today. The first of these is that in Sir

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[243]Osler, "The Army Surgeon", Aequanimitas, p. 105.

[244]Quoted in Cushing, II, 494. (From "Science and War", an address delivered October 1, 1915.

[245]Cushing, II, p. 24.

Thomas we see a man who had an ideal education, for he was not only thoroughly familiar with the classics, but he had "lived abroad for two years, and thereby learned the hardest lesson in life, for he became denationalized as far as his intellect and his human sympathies were concerned".[246] Osler felt that the second lesson is that Sir Thomas "presents a remarkable example in the medical profession of a man who mingled the waters of science with the oil of faith". "I know of no one in history who believed so implicitly and so simply in the Christian religion, and yet it is evident from his writings that he had moments of ardent acepticism."[247] Mentioning Browne's belief in witches, Osler stressed that a man must be judged by his day, his generation, and his contemporaries. "The third lesson to be drawn is that the perfect life may be led in a very simple, quiet way. Norwich in those days was provincial and small, and yet here is a man who lived perfectly, and who lived his life successfully, not only doing good, but also being able through his industry to carry out those extensive literary works which are now our pride and joy---."[248]

Osler gave the address which "first brought him prominently before the British public"[249] to the Guy's Hospital Pupils' Physical society on the evening of October 12, 1905. His subject was the Religio Medici, and he spoke feelingly of Sir

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[246]Cushing, II, p. 24.
[247]Cushing, II, p. 25.
[248]Cushing, II, p. 25.
[249]Cushing, II, p. 22.

Thomas Browne and his home life and travels, and of his famous book. Lastly he gave an appreciation of the author. Sir Thomas had acquired the best education available in his day, and as a result he had developed an "extraordinary breadth of culture, and a charity not always granted to travellers. He pierced beneath the skull of nationalism into the heart of the people among whom he lived, feeling at home everywhere and in every clime; hence the charity, rare in a Protestant, expressed so beautifully in the lines: 'I can dispense with my hat at the sight of a Cross, but scarce with the thought of my Saviour'".[250] Many of the fine qualities which Osler so admired in this great man of the past were present in himself to a marked degree. He told of Browne's sympathy with and understanding of the sorrows of others. "No one has put more beautifully the feeling which each one of us has had at times about patients. 'Let me be sick myself, if sometimes the malady of my patient be not a disease unto me; I desire rather to cure his infirmities than my own necessities; where I did him no good, methinks it is scarce honest gain; though I confess 'tis but the worthy salary of our well-intended endeavours'."[251] Sir William spoke of the many-sided mind of Sir Thomas, of how he visited many countries and studied their customs and politics, of his knowledge of astronomy and botany, and the systems of

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250Osler, "Sir Thomas Browne", An Alabama Student and Other Biographical Essays (Oxford, 1908), p. 252.

251Osler, "Sir Thomas Browne", An Alabama Student, pp.274-275.

philosophy, and of his keen power of observation. "He was the first to observe and describe the peculiar substance known as adipocere, and there are in places shrewd flashes such as the suggestion that the virus of rabies may be mitigated by transmission from one animal to another."[252] Osler added, however, that Browne lacked the "clear, dry light of science"[253] revealed in the works of his contemporary Harvey, although he had the greatest veneration for Harvey's work, and felt that his discovery of the circulation of the blood was to be preferred to the discovery of Columbus.

The writings of Sir Thomas Browne had had an enduring influence on the life and character of Osler. He felt that they had a very positive value for every student of medicine. The closing words of his address expressed his belief in the powerful influence of the lives and writings of great men of the past in shaping the character of men of the present. "The charm of high thoughts clad in beautiful language may win some readers to a love of good literature, but beyond this is a still greater advantage. Like the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius and the Enchiridion of Epictetus, the Religio is full of counsels of perfection which appeal to the mind of youth, still plastic and unhardened by contact with the world. Carefully studied, from such books come subtle influences which give stability to character and help to give a man a sane outlook on the complex

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[252] Osler, "Sir Thomas Browne", An Alabama Student, p. 275.
[253] Osler, "Sir Thomas Browne", An Alabama Student, p. 275.

problems of life. Sealed early of this tribe of authors, a student takes with him, as compagnons de voyage, lifelong friends whose thoughts become his thoughts and whose ways become his ways. Mastery of self, conscientious devotion to duty, deep human interest in human beings--these best of all lessons you must learn now or never; and these are some of the lessons which may be gleaned from the life and from the writings of Sir Thomas Browne."[254]

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[254]Osler, "Sir Thomas Browne", An Alabama Student, pp. 276-277.

VI

Osler and Greek Letters

Not only did Osler acknowledge many times the debt of modern society to the Greeks and stress the prominent place which the humanities should have in education, but many references to Greek writers appear in his various essays and addresses. Most of his knowledge of the men of Greece was obtained through translations of their works, and he regretted the fact that Greek and Latin were not taught in a more interesting and intelligent way so that the students would have a working knowledge of the languages. In an article quoted in part by Dr. Cushing, Osler described an Oxford Congregation[255] which had debated the question of compulsory Greek and compared it to the sixteenth century battle over Greek. "Then it was a struggle to restrain the introduction of the new learning, believed to be tinctured with heresy, now the battle is over the retention of this same old learning, i.e. Greek as a compulsory subject for the entrance examination."[256] Sir William expressed his own feelings about the subject. "Could the student be taught the dead languages 'without the perplexities of rules talked into him' (Locke), could we but cease from 'forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses and orations' (Milton),

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[255]In Oxford the resident M.A.'s and professors, with the heads of the colleges, form a body called a Congregation.

[256]Quoted in Cushing, II, p. 252.

could we but adopt the rational method by which Montaigne learned his native tongue, these languages might become working instruments, keys to great literatures and to the minds of great masters; and the student would read his Celsus and Hippocrates as freely as his Watson or Trousseau."[257] Osler was in favour of relaxing the present regulations but felt that Greek should be retained as a qualification for graduation in theology, medicine, and law. He thought that students of medicine should have a knowledge of Greek, for, if for no other reasons, "reverence for the memory of Hippocrates and honour of the labours of Galen demand that we should have more men in the profession with a knowledge of the language of our origins".[258]

In an address to the boys of Bradfield College on the occasion of the opening of a new science laboratory, October 9, 1912, Osler advised the boys that while obtaining a good foundation in science as a preparation for medicine, they should not neglect their Greek "because, after all, the Greek outlook on life was the outlook of youth; the Greeks were optimists and saw life with good clear vision".[259]

Professor Gilbert Murray had organized each year at Oxford a course of lectures on Greek subjects outside the general course, and Osler, who had always been interested in this project, spoke on "The Lessons of Greek Medicine".[260] In this

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[257]Quoted in Cushing, II, 254.
[258]Quoted in Cushing, II, 254.
[259]Quoted in Cushing, II, 336.
[260]Quoted in part in Cushing, II, 120. (Unpublished address delivered May 29, 1910)

lecture, as often in his addresses, he mentioned the debt of the West to Greek civilization. "The tap-root of Western civilization sinks deep in Greek soil, the oustanding fertility of which is one of the outstanding facts of history."[261] He stressed that while the Greeks had accomplished much by the powers of trained observation, they had gone very little beyond this, although "Pythagoras made one fundamental experiment when he determined the dependence of the pitch of sound on the length of the vibrating cord".[262] He added that there is scarcely a modern discovery which had not been anticpated by the Greeks. "Indeed one is staggered at their grasp of great principles. Could Democritus give the opening address at the new electrical laboratory he would maintain that his well-known exposition of the physical world had received support by all the recent studies. Man can do a great deal by observation and thinking, but with them alone he cannot unravel the mysteries of Nature."[263] Osler felt sure that had this been possible the Greeks would have done it, and that had Plato and Aristotle grasped the value of experiment, the course of Europen history might have been greatly changed. The great contribution of the Hippocratic school had been the development of the powers of observation and of strong, clear common sense. He spoke of the message of the

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[261]Quoted in Cushing, II, p. 220.
[262]Quoted in Cushing, II, p. 220.
[263]Quoted in Cushing, II, p. 220.

Hippocratic oath and recalled that Gomperz[264] had referred to this as "a monument of the highest rank in the history of civilization".[265] One of the most important lessons to be learned from the Greeks was "the emancipation of medicine from religion, mysticism, and superstition".[266]

Osler frequently emphasized that the Greek spirit was the leaven of the old world, and that no real progress was made until we returned to the Greek method--the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. "Out of the laboratory as the result of work done by men absorbed in study and usually without the slightest bearing upon practical problems, came the three great revolutions of the nineteenth century--the annihilation of time, the substitution of the machine for the hand, and the conquest of nature."[267]

In his address on "Harvey and His Discovery", Osler considered it "one of the most remarkable of phenomena in mental biography" that the Greeks should fail to succeed in great scientific discovery "after giving the world such a glorious start".[268] He stressed that they had "had every essential for permanent success; scientific imagination, keen powers of observation; and if in the days of Hippocrates the mathematical method of

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[264] Theodor Gomperz, 1832-1912, German philosopher and classical scholar. Author of Griechische Denker, Vol. 1 & 2 (Leipzig, 1893 & 1905).

[265] Quoted in Cushing, II, 221.

[266] Quoted in Cushing, II, 221.

[267] Quoted in Cushing, II, 246. (Extract from a Newcastle address, October, 1910).

[268] Osler, "Harvey and his Discovery", An Alabama Student, p. 328.

interrogating Nature prevailed rather than the experimental, Galen carried the latter to a degree of perfection never again reached until the time of Harvey. Only when placed in its true position in relation to Greek religion and philosophy, as has been done so skilfully by Gomperz, do we realize the immensity of the debt we owe to those 'our young, light-hearted masters'. And Gomperz makes clear the nature of the debt of Greek thought to the practical sense of the physicians".[269]

This debt which modern medicine owes to the Greek is mentioned, too, in Osler's address on "Chauvinism in Medicine". He said that "like everything else that is good and durable in this world, modern medicine is a product of the Greek intellect, and had its origin when that wonderful people created positive or rational science".[270] Osler declared that the critical sense and sceptical attitude of the Hippocratic school had laid the foundations of modern medicine on broad lines, and that the medical profession owed to it the emancipation of medicine from the shackles of priestcraft and of caste, the conception of medicine as an art based on accurate observation, and as a science, the integral part of the science of man and of nature, the high ideals expressed in the Hippocratic oath, and the conception and realization of medicine as the profession of a cultivated gentleman. He remarked that no other profession has had the same

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[269] Osler, "Harvey and His Discovery", An Alabama Student, p. 328.

[270] Osler, "Chauvinism in Medicine", Aequanimitas, pp. 279-280.

continuity of methods and of ideas, and that the profession of medicine has always included men who have lived up to the Greek ideals. "These ideals", he said, "were those of Galen and Aretaeus, of the men of the Alexandrian and Byzantine schools, of the best of the Arabians, of the men of the Renaissance, and they are ours today."[271]

It is interesting to note that Osler, writing in 1906, and Benjamin Farrington, writing over forty years later, came to the same conclusion concerning the failure of ancient science. Farrington pointed out that with the science of Alexandria and of Rome we are on the threshold of the modern world. "When modern science began in the sixteenth century it took up where the Greeks left off; Copernicus, Vesalius, and Galileo are the continuators of Ptolemy, Galen, and Archimedes."[272] Similarly, Osler said that without Aristotle, Galen, and Fabricius there would have been no Harvey.[273] Farrington concluded that the failure of ancient science was in the use that was made of it. Although applications of science to various ingenious mechanisms were not lacking, "there was no great foreward drive, no general application of science to life",[274] and science therefore failed in its social function. Osler made the same point many years

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[271]Osler, "Chauvinism in Medicine", Aequanimitas, p. 281.
[272]Farrington, II, 163.
[273]Osler, "Remarks made at the Opening of the Bodley Shakespeare Exhibition", Selected Writings of Sir William Osler, ed. George Cumberlege (London, 1951), p. 5.
[274]Farrington, II, p. 164.

earlier when he said that the special distinction which divides modern from ancient science is its "fruitful application to human needs--not that this was unknown to the Greeks; but the practical recognition of the laws of life and matter has in the past century remade the world. In making knowledge effective we have succeeded where our masters failed".[275]

Some of the most admirable characteristics of the Greeks are praised in Sir William's biographical sketch of William Pepper.[276] He felt that the American is the modern Greek in his power of thinking and acting, which was "the strongest Hellenic characteristic".[277] Pepper, Osler thought, was truly Grecian in his qualities of adaptability and flexibility; he felt that Matthew Arnold's description of the gracious flexibility so incarnate in Pericles also applied to the character of William Pepper. "Lucidity of thought, clearness and propriety of language, freedom from prejudice, freedom from stiffness, openness of mind, and amiability of manner."[278] He pointed out another Grecian feature of this fine man with the words, "You remember in the Timaeus how the Egyptian Priest said to Solon: 'You Hellenes are never anything but children; there is not an old man among you---in mind you are all young'".[279]

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[275] Osler, "Harvey and His Discovery", An Alabama Student, p. 328.
[276] Osler, "William Pepper", An Alabama Student, (see note 189)
[277] Osler, "Pepper", p. 228.
[278] Osler, "Pepper", p. 228.
[279] Osler, "Pepper", An Alabama Student, p. 228.

Osler referred in various essays to the remarkable career of Aristotle, and the famous Greek philosopher was the subject of a review for his Men and Book series in the Canadian Medical and Surgical Journal for May 1913.[280] In the opening paragraph he confessed that "if it be true that a man is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian, my congenital bias was toward the great idealist, but without, I fear, the proper mental equipment".[281] In truth, Osler was both a realist and an idealist. It must be remembered that he was destined for the ministry, but that scientific studies were presented to him in such an enticing way that his interests were directed along that line. He often regretted that the delights of literature had not been opened to him in as appealing a fashion at a time when his mind was athirst for knowledge. While he practiced medicine in the realistic atmosphere of sickness and death, he ever put into practice, too, his high ideals. In his spare moments he found inspiration in the ideals which were expressed in the works of his favourite authors. Osler said that the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of his studies had driven him into the camp of the Stagirite. "And it is a glorious tribe, to be sealed of which, even as a humblest member, one should be proud. In the first circle of the Inferno Virgil leads Dante into a wonderful company, the philosophic family who look with reverence on 'The Master of those who know'--

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[280] Quoted in part in Cushing, II, 346-347.
[281] Quoted in Cushing, II, 347.

and so with justice has Aristotle been regarded for these twenty-three centuries. No man has ever swayed such an intellectual empire--in logic, metaphysics, rhetoric, psychology, ethics, poetry, politics and natural history, in all a creator and in all still a master. The history of the human mind offers no parallel to the career of the great Stagirite."[282]

In his occasional addresses Osler referred more frequently to Plato than to any other ancient writer, for with the great philosopher he was in many ways spiritually akin. Quotations from Jowett's translation sometimes served as mottoes for his lay sermons. In an address entitled "Science and Immortality" Osler said that it is only the idealists who achieve perfect satisfaction on the question of the immortality of the soul, and added, "Some of you will wander through all phases, to come at last I trust, to the opinion of Cicero, who had rather be mistaken with Plato than be in the right with those who deny altogether the life after death; and this is my own confessio fidei".[283] Dr. Cushing remarks that it is not certain who first introduced Plato to Osler, unless it was James Bovell, but Gomperz' The Greek Thinkers[284] had long been a favourite with him, and in his later addresses he mentioned Plato almost as often as Sir Thomas Browne. Indeed he had selected as a motto for his text-book, The Principles and Practice of Medicine, Plato's

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[282]Cushing, II, 347.
[283]Osler, "Science and Immortality", (Boston, 1904), p. 43.
[284]See note 264.

definition of the Art of Medicine, "And I said of medicine, that this is an Art which considers the constitution of the patient, and has principles of action and reasons in each case".

Osler's address entitled "Physic and Physicians as Depicted in Plato" was delivered before the Johns Hopkins Historical Club in December of 1893. The Historical Club had studied the Hippocratic writings during the previous winter, and after referring in his opening remarks to some of the many interesting things the members had learned from these, Osler went on to say, "From the Hippocratic writings alone we have a very imperfect knowledge of the state of medicine in the most brilliant period of Grecian history; and many details relating to the character and to the life of physicians are gleaned only from secular authors. So much of the daily life of civilized community relates to problems of health and disease that the great writers of every age of necessity throw an important sidelight, not only on the opinions of the people on these questions, but often on the condition of special knowledge in various branches."[285] He spoke of our great good fortune in having had preserved the writings of "the two most famous of the Greek philosophers--the great idealist, Plato, whose 'contemplation of all time and all existence' was more searching than that of his predecessors, fuller than that of any of his disciples, and the great realist,

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[285]Osler, "Physic and Physicians as Depicted in Plato", Aequanimitas, pp. 48-49 - hereafter referred to as "Plato".

Aristotle, to whose memory every department of knowledge still pays homage, and who has swayed the master-minds of twenty-two centuries".[286] Much may be gathered about Greek physic and physicians from the writings of both. He, however, confined his address to Plato's Dialogues, quoting freely from Jowett's translation. Osler felt that while the anatomy and physiology of Plato are crude and imperfect, his psychology "has a strangely modern savour".[287] Many advanced psychologists agree with Plato that much of the prevalent vice is voluntary. "No more graphic picture of the struggle between the rational and appetitive parts of the soul has ever been given than in the comparison of man in the Phaedrus to a charioteer driving a pair of winged horses, one of which is noble and of noble breed; the other ignoble and of ignoble breed, so that 'the driving of them of necessity gives a great deal of trouble to him'."[288] Osler stated that the modes of treatment advocated by Plato were simple, and that it is evident that Plato had not much faith in medicines. This, Osler felt, was an anticipation of modern ideas. In this connection he quoted from Professor Jowett's commentary that Plato is still the enemy of the purgative treatment of physicians, "'which, except in extreme cases, no man of sense will ever adopt. For, as he adds, with an insight into the truth, 'every disease is akin to the nature of the living being

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[286] Osler, "Plato", Aequanimitas, p. 49.
[287] Osler, "Plato", Aequanimitas, p. 54.
[288] Osler, "Plato", Aequanimitas, p. 54 (Dialogues i, page 452).

and only irritated by stimulants'. He is of the opinion that nature should be left to herself, and is inclined to think that physicians are in vain, (cp Laws, vi, 761., where he says that warm baths should be more beneficial to the limbs of the aged rustic than the prescription of a not overwise doctor).'"[289] He quoted the passage wherein Socrates speaks to Theaetetus, comparing his art to that of a midwife, for he practises on the souls of men. He then discussed the status of physicians and their position in the society of Plato's time, and closed the address with a quotation from Jowett which praises the many-sided wisdom of Plato and the eternal freshness of his ideas.

Plato's emphasis on the individual man naturally appealed to one in whom love of humanity was supreme, just as it had appealed to the Renaissance humanists. The following quotation from Walter Pater's Plato and Platonism was printed with Osler's address "Physic and Physicians as Depicted in Plato": "From the lifeless background of an unprogressive world--Egypt, Syria, frozen Scythia--a world in which the unconscious social aggregate had been everything, the conscious individual, his capacity and rights, almost nothing, the Greek had stepped forth, like the young prince in the fable, to set things going."

Osler was continually stressing the values of a lifelong education, and in this connection he also quoted from Plato. His address entitled "After Twenty-Five Years", declared that the

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[289] Osler, "Plato", Aequanimitas, p. 58.

existing evils in the medical course were due to the neglect on the part of the teacher, student, and examiner, "of the great fundamental principle laid down by Plato--that education is a life-long process, in which the student can only make a beginning during his college course".[290] In another address delivered at the University of Toronto, he expressed his belief that "the medical man, perhaps more than any other man, needs that higher education of which Plato speaks,--'that education in virtue from youth upwards, which enables a man eagerly to pursue the ideal perfection'".[291] As the prefatory motto for the address "Teacher and Student" a quotation from the works of Plato is used: "It would seem, Adeimantus, that the direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life".[292]

The references to Plato in Osler's work range from quotations of long passages to the mere mention of one of the characters in the Dialogues. In the address entitled "Nurse and Patient" which he gave at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1897 Sir William remarked that the trained nurse "is a modern representative not of the Roman Vestal, but of the female guardian in Plato's republic".[293]

290Osler, "After Twenty-five Years", Aequanimitas, p. 210 (Address delivered at McGill College, Montreal, 1899).

291Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine", p. 383. (Delivered at the University of Toronto, 1903).

292Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, (Delivered at University of Minnesota, 1892).

293Osler, "Nurse and Patient", Aequanimitas, p. 162.

Plato's comparison of man in the Phaedrus to a charioteer driving a pair of winged horses seemed to Osler to be a particularly happy one, and reference to the passage was made in several of his articles. Thus, in an address at Newcastle[294] he said that to learn the use of his mind, to learn good manners, and to learn to drive Plato's horses, form the marrow of an education within the reach of every citizen, but to which universities minister in a very special way; and it should be comprehensive, fitting a Man, in Milton's words, "to perform all the offices, private and public, of peace or of war".[295] Again, he warned a body of Yale students that "to drive Plato's team taxes the energies of the best of us. One of the horses is a raging, untamed devil, who can only be brought into subjection by hard fighting and severe training. This much you all know as men; once the bit is between his teeth the black steed Passion will take the white horse Reason with you and the chariot rattling over the rocks to perdition".[296]

In an address given to the Canadian Medical Association, in Montreal in 1902, Osler stressed the value of the Art of Detachment, for, possessed of this precious gift "a man may separate himself from a life-long environment so as to take a panoramic view of the conditions under which he has lived and moved; it frees him from Plato's den long enough to see the

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[294]Quoted in part in Cushing, II, 245-247. (Address delivered in October, 1910).
[295]Quoted in Cushing, II, 246.
[296]Osler, A Way of Life (Yale, 1913), pp. 42-43.

realities as they are, the shadows as they appear".[297]

"Aristotle and Plato, Abelard and St. Bernard, Huxley and Newman, represent in different periods the champions of the intellect and of the emotions."[298] So said the great physician in his lecture on Science and Immortality. He added that the only people who have ever been completely satisfied with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul are the idealists, "who walk by faith and not by sight".[299] Osler praised the serene faith of Socrates along with the heroic devotion of St. Francis and St. Theresa. In many ways Christian and Platonic philosophy run on parallel lines, and Sir William here quoted similar words of both Plato and Christ. "'Many are the wand bearers, few are the mystics,'said Plato: 'Many be called but few are chosen', said Christ. Of the hosts that cry Lord! Lord! few have that earnest expectation of the creature which has characterized in every age those strong souls laden with fire who have kept alive this sentiment of immortality."[300] In the same address Osler advised the modern scientific man to keep his mind sweet by saturating it with the "Bible and Plato, with Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton; to see life through their eyes may enable him to strike a balance between the rational and the emotional, which is the most serious difficulty of the intellectual life".[301]

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[297] Osler, "Chauvinism in Medicine, Aequanimitas, p. 279.
[298] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 34.
[299] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 35.
[300] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 39.
[301] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 42.

In his address A Way of Life, the student gathering is advised to make the ideals of Socrates and Plato its own and to strive for "the fair mind the fair body".[302] "The one cannot be sweet and clean without the other, and you must realize, with Rabbi Ben Ezra, the great truth that flesh and soul are mutually helpful."[303]

Osler believed that, because of the intimate personal nature of his work, the medical man was very much in need of the higher education advocated by Plato. Medical men might otherwise lose interest in all but their profession and allow other faculties to go unused, a waste which he deplored. However, "a conscientious pursuit of Plato's ideal perfection"[304] would teach one the three great lessons of life. The first of these is to "learn to consume your own smoke".[305] The second great lesson "that we are here not to get all we can out of life for ourselves, but to try to make the lives of others happier",[306] can be illustrated in the life of a practitioner of medicine better than that of any other person. "And the third lesson you may learn is the hardest of all--that the law of the higher life is only fulfilled by love, ie. charity".[307] Anyone who had ever known Osler or had read his essays would realize that he had thoroughly learned these three lessons.

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[302] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 37.
[303] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 37
[304] Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 385.
[305] Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 385.
[306] Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 385.
[307] Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine," Aequanimitas, p. 386

VII

Osler's Belief in the Active Principles of Christianity as Seen in his Writings

"Modern civilization is the outcome of these two great movements of the mind of man, who to-day is ruled in heart and head by Israel and by Greece. From the one he has learned responsibility to a Supreme Being, and the love of his neighbour, in which are embraced both the Law and the Prophets: from the other he has gathered the promise of Eden to have dominion over the earth on which he lives. Not that Israel is all heart, nor Greece all head, for in estimating the human value of the two races, intellect and science are found in Jerusalem and beauty and truth at Athens, but in different proportions."[308] So said Osler in a speech to the members of the Jewish Historical Society of England on April 27, 1914.

"The springs of Western humanism are classical and Christian",[309] and the Graeco-Roman culture which was rediscovered in the Renaissance was modified by the forces of Christianity. "Early in the Christian era practical necessities brought about a rational compromise. The language of the church and of religious literature had to be learned and it could be learned only by study of its great masters. Besides, Christians could not defend their faith against pagans if they had not mastered their

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[308]Quoted in Cushing, II, 403. (From a speech delivered on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the Jewish Historical Society of England, April 27, 1914, published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, (August, 1914), IV, 729).

[309]Jacques Maritain, True Humanism (New York, 1913), p. XIV.

opponents' weapons, both rhetorical and philosophical. In addition to such utilitarian reasons it could be urged that much pagan literature was positively edifying, even for earnest Christians. For example, the Bible provided no detailed system of everyday ethics and since, in the intervals of exercising faith, hope, and charity, men might have occasion for justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude, the moral works of Cicero and Seneca made an invaluable supplement to the inspired writings. Even pagan poetry might be elevating, such as the Virgil every schoolboy studied, and holy Chrysostom, Milton says, had the art to cleanse the scurrilous vehemence of Aristophanes into the style of a rousing sermon. Thus the claims of pagan literature, among which one need not omit aesthetic appeal, had to be acknowledged. In spite of periodical attacks the position of classical authors in the Christian world became more and more secure."[310]

The humanists found many points of agreement between the thought of the ancients and that of Christianity, such as the emphasis on the individual in Plato and the belief that man should make use of all potentialities within him, for Christ too stressed the importance of the individual, and one of his most frequently quoted parables is that of the talents. The classical writers of pagan antiquity and of the Christian era presented the men of the Renaissance not so much with fixed doctrines as with suggestive examples of personal quests after truth and goodness.

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[310]Bush, pp. 42-43.

Bush says that the broad aim of Tudor humanism was training in virtue and good letters; the practical aim was training for the active Christian life, especially public life. "All the English humanists, like the majority of continental ones, regarded classical learning as a means, not an end, and their energies were given to education. They wished to produce citizens and statesmen, not scholars."[311] Their emphasis was on the values immediately applicable to life.

It is pointed out by Bush that whatever conflict there might have been between Petrarch's religion and the world, there was little between his religion and his love of the classics, and he did not fail to stress the ethical and religious quality of the ancient authors.[312] He says, too, that the writings of John of Salisbury[313] grew out of "that union of religious faith and classical culture which is called Christian humanism".[314] He quotes Leonardo Bruni's[315] definition of humane studies as those studies which have to do with life and conduct, those which form a good man, that is, the works of the ancient philosophers, poets, orators, and historians.[316] Erasmus had no interest in anything which did not minister to humane values, and the humanism of Grocyn, Colet, More, Linacre, Latimer, Lily, and others was of a thoroughly religious and ethical character. "Humanism in

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[311]Bush, p. 79.
[312]Bush, p. 50.
[313]John of Salisbury, c. 1115-80.
[314]Bush, p. 48.
[315]Leonardo Bruni, 1370-1444, Italian humanist and historian.
[316]Bush, p. 55.

the Renaissance", he writes, "normally means Christian faith in alliance with God-given reason, which is the most human faculty in man."[317]

Osler possessed the Christian virtues, as well as the pagan ones, to a marked degree, and many have likened him to the great Nazarene. He had gained a thorough knowledge of the Bible in his early days, and throughout his life advocated the reading of this book for its wonderful influence on character. Indeed, it appears first on the list of books which he advocated as a bedside library for medical students[318] and which includes Montaigne and Plutarch's Lives. In almost every occasional address of Osler's there are references to the Old or the New Testament. Even his medical works are studded with gems of Biblical thought. "If a man does not sell his soul, if he does not part with his birthright of independence for a mess of pottage to the Ishmaelites who harass our borders with their clubs and oppress us with their exactions, if he can only keep free, the conditions of practice are nowhere incompatible with St. Paul's noble Christian or Aristotle's true gentleman."[319] It is thus that Osler spoke to members of the Canadian Medical Assocation in 1902. "There are great lessons to be learned from Job and from David, from Isaiah and St. Paul",[320] he said at another time.

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[317]Bush, p. 54.
[318]Osler, "Bed-Side Library for Medical Students", Aequanimitas, p. 475.
[319]Osler, "Chauvinism in Medicine", Aequanimitas, p. 303
[320]Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine", Aequanimitas, p. 384.

His addresses abound with such Phrases as "the sick love-child of Israel's sweet singer",[321] "the sin-begotten son of Adam",[322] and, referring to the lot of the general practitioner, "Not, perhaps, the fruitful heritage of Judah or Benjamin but he may make of it the goodly portion of Ephraim."[323]

In his address A Way of Life Osler spoke to the medical students at Yale of his belief in the wonderful powers of the Bible in moulding character and providing inspiration for the daily task. He emphasized that Christ's message, "Ye must be born of the spirit", was never more needed, and urged his listeners to know the great souls that make up the moral radium of the world.[324] "You must be born of their spirit, initiated into their fraternity whether of the spiritually-minded followers of the Nazarene or of that larger company, elect from every nation, seen by St. John."[325] He urged his audience to begin their day with Christ and His Prayer, adding "You need no other. Creedless, with it you have religion, creed-stuffed it will leaven any theological dough in which you stick. As the soul is dyed by the thoughts let no day pass without contact with the best literature of the world. Learn to know your Bible, thought not perhaps as your fathers did. In forming character and in shaping conduct, its touch has still its ancient power. Of the kindred

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[321] Osler, "The Student Life", Aequanimitas, p. 423.
[322] Osler, "Medicine in the Nineteenth Century", p. 229.
[323] Osler, "The Student Life", p. 430.
[324] Osler, A Way of Life, pp. 55-56.
[325] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 56.

of Ram and sons of Elihu, you should know its beauties and its strength".[326]

Dr. Shepherd has said of Sir William that he was steeped in the wisdom of Plato, Marcus Aurelius, and Sir Thomas Browne, and knew the Bible better than many clergymen.[327] He expressed the belief that had Osler been born in the twelfth century he would have been a monk.[328]

In an address[329] at a farewell dinner given in his honour by the profession of the United States and Canada on May 20, 1905, in New York, Osler told of the three personal ideals which had guided his life. The first was to do the day's work well and not to bother about tomorrow. To this ideal, which Christ had praised in his Sermon on the Mount, and which had formed the subject of his address "The Student Life", Osler felt he largely owed his success. The second ideal had been to act the Golden Rule, as far as was humanly possible. "And the third has been to cultivate such a measure of equanimity as would enable me to bear success with humility, the affection of my friends without pride and be ready when the day of sorrow and grief came to meet it with the courage befitting a man."[330] Osler was ever true to these guiding principles, and to the Golden Rule he "consistently held in his relations with every man".[331]

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[326] Osler, A Way of Life, pp. 56-57.
[327] Francis J. Shepherd, "Osler's Montreal Period: A Personal Reminiscence", Sir William Osler Memorial Number, p. 153.
[328] Shepherd, p. 153.
[329] Osler, "L'Envoi", Aequanimitas.
[330] Osler, "L'Envoi", Aequanimitas, p. 473.
[331] Edmund J.A. Rogers, "Personal Reminiscences of the Earlier Years of Sir William Osler", Sir William Osler Memorial Number, p.164.

VIII

The Fixed Period

Before leaving America Osler delivered three valedictory addresses. That given at the Johns Hopkins University on February 22, 1905, was entitled "The Fixed Period", and in it he expressed ideas which he had long held with regard to the age of usefulness of medical teachers. One of these was the comparative uselessness of men above forty years, and another the uselessness of men above sixty years of age. Osler referred to Anthony Trollope's novel, The Fixed Period, and jokingly commended the author's "admirable scheme of a college into which at sixty men retired for a year of contemplation before a peaceful departure by chloroform".[332] He added, "That incalculable benefits might follow such a scheme is apparent to anyone, who, like myself, is nearing the limit, and has made a careful study of the calamities which may befall men during the seventh and eighth decades".[333] He also referred to Donne's Biathanatos, in which the author "tells us that by the laws of certain wise states sexagenarii were precipitated from a bridge, and in Rome men of that age were not admitted to the suffrage and they were called Depontani because the way to the senate was per pontem and they from age were not permitted to come thither".[334]

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[332] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 399.
[333] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 399.
[334] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 399

The following day, such headlines as "Osler Recommends Chloroform at Sixty", appeared in papers throughout the country. "To Oslerize became a byword for mirth and approbium."[335] The fact that Dr. Osler had devoted his life to prolonging the lives of others, and that he was about to assume a distinguished position in a university across the sea, was completely overlooked. Of the address, Colonel Fielding H. Garrison said, "But Osler's reasoning about the comparative uselessness of men at sixty, in the face of the imposing exceptions in Longfellow's Morituri Salutamus was obviously an expression of his essential preference for and innate sympathy with the oncoming race of younger people, whose worth he had sensed many times over in his beloved pupils".[336] It is related that the Professor of Greek of Johns Hopkins University, Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, who sat on the platform while Osler made "The Fixed Period" address at the university in 1905, and was at that time seventy-three, said of the occasion, "His famous speech which made some of the auditors grieve for me, did not cause me a flutter. In 1905 I sat opposite to him at the Christ Church gaudy, and in reply to a light remark about his McCoy Hall performance, he said: 'The way of the jester is hard'. I know that he always maintained that he was in earnest, when propounded his Thesis, but the whole matter is an old story to one who knows that the antique floruit was forty".[337]

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335 Cushing, I, 669.
336 Quoted in Reid, p. 175.
337 Quoted in Cushing, I, 671.

Osler himself did not like to hear the unfortunate incident referred to, but in the preface to the second edition of the volume Aequanimitas and Other Addresses[338] he added a word of explanation with regard to "The Fixed Period". He told how he had hoped to "relieve a situation of singular sadness in parting" from his "dear colleagues of the Johns Hopkins University"[339] and had "jokingly suggested for the relief of a senile professoriate an extension of Anthony Trollope's plan mentioned in his novel, The Fixed Period. "To one who had all his life been devoted to old men, it was not a little distressing to be placarded in a world-wide way as their sworn enemy, and to every man over sixty whose spirit I may have thus unwittingly bruised, I tender my heartfelt regrets."[340] He added, however, that his belief that the real work of life is done before the fortieth year and that after the sixtieth year it would be best for the world and best for themselves if men rested from their labours had not changed but had rather strengthened.

This idea that the "effective, moving, vitalizing work of the world is done between the ages of twenty-five and forty"[341] was one long held by Osler. He did not deny that should be subtract the work of the men above forty "we should miss great treasures, even priceless treasures",[342] but felt that the "sum

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[338] Osler, Aequanimitas and Other Addresses, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1906).
[339] Osler, "Preface" to Aequanimitas, p. viii.
[340] Osler, "Preface" to Aequanimitas, p. viii.
[341] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 398.
[342] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 398.

of human achievement in action, in science, in art, in literature"[343] had been accomplished by young men. He expressed the belief that the chief value of the teacher who has passed his climacteric is to encourage the young men and to play the man midwife as Socrates did to Theaetetus, and determine whether the thoughts which the young men are bringing to the light are false idols or true and noble births.

Anyone merely reading the newspaper reviews of Osler's address would have the impression that he ruthlessly condemned all men above sixty years of age, and such passages as the following were quoted by journalists seeking sensational copy: "As it can be maintained that all the great advances have come from men under forty, so the history of the world shows that a very large proportion of the evils may be traced to the sexagenarians--nearly all the great mistakes politically and socially, all of the worst poems, most of the bad pictures, a majority of the bad novels, not a few of the bad sermons and speeches."[344] Yet throughout his life Osler had great love and respect for the old men of the world, and much of the reverence which the Grecians and Romans had for the wisdom of their elder philosophers and statesmen. Cicero, in his De Senectute, had written of the notable accomplishments of certain elderly men, and Osler remarked in his address that "it is not to be denied that occasionally there is a sexagenarian whose mind, as Cicero remarks, stands out

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[343]Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 397.
[344]Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 399.

of reach of the body's decay".[345] To many such men Osler had paid tribute, and he had frequently been instrumental in organizing banquets in their honour. The point to be stressed is that while Osler felt that the main work of the world had been accomplished by young men, he felt that there were exceptions, and that the secret of their success was the "secret of Hermippus, that ancient Roman who, feeling that the silver cord was loosening, cut himself clear from all companions of his own age and betook himself to the company of young men, mingling with their games and studies and so lived to the age of 153, puerorum halitu refocillatus et educatus".[346]

Again and again in his essays Osler stressed that "it is only those who live with the young who maintain a fresh outlook on the new problems of the world".[347] In his address "Teacher and Student",[348] Sir William told his listeners that the only safeguard against the loss of mental elasticity and the ability to adapt to an altered intellectual environment is "to live in, and with the third decade, in company with the younger, more receptive and progressive minds".[349] In still another address,[350] he urged the clinical physician, "as he travels from the East, to look well to his companions--to see that they are not of his

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[345] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 399.
[346] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, pp. 399-400.
[347] Osler, "The Fixed Period", Aequanimitas, p. 400.
[348] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, Delivered at the University of Minnesota, 1892.
[349] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 33
[350] Osler, "Internal Medicine as a Vocation", Aequanimitas, (Delivered to the New York Academy of Medicine, 1897).

own age and generation. He must walk with the 'boys', else he is lost, irrevocably lost; not all at once, but by easy grades, and everyone perceives his ruin before he, 'good, easy man' is aware of it. I would not have him a basil plant, to feed on the brains of the bright young fellows who follow the great wheel uphill, but to keep his mind receptive, plastic, and impressionable he must travel with the men who are doing the work of the world, the men between the ages of twenty-five and forty".[351]

One of the glories of the Renaissance was that a joyous interest in the life of the present, in the beauties of nature and the world, replaced the pessimism and preoccupation with life in the future which were so widespread in the Middle Ages. Man thought of himself as a free individual with unlimited scope for his talents, and an insatiable thirst for knowledge was characteristic of the period. In the works of the ancients a long-forgotten way of life was rediscovered. Osler retained this fresh, buoyant, youthful, optimistic outlook throughout his life. He felt that it was the only outlook which would counteract the loss of flexibility and adaptibility which tended to take place after forty, and that it was the outlook of the Greeks. It is this attitude, too, that he praised in so many of the old men to whom he paid tribute. Of Oliver Wendell

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[351] Osler, "Internal Medicine as a Vocation", Aequanimitas, p. 151.

Holmes he said, "Delightful, too, to think that although he had, to use the expression of Benjamin Franklin, intruded himself these many years into the company of posterity, the freshness and pliancy of his mind had not for a moment failed".[352] On the occasion of the seventieth birthday celebration of Abraham Jacobi on May 5, 1900, Osler proclaimed that happiness at three-score years and ten is for the man who has learned to adjust his mental processes to the changing conditions of the times. He again mentioned his belief that in all of us senility begins at forty and to "Obviate the inevitable tendency it is necessary for a man to keep fresh by contact with fresh, young minds, and ever retain a keen receptiveness to the ideas of those who follow him".[353] This, he felt, Jacobi had been able to do because he was one

> whose even-balanced soul
> Business could not make dull nor passion wild,
> Who saw life steadily and saw it whole:

The Grecian characteristics of flexibility and adaptibility which he so praised in his colleague William Pepper were possessed by Osler himself in large measure, and the words from the Timaeus which he quoted to illustrate another Grecian feature of his friend, were no less applicable to himself. "You Hellenes are never anything but children; there is not an old man among you--in mind you are all young."[354] In mind, Sir William Osler was always young.

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[352]Osler, "Oliver Wendell Holmes", An Alabama Student, p. 54.
[353]Quoted in Cushing, I, pp. 526-527.
[354]Osler, "William Pepper", An Alabama Student, p. 228.

IX

The Influence Osler Exerted on Others in the Love of Literature and of Literary Research

Osler was responsible for teaching countless medical stuents the love of good literature, and he encouraged many to indulge in some form of literary research. His name became linked with not a few volumes, some of them famous, some less known, and several books were dedicated to him, a great many inspired by him.

Of Osler's influence in spreading a knowledge of general literature among members of the medical profession, Dr. Francis Packard wrote, "Though Fields, the Boston publisher, brought out an edition of the Religio Medici, the works of Sir Thomas Browne were but little read in America outside of the more select intellectual circles until Osler, by his allusions to them in his addresses and articles, aroused the interest of the members of his profession in their ancient confrere. So that there are now but few cultivated physicians in this country, who have not been led to at least read the Religio Medici and has thus had the door of pure literature opened to them. The indirect influence of Osler in promoting the spread of a just literary taste among the profession it is impossible to estimate. His contact with thousands of physicians through his teaching and writings was especially wide-spread, with correspondingly broad results. He was really the first great American medical teacher to exert an extra-professional cultural influence on his students and

followers. The leaven of his spirit has already wrought a great benefit to the profession and it is safe to say will continue to do so for many years".[355] Many of Osler's students have recalled with delight what he referred to as his "book clinics", and in Baltimore he also formed a small informal dining-club which he named "The Ship of Fools". Countless of his students were invited from time to time to his warm and friendly home, and many of them owed to their host their introduction to one or more of the great authors of the past, and his favourites--Sir Thomas Browne, Plato, Plutarch, Burton, to mention only a few--became their own as he told them, simply and yet vividly, stories of the authors. "He taught medical men to love the literature of the profession as well as the highest type of general literature, and so he taught us culture, and that the wearied mind could find comfort, sustenance, and inspiration in paths wherein we had not trod in this workaday world. His love of the Fathers in Medicine served to teach us that we should learn what they did before we boast of what we do, and his unusual knowledge of classical literature was utilized to charm us as we laboured."[356]

Dr. Osler did much to induce his friends to undertake some form of literary research, and not infrequently gave them advice

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[355]Francis L. Packard, "Literary Influences on the Writings of Sir William Osler", Sir William Osler Memorial Number, p. 27.

[356]Hobart Amory Hare, "William Osler as a Teacher and Clinician in Philadelphia", Sir William Osler Memorial Number, p. 213.

and even obtained publishers for them. Dr. Cushing tells how Osler encouraged Dr. Blodgett of Boston to translate Letters to M. Charles Spon into English,[357] how when Dr. Jesse Myer had completed his Life of Beaumont he urged him to turn his attention to Daniel Drake, and of how he assisted Dr. Archibald Malloch with his monograph on Finch and Baines.[358] Dr. Ruhrah tells that, under the patronage of Osler, Cordell, who was for years an amateur in the history of medicine, "gathered his forces and notes and brought out the Medical Annals of Maryland, one of the best pieces of medico-historical work produced in this country".[359] Countless other instances of such encouragement and guidance are recorded by Osler's friends and students.

Sir William wrote introductions for several volumes, among which were Dr. Myer's Life of Beaumont and the Life of Pasteur by Vallery-Radot, two hundred and fifty copies of which Henry Phipps had had printed for distribution through the Johns Hopkins University and other institutions.

Rudyard Kipling carried on a correspondence with Sir William on several occasions, and visited him at his home in Oxford. In June 1907 Kipling journeyed to Oxford to attend a notable pageant which he describes in the Book of Words. The celebrations continued for a week and during this time both the author and his wife were guests at the Osler home. Osler wrote of him as "such

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[357] See Cushing, II, 316.
[358] Monograph on Sir John Finch and Sir Thomas Baines (Cambridge University Press, 1917).
[359] Ruhrah, p. 344.

a jolly fellow, so full of fun and with an extraordinary interest in everything".[360] He evidently took a keen interest in Osler's extreme reverence for and knowledge of the fathers of medicine, and after his return home wrote to Osler from time to time requesting certain of the regius professor's biographical and historical sketches so that he might file them with his "old doctors". In Osler's library is a copy of Rewards and Fairies inscribed to him with the quotation: "Excellent herbs had our fathers of old", and in it there is a note dated October 3, 1910, and written from Bateman's, Burwash, Sussex: "Dear Osler,--Herewith my book of Tales. I wouldn't bother you with it except for Nick Culpeper and Laennec for whom I feel you are in a way responsible. Yours very sincerely--Rudyard Kipling".[361]

Dr. Cushing tells us that in a copy of Conrad Gesner's Historia Animalium which he forwarded to George Dock, Osler copied out the following lines, all unconscious, in his admiration for the author, of how appropriate they were to himself:

> Conrad Gesner who kept open house for all learned men who came into his neighbourhood was not only the best naturalist among the scholars of his day but of all men of that century he was the pattern man of letters. He was faultless in private life, assiduous in study, diligent in maintaining correspondence and good will with learned men in all countries, hospitable, though his means were small--to every scholar that came into Zurich. Prompt to serve all, he was an editor of other men's volumes, a writer of prefaces for friends, a suggestor to young writers of books in which they might engage themselves, and a great helper

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[360] Quoted in Cushing, II, 97. (From a letter to Mrs. Brewster written on July 19, 1907).

[361] Quoted in Cushing, II, 241-242.

to them in the progress of their work. But still, while finding time for services to other men, he could produce as much out of his own study as though he had no part in the life beyond its walls. [362]

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[362] Quoted in Cushing, II, 183. (Copied out under the date of July 1, 1909. From Henry Morley's Life of Jerome Cardan, II, 152).

X

Osler as a Critic

Osler wrote many reviews of books, and in his short notes and letters frequently made critical comments on a recently-acquired volume. Sometimes, too, he made critical annotations in the books in his collection. His extensive knowledge of general literature and his keen powers of observation served him well in the role of critic.

Osler's long scientific training had strengthened his naturally perceptive mind, and his dislike for false descriptive passages in the literature which he read was intense. In the Spectator for November 1911 there was published Osler's letter entitled "Maeterlinck on Death".[363] Having studied the "art and act of dying"[364] for many years, he confessed that he had been disappointed in Maeterlinck's Essay. Although he called it "a brilliant example of the type of literature characterized by Hamlet in his famous reply to Polonius".[365] He proclaimed that there was about the Essay "a cadavernous mustiness"[366] which even the woods could not cover", and in spite of the plea for burning burials, one smells everywhere 'the mould above the rose'".[367]

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[363] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298-299.
[364] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298.
[365] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298.
[366] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298.
[367] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298.

Osler advised those readers who felt about the reading, as he did, "the chill of the charnel-house",[368] to bask for an hour in the warm sunshine of the Phaedo. Having discussed the form of the essay, he turned to the substance, and protested against the horrifying pictures which were given of the act of dying. From his experience, Osler knew these to be false. "A few, very few, suffer severely in the body, fewer still in the mind."[369] He added that almost all of Shelley's description fits, and quoted the lines from Queen Mab:

> Mild is the slow necessity of death;
> The tranquil spirit fails beneath its grasp,
> Without a groan, almost without a fear,
> Resigned in peace to the necessity;
> Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
> And full of wonder, full of hope as he.

Similarly, though a student of Francis Bacon, whom he called a great transformer of the mind, a man who "realized, as no one before had done, that within the reach of the grasp of man lay the unexplored kingdom of knowledge if he will be but humble enough, and patient enough, and truthful enough, to occupy it",[370] Osler deplored Bacon's mind-blindness. He was an admirer of Bacon's philosophy, but pointed out that while "Bacon was philosophizing like a Lord Chancellor"[371] two

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[368] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298.
[369] Quoted in Cushing, II, 298.
[370] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters, as illustrated by Shakespeare, Bacon and Burton", Selected Writings of Sir William Osler, p. 3--hereafter referred to as "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters".
[371] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 3

English physicians had gone back to the Greeks. William Gilbert laid the foundations of modern physical science, and William Harvey made the greatest advance in physiology since Aristole, yet Bacon "failed to see that these works of his contemporaries were destined to fulfill the very object of his philosophy--the one to give man dominion over the macrocosm, the world at large; the other to give him control of the microcosm, his own body".[372] Osler added that a more striking instance of mind blindness is not to be found in the history of science. As for Bacon's prose, he felt that, outside of the Essays, this made very dull reading, and in speaking of the Historia Naturalis, said that one would think that a consideration of Life and Death would "so far fire the imagination as to save an author from the sin of dullness".[373] "Try to read it. A more nicely tasteless, more correctly dull treatise was never written on so fruitful a theme."[374] He added that there was good sense in the sections on medicine and nature, but that apart from the contrast between youth and age, "which has a fine epigrammatic quality",[375] the work is as dull as shoe-leather, and the dryness is all his own as other authors are rarely quoted. "Only a mollusc without a trace of red marrow or red blood could have penned a book without a page to stir the feelings and not a sentence with a burr to stick in the memory."[376]

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[372] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 4.
[373] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 4.
[374] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 4.
[375] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 4.
[376] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 4.

It was natural that Burton's sympathetic picture of the whole sweep of humanity should appeal to Osler, and the Anatomy of Melancholy was high on the list of his favourite books. He stated that the thoughts and words of more dead writers are transmitted to modern readers by Burton than by any other 17th century author.[377] That the Anatomy is not in the cemetery of dead books is due to the saving salt of human sympathy scattered through its pages. The book was the subject of an address to the Elizabethan Club at Yale on Tuesday, April 22, 1913. On this occasion Osler expressed his belief that

> No book of any language presents such a stage of moving pictures--kings and queens in their greatness and in their glory, in their madness and in their despair; generals and conquerors with their ambitions and their activities; the princes of the church in their pride and in their shame; philosophers of all ages, now rejoicing in the power of intellect, and again grovelling before the idols of the tribe; the heroes of the race who have fought the battle of the oppressed in all lands; criminals, small and great, from the petty thief to Nero with his unspeakable atrocities; the great navigators and explorers with whom Burton travelled so much in map and card, and whose stories were his delight; the martyrs and the virgins of all religions, the deluded and fanatics of all theologies; the possessed of devils and the possessed of God; the beauties, frail and faithful, the Lucretias and the Helens, all are there. The lovers old and young; the fools who were accounted wise, and the wise who were really fools; the madmen of all history, to anatomize whom is the special object of the book; the world itself, against which he brings a railing accusation--the motley procession of humanity sweeps before us on his stage, a fantastic but fascinating medley at which he does not know whether to weep or laugh.[378]

Osler was extremely interested in the descriptions of doctors which were drawn by English novelists of all periods,

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[377] Osler, "Creators, Transmuters and Transmitters", p. 3.

[378] Quoted in Cushing, II, 359. (From the Yale Review, January, 1914).

and the accounts which were given of the social side of professional life. He felt that Roger Chillingworth of Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter presented a singularly truthful picture of the old colonial physician,[379] and that Dr. Thorne of Anthony Trollope's novel of the same name represented the transition in the English profession from the apothecary to the general practitioner.[380] For the best description of the doctor in an English novel, however, Osler believed one should turn to George Eliot's Middlemarch, a favourite novel of his and one to which he frequently refers in his addresses. "Writers of our times, like George Eliot, have told for future generations in a character such as Lydgate, the little everyday details of the struggles and aspirations of the profession of the nineteenth century."[381] In a note which Osler intended to include in the Introduction to the "Litteraria" section of his library George Eliot's description of Lydgate is warmly praised. "Ask the opinion of a dozen medical men upon the novel in which the doctor is best described, and the majority will say Middlemarch. Lydgate is at once an example and a warning.... An unmitigated calamity, his marriage ruined his intellectual life in a soul-wasting struggle with worldly annoyances.... George Eliot was happy in her relations with the profession, and we owe her a

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[379] Osler, "British Medicine In Greater Britain", Aequanimitas, p. 182.

[380] Quoted in Cushing, II, 602 (note).

[381] Osler, "Physic and Physicians as Depicted in Plato", Aequanimitas, p. 49.

deep debt for this Early-Victorian sketch of it in a provincial town."[382]

Osler was an admirer of Browning's in an age when the poet's works were viewed with mixed feelings. Browning was often criticized for his vagueness and obscurity, but Osler shared the poet's invincible optimism and found inspiration in Brownings philosophy of life. One poem in particular, Rabbi Ben Ezra, was a favourite, and this he frequently referred to in his talks to medical students. Ideals will have, "if encouraged, an ennobling influence, even if it is for you only to say with Rabbi Ben Ezra 'what I aspired to be and was not, comforts me'".[383] Again, in his address entitled A Way of Life, Osler advised students that they must realize, "with Rabbi Ben Ezra, the great truth that flesh and soul are mutually helpful".[384] He thought that the young doctor would find the philosophy of Rabbi Ben Ezra a better guide, "with his stimulating

> Then, welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough
> Each sting that bids not sit nor stand but go!

than Omar, whose fatalism, so seductive in Fitzgerald's verses, leaves little scope for human effort".[385] Not everyone would agree with Osler that this poem of Browning's would "atone for

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[382] Quoted in Cushing, I, 463 (note).
[383] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 43.
[384] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 36.
[385] Osler, "On the Educational Value of the Medical Society", Aequanimitas, p. 350.

countless muddy folias" because of its "diction and clarity of thought",[386] although few could fail to catch something of the poet's optimism.

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[386] Quoted in Cushing, II, 404. (From Canadian Medical Association Journal, August, 1914, IV, 729).

XI

Osler's Use of Quotations and Literary Allusions

It has been said that if allusions and quotations are a criterion, any number of Sir William's Works could be catalogued among the works of literature. Cushing points out[387] in rough calculation of the number of quotations in his Aequanimitas volume alone, there are six hundred and fifty examples of the quotatio recta in the less than four hundred small octavo pages of good-sized type, and that the examples of the quotatio obliqua are countless. In addition to quotations from the books which were included in his "bedside library" for medical students--the Old and New Testament, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Plutarch's Lives, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Religio Medici, Don Quixote Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Breakfast Table" Series--Osler quoted from many other authors such as Carlyle, whose advice "not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to do what lies clearly at hand", was one of the guiding principles of his life, and from Kipling. Osler's philosophy of life was to a large extent the result of his reading and thinking experiences. Each evening he sought inspiration in the philosophies and ideals of his favourite authors, and each day faced the world of science with a fresh outlook. He urged his students to follow this practice, and the writings of each author on the "bedside" list

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[387]Cushing, I, 658 (note).

form a sharp contrast to the realism and exactitude of scientific work.

Dr. Keen said of Osler, "His mind was permeated with the great Grecians and great Romans and he constantly borrowed shafts from their quivers."[388] Another friend wrote, "In many instances his references would serve as well as crossword puzzles to stimulate dictionary research. Thus he speaks of Atkinson, the medieval bibliographer, as a "Thelemite". How many readers of Osler realize that a Thelemite was a monk of the abbey of Theleme, so eloquently described by Rabelais. Osler may be said to have fulfilled in his own person...Walter Savage Landon's wish, which he quotes, that he might walk with Epicurus on his right hand and Epictetus on his left, if we're to judge by the familiarity which he manifests of their sayings".[389]

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[388] W.W. Keen, "A Tribute to Sir William Osler", Osler Memorial Number, p. 248.

[389] Francis L. Packard, "Literary Influences on the Writings of Osler", Osler Memorial Number, pp. 26-27.

XII

Osler as a Writer

The Renaissance humanists were so busily occupied with the study and translation of the ancient manuscripts of Greece and Rome which presented them with a whole new world and outlook on life, that they wrote comparatively few original works. In spite of the many demands on his time, Sir William Osler was a prolific writer; his books, addresses, and pamphlets number in all nearly eight hundred. Practically all of his writings were addressed to professional people, but, as Dr. Francis points out, two unusual honours which came to him towards the end of his life bear witness to his literary reputation outside his profession. These were his election to the presidency of the British Classical Association, and to membership "in what calls itself proudly and officially The Club (with a capital T)--but is not ashamed to be called more specifically Dr. Johnson's Club, since it was founded in 1761 by the famous coterie of that literary Leviathan".[390] He was also president of the Bibliographical Society for seven years.

Two volumes of Osler's addresses, Aequanimitas and An Alabama Student, were published during his lifetime. The biographical essays, discussed in a previous section, were a

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[390]See the unpublished address (Montreal, 1934) by W.W. Francis, "Sir William Osler as a Literary Man", p. 2.

valuable contribution to the annals of medical history and illustrate Osler's reverence for the great men of the past. They are, however, of particular interest to students of medicine. In the preface to An Alabama Student the author explained that he frequently chose a biographical subject for his occasional addresses because, in addition to his interest in this field, he held a strong belief in the value of biography in education. He felt that it helped to "awaken that precious quality of human sympathy"[391] which enables the student to appreciate that in the simple annals of such a career as that of the Alabama Student a life may be as perfect as in a Harvey or a Locke. In the lives of the men of whom he spoke he saw the embodiment of those ideals which he had sought to follow throughout his life. Thus in the life of Alfred Stillé he saw "a delightful equanimity and serenity of mind which is one of the most blessed accompaniments of old age".[392] He praised Beaumont for living up to and fulfilling the ideals with which he had set out so that his work remained a "model of patient persevering investigation".[393] In "The Influence of Louis on American Medicine" he told how the students of Louis had become endowed with the spirit and zeal of their master and those finer qualities which made Louis so lovable".[394] They had become bright ideals for

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[391] See the "Preface" to William Osler's An Alabama Student and Other Biographical Essays (Oxford, 1908).

[392] Osler, "Alfred Stille", An Alabama Student, p. 244.

[393] Osler, "A Backwood Physiologist", An Alabama Student, p. 184.

[394] Osler, "The Influence of Louis on American Medicine", An Alabama Student, p. 210.

all future generations of American students. In William Pepper he discovered an adaptibility and flexibility truly Grecian; in Sir Thomas Browne, mastery of self, conscientious devotion to duty, and deep human interest in human beings. Locke's rule of life, was one which Osler commended to all students of medicine: "'Live the best life you can, but live it so as not to give needless offence to others; do all you can to avoid the vices, follies, and weaknesses of your neighbours, but take no needless offence at their divergences from your ideal.'"[395]

The Aequanimitas volume is comprised of addresses to Medical Students, Nurses, and Practitioners of Medicine. It will undoubtedly have a more enduring influence than the volume of biographical essays, for its appeal is more universal. Good literature knows no nationality, nor any bounds save those of humanity, and is an expression of life in forms of truth and beauty. A history of the human soul, it records the dreams that make great deeds possible. While some of the problems discussed in the essays of the Aequanimitas volume were peculiar to one particular period in the history of medical education, the ideals which Osler preached are applicable to every walk of life throughout all time. If men were true to these standards of perfection the world would certainly be a better place in which to live. It was Osler's purpose to inspire men to nobler deeds,

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[395]Osler, "John Locke as a Physician", An Alabama Student, p. 107.

Throughout the addresses one sees his love of good literature, and many of the aims which are reflected in his writings are attributable to his love of the classics. In his favourite authors he found inspiration, and he sought in turn to infect others with the ideals which make great deeds possible, and give men a serenity, a courage, and a humility which will enable them to rise superior to the vicissitudes and the successes of life. In his addresses he stressed that ideals are all-important, that they give zeal and cheerfulness to youth as well as peace to old age. During the two years which elapsed between the appearances of the first and second editions of the book, Osler received many letters from men on both sides of the Atlantic, acknowledging that the addresses had been helpful in forming their goals, and it was a source of inexpressible gratification to him that he had helped to make the yoke of the general practitioner easier and his burden lighter. Believing that the practice of medicine affords scope for the exercise of the best faculties of mind and heart, he sought to inspire students with standards which would make them loyal to the best interests of the "noblest of callings".[396] His style is a reflection of his personality - of his lofty ideals, his humour, his love of humankind. Simple, clear, and vital, his power of expression is probably attributable to his wide reading.

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[396]See the "Preface" to William Osler's Aequanimitas With Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1906).

Since Osler's death, extracts from Aequanimitas have appeared in several literary anthologies. Christopher Morley printed "The Student Life" in a collection of essays, published in 1921, and later Professor Franz Montgomery and Professor Warner Taylor chose it for their anthologies. That this essay has found its way into several anthologies and college textbooks of English prose is perhaps, in the words of Dr. Francis, a good augury of permanent literary fame. Within recent years, extracts from "Teacher and Student" have appeared in a work entitled The Physician Throughout the Ages, part of "The Fixed Period" has been included in Expression Through Prose, and extracts from Aequanimitas have been published in A Treasury of Inspiration.

In the address "Aequanimitas", from which the book takes it title, Osler considers "but two of the score of elements which might make or mar the lives of students of medicine".[397] In the first place he speaks of the quality of imperturbability, which he defines as coolness and presence of mind under all circumstances, calmness amid storm, clearness of judgment in moments of grave peril, immobility, impassiveness. It inspires courage and helps one to meet the exigencies of practice, and, one might add, of life. Although imperturbability is essentially a bodily endowment, education can nevertheless do much to help us to attain this quality. Osler warns, however, against a hardening of the human heart. The mental equivalent of this bodily

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[397] Osler, "Aequanimitas", Aequanimitas, p. 3.

endowment is equanimity, a philosophy of life summed up by the Roman Antonius Pius in the watchword, Aequanimitas. Although natural temperament has much to do with the development of this quality, a clear knowledge of our relation to our fellow creatures, and to the work of life, is also indispensable. We need patience and charity toward our fellow-creatures, one of the first essentials in securing good-natured equanimity being not to expect too much of people. A distressing feature of life is that uncertainty pertaining not alone to the science and art of medicine, but to the hopes and fears which make us men. It is impossible to find absolute truth, but each of us must be content to pick up a fragment. Osler quotes from Milton's Areopagitica to show how the sad friends of truth have ever sought to find scattered pieces. From the portion or portions of truth we possess we may reconstruct ideals. He then warns us, in the words of Wordsworth, not to become so engrossed in getting and spending that we lay waste our powers. Some of us will have to bear the struggle with defeat and it will be well to have cultivated the quality of equanimity. "Even with disaster ahead and ruin imminent, it is better to face them with a smile.... than to crouch at their approach. In fights for principle and justice, cling to your ideal and like Childe Roland blow the challenge and calmly await the conflict.[398] Osler recalls the

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[398] Osler, "Aequanimitas", Aequanimitas, p. 8

men whose labours have made the present possible and remarks that the great possession of any university is in its great men. He concludes his address with the words "Gentlemen, - Farewell, and take with you into the struggle the watchword of the good old Roman - Aequanimitas".

It can be seen that though "Aequanimitas" was written as a valedictory address to be delivered at the University of Pennsylvania, it is filled with words of wisdom helpful to men in every walk of life. The literary allusions give evidence of Osler's wide knowledge of general literature. The philosophy of life which the essay advocates is one to which the author was true throughout his life. The prose style is informal and reflects Osler's personality with his deep understanding of and faith in his fellow men, and his desire to help each one live his life to the fullest possible extent.

"Teacher and Student" was delivered at the University of Minnesota in 1892. In this Osler says that the vital element in any university and the one on which the fate of the institution rests, lies in "the men who work in its halls and in the ideals which they cherish and teach".[399] He emphasizes that this element transcends all material interests, the enormous development of which may cause us to miss the secret of a nation's life, "the true test of which is to be found in its intellectual and moral standards".[400] Osler reminds us that we often forget

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[399] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 26
[400] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 29.

that the measure of the value of a nation to the world is neither the bushel nor the barrel, but mind. He compares the fruits of the earth to those of the mind; the former are easily grown, while the latter are of slower development and require prolonged culture. He quotes John Henry Newman on the personal influence of the teacher and paraphrases the words of Matthew Arnold--"the function of the teacher is to teach and to propagate the best that is known and taught in the world".[401] The departments of a school should be in charge of men who have enthusiasm, full personal knowledge of the branch which they teach, and a sense of obligation as a contributor to the knowledge of the world. The most pressing need of the day in the medical schools of the country was for thoroughly equipped laboratories in charge of men who were thoroughly equipped as teachers and investigators. He speaks of the disadvantages to a school of having too many men of mature years, because older men usually have a weakened receptivity and inability to adapt themselves to a changed intellectual environment. Congratulating the students on their choice of calling, one which offers "a combination of intellectual and moral interests found in no other profession,"[402] he proposes to inspire them with ideals which will help to make them good students throughout their lives. These influences include the Art of Detachment, or the faculty of isolating oneself

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[401] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 27.
[402] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 34.

from the pursuits and pleasures incident to youth, the Virtue of Method, which means the orderly arrangement of work and the collection of facts with open-minded watchfulness, and the Quality of Thoroughness. These influences may make true students, successful practitioners, and even great investigators but "that which can alone give permanence to powers"[403] is the Grace of Humility. With it comes reverence for truth and a correct estimation of the difficulties to be overcome in our search for it. If we are convinced that absolute truth is difficult to find in matters relating to our fellow creatures, we shall draw lessons from our errors. For the sake of what it brings the grace of humility is a precious gift, for, remembering our own imperfections, the faults of our brothers seem less grievous. Here, as so frequently in his addresses, Osler refers to Sir Thomas Browne on the question of charity. He tells of how, when he was sitting Lincoln Cathedral, there arose within him a strong sense of reverence for the men whose minds had conceived such beautiful works, for those who had given to the world visible signs of the ideals which had inspired them. He expresses the belief that the ideals which men cherish assist the progress of the race. Osler tells his students that with the ideals which they now entertain, their future is indissolubly bound. He has tried to indicate some of the aims which they achieve. Though these may be paradoxical in comparison with the

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[403] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 39.

conditions in which they work, they will have, if encouraged, an ennobling influence.

> And though this course does not necessarily bring position or renown, consistently followed it will at any rate give to your youth and exhilarating zeal and cheerfulness which will enable you to surmount all obstacles--to your maturity a serene judgment of men and things, and that broad charity without which all else is naught--to your old age that greatest of blessings, peace of mind, a realization, maybe, of the prayer of Socrates for the beauty in the inward soul and for unity of the outer and the inner man; perhaps, of the promise of St. Bernard, "pax sine crimine, pax sine turbine, pax sine vixa".[404]

"Nurse and Patient" opens with a humorous description of the functions of the trained nurse:

> No man with any self-respect cares to be taken off-guard, in mufti, so to speak. Sickness dims the eye, pales the cheek, roughens the chin, and makes a man a scarecrow, not fit to be seen by his wife, to say nothing of a strange woman all in white or blue or gray. Moreover she will take such unwarrantable liberties with a fellow, particularly if she catches him with fever; than her special virtues could be depicted by King Lemuel alone. So far as she is concerned you are again in swathing bands, and in her hands you are, as of yore, a helpless lump of human clay.[405]

Osler points out that in modern society both nursing and charity are done at second-hand. The nurse has taken over the duties to the sick which were formerly performed by relatives. In a more serious vein he speaks of the virtue of taciturnity, one which he feels should be cultivated by every member of the medical profession. Sir Thomas Browne and Carlyle are quoted on this subject. Osler warns against an assurance which is based on a thin veneer of knowledge, claiming that ignorance is more

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[404] Osler, "Teacher and Student", Aequanimitas, p. 43.
[405] Osler, "Nurse and Patient", Aequanimitas, pp. 155-156.

wholesome than this. Praising the nurse as one of the great blessings of humanity, he proclaims that her mission is inferior to neither the physician nor the priest. He recommends the formation of organized nursing guilds which could undertake the care of large or small institutions, saying that there is no higher mission in this life than nursing God's poor. He speaks of the necessity of having high ideals, for even though these may never be realized, they will enable us to look with sympathy upon the more successful efforts of others. In institutions, too, the corroding effect of routine can be withstood only by maintaining high standards of work. Since a great corporation cannot have a very fervent charity, physicians and nurses have but one enduring corrective - the practice towards patients of the Golden Rule of Humanity.

"After Twenty-five Years" was delivered at McGill College in 1899. In it Osler looks back over the years since he was a student of medicine and forward to the future. It is his belief that from two points of view alone have we a wide and satisfactory view of life--"one, as, amid the glorious tints of the early morn, ere the dew of youth has been brushed off, we stand at the foot of the hill, eager for the journey; the other, wider, perhaps less satisfactory, as we gaze from the summit at the lengthening shadows cast by the setting sun".[406] From no other point along the pathway have we the same outlook, "for

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[406]Osler, "After Twenty-five Years", Aequanimitas, p. 199.

the steep and broken pathway affords few halting places with an unobscured view".[407] Osler says that just as Dante, when he reached a high terrace encircling the hill, sat down and said to his guide, "All men are delighted to look back", so he was delighted to look back over the past quarter of a century. He recalls how the members of the faculty, with zeal and enthusiasm and boundless energy, built the medical school at McGill into one of the finest on the continent. The progress had been swift, and any existing evils in the system were due to the neglect on the part of the teacher, student and examiner of the great fundamental principle laid down by Plato - that education is a lifelong process, in which the student can only make a beginning during his college course. Osler assures the students that the profession which they are entering offers to each one a happy, contented, and useful life, and he gives them sound advice on how to achieve success. He urges them to acquire early a relish of knowledge but not to become so absorbed that they exclude all outside interests. "Success in life depends as much upon the man as on the physician.[408] The single piece of advice which Osler offers with regard to the method of their work is to let each day's work absorb their entire energies and to take no thought for the morrow. He urges them to seek an avocation so that they may keep in touch with the world outside of their

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[407] Osler, "After Twenty-five Years", Aequanimitas, p. 199.
[408] Osler, "After Twenty-five Years", Aequanimitas, p. 212.

profession, and remarks that for the hard-working medical student an interest in literature is perhaps the best. Finally, every medical student should remember that his end is to learn how to recognize and treat disease.

"The Master-Word in Medicine" presents us with the key to success in every path of life, and the ideals which it inspires should be helpful not only to the practitioner of medicine, but to all of us. Osler tells us that with the secret of life all things are possible. The miracles of life are with the magic word. "To the youth it brings hope, to the middle-aged confidence, to the aged repose. True balm of hurt minds, in its presence the heart of the sorrowful is lightened and consoled. It is directly responsible for all advances in medicine during the past twenty-five centuries."[409] This master-word is Work, a small one but of the utmost importance to success. Osler advises the students to form good habits early. He urges them to appreciate clearly their aims and objectives--a knowledge of disease and its cure and a knowledge of themselves. The former will make them practitioners of medicine, while the latter, an inner education, may make them truly good men. Osler lays stress on a few of the more essential factors which make for success in life. These include the acquisition of a relish of knowledge, the cultivation of system, which enables one to take the greatest possible advantage of his capacities with the least possible

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[409]Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine", Aequanimitas, p. 373.

strain, and absorption in the duty of the day. Over and over again Osler emphasizes the importance of doing the day's work well without regard to the future, and he attributes his own success to the observation of this habit. He also urges practitioners of medicine to seek daily intercourse with some of the great minds of all ages so that they may keep their viewpoints broad and prevent a narrowing of the mind. In conclusion he advises them that a conscientious pursuit of Plato's ideal perfection may teach them the three great lessons of life; to consume their own smoke--to "learn to accept in silence the minor aggravations"[410] and to cultivate the gift of taciturnity and consume their own smoke with an extra draught of hard work; to realize that we are here not to get all we can out of life for ourselves, but to try to make the lives of others happier; and to understand that the law of the higher life is only fulfilled by love. Thus Osler once again seeks to inspire others with the ideals to which he has been true.

"The Student Life" was a farewell address to American and Canadian medical students. Osler introduces his subject by saying that Shakespeare might have made the student a fourth in his immortal group. "The lunatic with his fixed idea, the poet with his fine frenzy, the lover with his frantic idolatry, and the student aflame with the desire for knowledge are of

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[410] Osler, "The Master-Word in Medicine", Aequanimitas, p. 385.

'imagination all compact'."[411] The student often resembles the poet in that he is born and not made, for he possesses something of a divine spark.

> Like the Snark, he defies definition, but there are three unmistakable signs by which you may recognize the genuine article from a Boojum--an absorbing desire to know the truth, an unswerving steadfastness in its pursuit, and an open, honest heart, free from suspicion, guile, and jealousy.[412]

In the satisfied quest for truth, the fervent longing is the important thing, for the truth is the best you can get from your best efforts. We must realize our limitations, or only disappointment awaits us.

Steadfastness of purpose and humility enable the student to accept change. Thirdly, an honest heart will keep the student in touch with his fellows. It is also important for the student to realize that the education upon which he is engaged is a life course in which concentration is the price he pays for success. It is possible, however, for a student to become absorbed in a problem that he loses the sense of proportion in his work and even wastes a lifetime in researches which are valueless because not in touch with current knowledge. The best preventative to this is to become denationalized early, for the true student is a citizen of the world. Remember that almost everything has been renewed in the science and art of medicine but there has been no change in the essential features of the

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[411] Osler, "The Student Life", Aequanimitas, p. 415.
[412] Osler, "The Student Life", Aequanimitas, pp. 415-416.

life which is the contemplation and care of the medical practitioner. Osler advises a division of attention between books and men. The student of men should travel so that he may learn of the outside world and its ways. Osler gives a delightful picture of the two great types, "the student-lark who loves to see the sun rise, who comes to breakfast with a cheerful morning face, never so fit as at 6 a.m.", and the "student-owl with his saturnine morning face, thoroughly unhappy, cheated by the wretched breakfast bell of the two best hours of the day for sleep, no appetite, and permeated with an unspeakable hostility to his Vis-a-ius, whose morning garrulity and good humour are equally offensive".[413] After graduation much will depend on the attitude of mind which has been encouraged. To each one the practice of medicine will be very much as he himself makes it. In the student spirit each one can best fulfill the high mission of a noble calling - in humility, in confidence, and in pride.

In "Unity, Peace and Concord" Osler speaks of the notable period of reconstruction in which he has lived and proclaims his pride in having been associated with men who had been zealous in the promotion of great reforms. He points out that century after century the desire for unity, the wish for peace, and the longing for concord have been deeply rooted in the human heart, have "stirred the most powerful emotions of the race and

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[413] Osler, "The Student Life", Aequanimitas, p. 427.

have been responsible for some of its noblest actions".[414] He speaks of the unity of the medical profession, the most united of all world-wide professions. Osler asserts that one of the most urgent local needs is a reciprocity between state licensing boards. Another is the need of consolidation of many of the medical schools, and a third is the need for mutual concessions between physicians and homeapaths. The greatest enemies to peace are apathy, wilful and helpless ignorance, and vice in all forms. The enemies of concord are lack of friendly intercourse, uncharitableness, and the wagging tongues of others. Osler closes his address with the belief that he leaves in charity with all. To one and all he gives this single word as his parting commandment "Charity".

"L'Envoi", the final essay of the Aequanimitas volume, consists of remarks made at a farewell dinner given by the profession of the United States and Canada in May, 1905. Osler professes that happiness has come to him in many ways, for he has found what he sought in the estimation, fellowship, and friendship of members of his profession; he had found friendship everywhere, intimacy with general practitioners, happiness in his home life and in his relationship with colleagues and fellow workers, as well as with the students who have been the inspiration of his life and work. He has had two ambitions in the profession, to be a good clinical physician and to build up a

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[414]Osler, "Unity, Peace, and Concord", Aequanimitas, p. 449.

great clinic on Teutonic lines. He has also had three personal ideals. One was to do the day's work well and not to bother about tomorrow. The second has been to act the Golden Rule towards his professional brethren and towards his patients.

"And the third has been to cultivate such a measure of equanimity, as would enable me to bear success with humility, the affection of my friends without pride and to be ready when the day of sorrow and grief came to meet it with the courage befitting a man."[415]

Though some of the addresses in the Aequanimitas volume had a more topical interest in Osler's own day, the majority of them appeal to the imagination and emotions as well as to the intellect, and are inspirational in nature. They have an attraction not only for students of medicine but for those in every field of endeavour. The book is raised above the level of a mere manual of morals and conduct and becomes literature through the universality of its appeal to wide human interests and simple emotions, and by its fine prose style. The philosophy of life which is presented is one which the author has found useful in work and play. The essays are interwoven with the thoughts of great minds of all ages and the literary allusions astound one by their number and variety. The prose style reflects the personality of the author with his deep understanding of human nature and his love of the individual with all his follies and

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[415]Osler, "L'Envoi", Aequanimitas, p. 473.

foibles. The style is the man. We sense Osler's optimism, his deep love of humanity. His are not lifeless counsels of perfection, for as one reads the essays one feels that here was a man who was the very embodiment of the ideals with which he seeks to inspire us.

The fact that another edition of Aequanimitas has been brought out since Osler's death and that extracts from the volume continue to appear in anthologies from time to time, proves that the inspirational essays have never lost their appeal. It is likely that they will hold their attraction for generations to come.

Harvard college had been left a bequest of $5,000, the income of which was to be devoted to an annual lecture on "The Immortality of man". When first approached to deliver a lecture on such a subject, Osler refused, but finally in May, 1904 he consented to speak on "Science and Immortality". His predecessors in the lectureship had been a theologian, a philosopher, a philologist, a psychologist, and a historian. The president of the university was disappointed in Osler's address, for though he felt that it was a brilliant and charming essay, he had expected a scientific discourse on the subject of immortality. That such a discourse is impossible, Osler acknowledges in an early paragraph of his address. He adheres to the belief of Sir Thomas Browne that a dialogue between two infants in the womb concerning the state of this world might well illustrate our ignorance of the next. He refers to a study he has made of the last sensations

of the dying, a study which has led him to believe that death, like birth, is a sleeping and a forgetting. Osler's address is literary rather than scientific, and he uses as a framework for his thoughts a classification of mankind into the Laodiceans, to be influenced by it; the Gallionians who have nothing whatsoever to do with the supernatural; and the Teresians with whom this faith is the controlling influence. Osler believes that the only people who have ever obtained complete satisfaction on the subject of the immortality of the soul are the idealists, "Who walk by faith and not by sight",[416] and it is the Teresians who have kept alive the sentiment of immortality". Not always the wise men after the flesh (except among the Greeks), more often the lowly and obscure, women more often than men, these Teresians have ever formed the moral leaven of humanity.[417] Although they have no strong reason for their faith they compel our admiration by the fine lives they lead and the influence which they exert. By the example of their lives they help maintain among the Laodiceans a belief in immortality, for "not by lips, but by the life, are men influenced in their beliefs; and where reason calls in vain and arguments fall on deaf ears, the still small voice of a life lived in the full faith of another may charm like the lute of Orpheus and compel an unwilling assent by a strong, indefinable attraction, not to be explained in words, outside

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[416] Osler, Science and Immortality, (Boston, 1904) p. 35
[417] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 35.

the laws of philosophy".[418] Osler confesses that on the subject of immortality the only enduring enlightenment is through faith, for science is concerned with things that can be seen and proved. Yet to acknowledge the value of a belief in the life after death is an asset to the scientific student. Osler pictures human misery ebbing and flowing like a tide with many of the noblest of men clinging to a rock which represents a belief in the resurrection of the dead and the life to come. The student of science should accept the comfort of such a belief and acknowledge the service to humanity of the great men who have passed on with a sure hope of resurrection, though he has no proof nor any means of proving that there is another world. He advises the modern scientific man to become saturated with the Bible and Plato, with Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton, so that, seeing life through their eyes, he may be able "to strike a balance between the rational and the emotional, which is the most serious difficulty of the intellectual life".[419] Beset by doubts, each one of us must find his own solution to the situation. Once again Osler returns to the terminology of the sea to express his belief in a literary way. "Better that your spirits' bark be driven far from the shore - far from the trembling throng whose souls were never to the tempest given - than that you should tie it up to rot at some Lethaen wharf".[420]

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[418] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 37.
[419] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 42.
[420] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 43.

In some the great hope of humanity may be reduced to a vague sense of eternal continuity, in a few it will expand into the fervent faith of the Teresians, while in others it will resemble that "sabbatical interest of the Laodicians".[421] It is Osler's parting thought that some students will wander through all phases to come at last to the opinion of Cicero, "who had rather be mistaken with Plato than be in the right with those who deny altogether the life after death".[422] This he acknowledges to be his own confessio fidei.

This address is literary in both form and substance, and is of particular interest since it illustrates the beliefs of a great scientist whose daily life proved that he was also a thorough Christian.

Osler had always been fascinated by Tony Moore's poem, The Lake of the Dismal Swamp, and had always hoped to visit that lake. Dr. Futcher, who was resident physician at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore and Associate Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University, tells how on Easter Monday in the year 1900 he and Dr. Osler left by boat early for Portsmouth, Virginia, drove across country, and at the Albemarle Canal hired a motor launch which finally brought them to the only outlet of the lake.

> This is a deep ditch about fifteen to twenty feet wide and two or three miles long. The banks are eight to ten feet high and made up of a rich vegetable humus

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[421] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 43.
[422] Osler, Science and Immortality, p. 43.

> aeons old. Just before the lake is reached, there is a small lock which raised us up to the level of the water in the lake. Passing along this stream for a few hundred yards, we finally reached the lake, which has no visible banks, the waters of the lake seeming to merge with the trees of the swamp surrounding it. The weird cypress trees, with their numerous roots rising out of the water and merging to form the trunk several feet above the water's level, extending far out into the lake, produce the illusion that the lake has no shores.[423]

While Osler and his companion were eating lunch, Osler wrote a most delightful and imaginative account of the journey on the back of a copy of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, which he had brought with him. "In this he described how we passed between the roots of the cypress trees; how brilliant-hued moccasin snakes had dropped into our boat from the limbs of the trees as we passed under them; now we had met a man with a vertical eye; and also of the negroes who had not yet heard of Emancipation."[424] Although his friends urged Sir William to publish this very original work, he never did so. It may still be seen in the Osler Library at McGill University.

Of all the "lay works" of Sir William Osler, the one which has had the widest appeal is A Way of Life, an address to the students of Yale University on a Sunday evening exactly forty years ago. According to the will of the late Dr. Grant Stewart, a copy of this address is presented to every medical student at McGill. It has enjoyed an increasing popularity during the

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[423]Quoted in Cushing, I, 523-524.
[424]Quoted in Cushing, I, 524.

past few years and sections of it have appeared in several published works. In 1945 it was printed, abridged, in The Autobiography of Science, while a year later sections two and three were included in an Anthology of Canadian literature entitled A Pocketful of Canada. Along with poems by Isabella Valancy Crawford; Duncan Campbell Scott, Pauline Johnson, Robert Service, and prose by Stephen Leacock, to mention only a few. "A Way of Life" appeared in that section of the anthology entitled "The Patchwork Quilt". Although too universal in its thoughts it expresses to be counted truly Canadian in the narrower sense, it is a contribution to world thought and feeling by a Canadian. The reprinting of the same address in Joy of Living in 1948, abridged and with the title "Twenty-Four Hours to End Worry", and of extracts from it in A Treasury of Inspiration by R. L. Woods in 1951, give testimony to the success of its purpose. That purpose is to point to a way of life which Osler had advocated over and over again in his inspirational addresses such as "L'Envoi", "The Army Surgeon", "The Master-Word in Medicine", and "After Twenty-Five Years" - the practice of living for the day only, and for the day's work. "My message is but a word, a Way, an easy expression of the experience of a plain man whose life has never been worried by an philosophy higher than that of the shepherd in 'As You Like It'. I wish to point out a path in which the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err; not a system to be worked out painfully only to be discarded, not a formal

scheme, simply a habit as easy - or as hard! - to adopt as any other habit, good or bad".[425] Osler tells the students how, when he was attending the Montreal General Hospital, he was worried about his future - the final examination and what he should do afterwards, when he happened to open a volume of Carlyle at the page which included this sentence: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand". This made such an impression on his mind that it became the starting point of a habit that had helped him for the rest of his life, and could likewise be of great assistance to others. He reminds us that "the workers in Christ's vineyard were hired by the day", that "only for this day are we to ask for our daily bread, and we are expressly bidden to take no thought for the morrow".[426] Osler compares the student who suddenly finds peace by looking neither backward to the past nor forward to the future, to a patient suffering from double vision who finds relief from well-adjusted glasses. He aptly illustrates this ideal of life by another comparison. "I stood on the bridge of one of the great liners, ploughing the ocean at 25 knots. 'She is alive', said my companion, 'in every plate; a huge monster with brain and nerves, an immense stomach, a wonderful heart and lungs, and a splendid system of locomotion'. Just at that moment a signal sounded, and all over the ship the watertight

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[425] Osler, A Way of Life (London, 1913), pp. 8-9.
[426] Osler, A Way of Life, pp. 18-19.

compartments were closed. 'Our chief factor of safety', said the captain. 'In spite of the Titanic', I said. 'Yes', he replied, 'in spite of the Titanic'."[427] Osler emphasizes that each one of his listeners is a much more marvellous organization than a great liner and is bound on a longer voyage. He urges them to learn to control their machinery so as to live with "day-tight" compartments as the most certain way to ensure safety on the voyage. "Get on the bridge and see that at least the great bulkheads are in working order. Touch a button and hear, at every level of your life, the iron door shutting out the Past - the dead yesterdays. Touch another and shut off, with a metal curtain, the Future - the unborn tomorrows. Then you are safe - safe for today!"[428] Again, as in so many of his addresses, he urges the students to bury their grievances, disappointments, and mistakes each day. He quotes George Herbert on the wisdom of undressing one's soul at night, and refers to the wise men of Christian literature and of pagan mythology in support of his advice. To die daily, after the manner of St. Paul, ensures the resurrection of a new man, or make a pilgrimage to Hades with Ulysses. Osler advises the students once while at college to climb a mountain top and get a general outlook of the land and to conduct that inquisition which Descartes urges every man to hold once in a lifetime. He points out that a man who is worried

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[427]Osler, A Way of Life, pp. 21-22.
[428]Osler, A Way of Life, p. 23

about the future is plagued by waste of energy, mental distress and nervous worries. He adds, however, that the habit of living for the day only is one which takes time to acquire and the way to acquire it must be worked out by each one for himself. He can only give general directions and encouragement, hoping that while they are young they may have the courage to persist. Osler asks them to realize the wonderful possibilities awaiting them in the world and to make the ideals of Plato and Socrates their own - to cultivate the fair mind in the fair body. He feels that the end of education is to control the mind by building up good habits of living. From the habit of dedicating a number of hours each day to routine, order, and system, we gradually gain control over our nerve centers and can do more and more. Steady work of this sort gives a man a sane outlook on the world and there is "no corrective so valuable to the weariness, the fever and the fret that are so apt to wring the heart of the young".[429] Osler agrees with George Herbert that work is the famous stone which turns all to gold. In his address he has presented a philosophy of life which he has found helpful in his work and useful in his play. Finally, he reminds them that Christ's message to Nicodemus is His message to the world: "Ye must be born of the spirit". He urges the students to learn to know the "great souls that make up the moral radium of the world",[430] to know their Bible, for, like the Renaissance

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[429] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 54.
[430] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 56.

humanists, he believed that good literature has to do with life and conduct, gives training in virtue, and teaches men how to live an active Christian life. He himself knew the Bible more thoroughly than most men. Osler advises his listeners that a knowledge of the great men of the past will give faith in our own day, for "certain great ideas flow fresh through the ages".[431] He points out that generations of strong men have blazed the path of life. "You must enter into their labours and make their ideals your inspiration, for whether controlled by emotion or reason you will need the leaven of their spirit."[432] A quiet life lived in day-tight compartments helps us to bear our own and others' burdens with a light heart.

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[431] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 59
[432] Osler, A Way of Life, p. 61

That Osler was a humanist in the broader sense of the term, as a lover of human kind, there is no doubt. His every word and deed proclaimed the fact. He acknowledged that his best friends were the old Humanists and that his breviary was Plutarch "or rather Plutarch gallicized by Montaigne", and he was an avid collector of books, an eager student of biography and bibiliography. Yet these studies were at best an avocation, and he was primarily a great physician. Osler felt that the ancient breach between science and the humanities should be healed, and that the word "humanism" should embrace all the knowledge of the ancient classical world--what man knew of nature as well as what he knew of himself. There is no doubt that he was infected with the "spirit of the humanities",[433] and that his invincible optimism, his emphasis on the potential greatness of the individual, his joyous delight in the life of the present, his reverence for the past, his desire to see the talents of every individual properly employed, his lack of narrow prejudice, and his broad charity to all, were the result. His writings are the reflection of his philosophy of life and are a contribution to the thought and feeling of the world, as well as a worthy addition to Canadian literature. Those of his lay works which have had and will continue to have the most enduring influence are those which appeal to our emotions and imagination and thus

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[433] Osler, The Old Humanities and the New Science, (Boston, 1920), pp. 33-34.

have universal appeal. Osler possessed a great love for and understanding of human kind, and in his lifetime had great power as an inspirer or animator. This quality is apparent in his inspirational essays of Aequanimitas and in the address entitled A Way of Life. These addresses will undoubtedly have the most lasting influence. Osler himself said, "the love, hope, fear and faith that make humanity and the elemental passions of the human heart remain unchanged, and the secret of inspiration in any literature is the capacity to touch the cord that vibrates in a sympathy that knows not time nor place."[434] Sir William Osler possessed that capacity.

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[434]Osler, A Way of Life, pp. 59-60.

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NOTE:

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