Chapter I - Parentage & Childhood 1849-1864.

Illustrations
Featherstone Osler
Ellen Pearson

Contents of Volume One

cf. Osler's life for examples

Part I

The Canadian Period 1849–1884

~~1849–1884~~

Jan 1914

[illegible] somewhat [illegible] last

UNITED STATES ARMY,

BASE HOSPITAL Nº 5.

Then there was the Bodleian which he was seeking to know thoroughly for twenty or thirty years when in 6 & found that Bodley's staff – ~~the librarian or fellows~~ from chief to chore-boy – was not averse to his stimulating and enlivening visit. The former librarian Nicholson who had kept on the floor at 73 Marlborough Gardens (or 7?) on learning of that the Turbott Wolfe picture had been secured here during his latest years/ suffered from arythmomania, as the little Staff-Kalendar published each year evidences, to such an extent that he was quite unfallible for his latest and the first was that died on March 17 1912.# He

Final notes

many letters on personal relativity to Nicholson's fecundity and of his female relations when often cares for him. ~~after~~ ~~This volume later bequeathed to Bodley's~~ ~~and he wrote after fly leaf under special dispositions~~ having written on the fly leaf "This book for to Bodley but does not wish anyone to print the Nicholson note at the end during his (20th) century 5 XI 18"

In consequence has great his bracelet for the Bodleian and other under special dispositions of it

had been succeeded

The Life of Sir William Osler

By Harvey Cushing

Vol I

Thus there are two books from whence I collect my divinity; besides those written one of God, another of his servant nature, that universal and public manuscript, that lies expanded unto the eyes of all: those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other.

Religio Medici.

Oxford

"We have had an extraordinary winter – the almond trees have been in bloom for a week. Dear

"We are happy & peaceful here with the house cleared out" he writes – early in January: ~~Dear~~ struggling with my Clarendon Lectures which drive my industry – by my 10 hours the Evolution of Scientific Medicine" Are these words taken "Dearer for giving finishing those lectures today. Have heard from Harvard about the Clarendon Press lectures. [Horace] Hand is doing fine studies for me". Evidently he have taken on other things besides the Yale series, yet on January 26th he writes to the Yale Managing Committee "I should have everything ready for you after the lectures and was should be able to have the house out by October". It was an anticipation unrealized as will be seen.

~~for a month~~ ~~course.~~ ~~It was in for a month of many ties & interests~~ many contacts and interests – should have interruptions even with the house cleared out.

It was inevitable that a man with so

On this visit he talks – Mr. S. Shepherd of Worcester

Home walks.

Smoking the way.

Chap. VII 1876–1877 The Somerville Lectures. Pres. of Microscopical Club. Pathologist to the Montreal General. Canadian fresh water Polyzoa. Veterinary interests. Registrar of School. Dr. Buller's household. The Drawing Club. Pathological Report No 1

Chap VIII 1878–~~1879~~ 1880 ~~Chap~~ Appointment to the Montreal General. "Abroad with George Ross." ~~Osler's reminiscences~~. The new physiological laboratory. Medico chirurgical Society meetings. ~~Buller's household at St Catherine's Street~~. Alexis St Martin. Pathological Report No II. Egerton G. Davis introduced. Death of Johnson & Burke.

Chap IX 1881–1883 Fresh water polyzoa again. International Medical Congress in London. Fifth Macphersonian Lecture. McGill semi centennial. Studies in Cochinino's Trichinosis. Under for the Medical News. Honorary F.R.C.P. Studies in Endocarditis.

Chap X 1884 Berlin & Leipzig. The Call to Philadelphia. Horatio Wood and Weir Mitchell. His reasons for acceptance.

~~Chap XI 1884–1885~~ Part II The United States 1884–1905

Chap XI 1884–1885 Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Early impressions. Friendship with William Pepper. Egerton G. Davis again. Educational work. The Biological Club & Joseph Leidy. The Goulstonian Lectures. Blockley Hospital. The International Medical Congress. Symptoms.

Chap XII 1886–1889 Visiting Physician at Blockley. Walt Whitman. Cartright Lectures. Founding of College of Physicians. Studies on Malaria. Centennial of College of Physicians. Pneumonia & Typhoid. "Note & Comment" Physician to Orthopaedic Hospital. Central Dispensary for Children. Call to Baltimore. Death of Dr. Hammond and Dr. Gross. Ex-examinations.

Chap XIII 1889–1890 Baltimore. Opening of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. Intimacy of the early staff. 204 West Monument Street. Establishing societies & journals. A visit to German clinics. Contributions to Pepper's System.

Chap XIV 1891–1892 Writing the Text Book. The Medical Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland. The Medical Library Association. Addresses & papers. Engagement announced. Marriage. No 1 West Rowland Street. "Teacher & Student." Historical Club. Mrs Gerrett left to the Medical School.

At the opening of the winter session at St George's Hospital in October 1st Olen gave an introductory address on "Examinations, examiners and Examinees". It was a vigorous appeal for reform — he is sorry, by some accounts, good of the sense of leniency ~~Other's own leniency~~ as an Examiner. Illustrations of this have already been given. Some of his leniency to England he has been asked to examine in Cambridge — but only that once. For he was far too lenient — and gave all the more pass marks where only about 50 percent were conscientiously let through! It might be called to mind the of those examiners who always stayed at 13 Nevbury Square during the June and December examinations which were invariably held after they had reached the Cotswolds, never 12 miles on the basis "There just one thing to remember — be lenient —!" His readers today that his attitude arose strongly appealed from their experience in the old System of examination which kept men during their best years continually worried — lests — or suspected they had long kept behind. Of the examiner, who had his chief opportunity he said in this address:

UNITED STATES ARMY,

BASE HOSPITAL No 5.

~~Were we probably much to blame for such a System~~

Certainly something was wrong with a System of accumulated examinations which — in the case of one of them at least — ~~the candidates~~ could reject by percent of the candidates.

When proving figures

Last page

being.

Chap. XV 1893–1894 Opening of Medical School. Hopkins Hospital. Baltimore in the 90s. Shattuck lecture. Opening of Medical School. Diagnosis of Abdominal Tumors. 'The Living Organism' 'The Leaven of Science' Antiviscection Bills. England. Life at West Sunderlandt.

Chap. XVI 1895–1896 "Teaching & Students" 'Trans Davis' etc. The Assoc. Medical at Baltimore. First Revision of Text Book. The Hopkins faculties. Osler the consultant. 'Ephemerides'. Revised texts. Newbolding for the Faculty. Clinical teaching. Attendance at medical meetings.

Chap XVII 1897–1898 Sinacen Syndrome of Harvey (Maryland) Conference of Health Officer. 'Functions of a State Faculty'. 'Disease & Patient'. Origin of the Rockefeller Institute. Bronchial allergies. Second revision of Text Book. Centenary of Maryland Faculty. Sherwin lecture. Fellow of Royal Society. Dean of Medical School. Degrees at Edinburgh & Aberdeen. Pepper death. Bronchopneumonia.

Chap XVIII 1899 Hopkins fifteen years jubilee. Fundoni visit. Cavendish lecture. Summer at Sevenoaks. 'After Twenty Five Years'. 'Elisha Bartlett'. Beginning of the Second Service Movement.

Chap. XIX 1900 The Smith Opened Wards. The Edinburgh Call. Antivivisection testimony. Summer in Europe. Sir Thomas Barlow dead. Founding the Science Club. Third Hopkins faculties. 'The Internation of Post Graduate Study'

Chapter XX 1901 Third revision of text book. 'Books & Men' address. Death of B.B. Osler. Mr. Johnson's resignation. Welch Reed & Fellows fund. Osler's clinic. ~~The dead~~ Visit to the Dublin clinics. Yale bicentennial.

Chap. XXI 1902 The Tuberculosis Commission. A Hopkins anniversary. Fourth revision of text book. Medical Societies. Pointe à Pie. 'Chaucer as a Medicine'. The Beaumont address. Osler-Vaughan discussion. Osler's death. Marsall Lecture in London.

Chap. XXII Revised Edinburgh Lect. New Haven address. Dictionary of Medical Biography presented. Mr. Henry Phipps first open tuberculosis clinic. Summer in Guernsey. 'The Medical Mind in Medicine'. The tuberculosis exhibition.

1904 Chapter XXIII The Baltimore fire. Panama Canal. Marsall Lecture on Science & Immortality. Harvard LL.D. System of Medicine projected. Oxford & Association of Royal Professors. Shakspeare Nurse Club.

Chapter XXIV 1905 Opening of Phipps Dispensary. The Yale Paul address at Letter valedictory. Fifth revision of text book. ~~Lecture~~ Summer home in Newfoundland.

Copies Aug 6 – 13

Aug 11th 13 Strattons Garden Party – Royal Botanic Gardens Regents Park – in the 9 30 to feel c. Stroll c Proceeds c they got the up. tunnel the lake & rills of, a very warm

PART ONE
THE CANADIAN PERIOD
-:-

Chapter I.
Bondhead and Dundas.
~~PARENTAGE AND BOYHOOD~~
1849 - 1864

~~A. Williams Osler, the youngest son in a large family of children was born on the 12th July, 1849 in a parsonage at Bond Head, Tecumseth County, Upper Canada, near the edge of the wilderness. How this came about a long and circumstantial story.~~

¶ One of the old Canadian trails used by voyageurs, missionary ~~explorer, fur-trader~~ and Indian led from 'Muddy York' (Toronto) on Lake Ontario to a landing on the south-eastern end of Georgian Bay bearing the name of Penetanguishene. This was a matter of some seventy miles as the crow flies, but by stream and portage - up the Humber, the long carry across the low ridges, down the Holland, across Lac aux Claies (Simcoe) and finally by the Severn River to 'Penetang'* - it

*~~This~~ According to Parkman it, was the route to Lake Huron and Michilimackinac followed in 1680 by La Salle in his expedition to relieve Henri de Tonty whom he had left the year before at Fort Crèvecoeur on the Illinois. ~~Parkman's La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West~~.

must have been so devious as to make the longer way round, by Niagara and Detroit to Lake Huron and the Sault, seem the shortest way across this upper-river portion of the original Province of Quebec.

~~Natural~~ Geographical obstacles, however, ~~are most~~ can be energetically attacked when a military objective is in view: ~~Hence~~ and so, when Upper Canada was partitioned off from the Old Province in 1791 and General John G. Simcoe, who had commanded a Loyalist corps during the Revolutionary War under Cornwallis, came to be its first Governor, with the aid of

his soldiers, the 'Queen's Rangers,' he built a strategic road, or, more properly speaking, broke trail through forest and swamp for such a road, in direct line,* the thirty-eight miles from York to Holland Landing near the southern

* "Lieut.-Gov. Simcoe's route on foot and in canoes to explore a way which might afford communication for the Fur-traders to the Great Portage, without passing Detroit in case that place were given up to the United States. The march was attended with some difficulties, but was quite satisfactory; an excellent harbour at Penetanguishene; returned to York, 1793." (Note on contemporary map.)

arm of what came to be called Lake Simcoe. This road is now the celebrated Yonge Street, said to be the longest 'street' in the world, though for many years after it was ~~cut through~~ projected it scarcely deserved even the name of trail.*

*"Monday, Dec. 28, 1795. A party began to cut a road from hence (York) to the Pine Fort (at Holland River) near Lake Simcoe. Mr. Jones the Surveyor says the Indians killed over 500 deer in a month."

Mrs. Simcoe's diary.

During ~~this~~ war of 1812, ~~1815~~ on land purchased from the Indians, a rough forest road ~~was~~ had been cut through from Kempenfeldt to Penetanguishene. ~~Lake~~ Simcoe ~~being~~ remained the connecting link between the two highways, ~~and it was not~~ until 1827 ~~that~~ when 'Yonge Street' and this northern segment were connected by a track through the wilderness to the west of the Lake ~~to~~ with its northern terminus at Barrie on Kemperfeldt Bay.

It was along this narrow trail behind nine yoke of oxen, with the naval base at Penetang as his destination, that Pierre le Pelletier (Peter Pilky) of Scarboro Township, one-time baker to the garrison at York dragged ~~the~~ a two-ton anchor as far as Holland Landing where it was abandoned in the bush when the belated news ~~came~~ that the war (of 1812-1815) was ended finally reached him.

~~It was~~ Along the same trail ~~a few years later that~~ at the close of the war Lord Selkirk's ~~last~~ last expedition, representing the Hudson Bay Company interests, passed on their way to the Georgian Bay, the Sault and Fort William (the 'North-West Company's' stronghold) and finally the next year (1817) pushed on to the Red River Settlement.

But Governor Simcoe wisely devoted himself to other things ~~besides~~ than the mere military defense of his province. A thorough surveyal and the promise of 100-acre grants to settlers greatly encouraged immigration, particularly on the part of the United Empire Loyalists who had flocked into all parts of Canada after the revolt of the Colonies. Concessions were also made in course of time for the British half-pay officers and pensioners, veterans of the Colonial and Napoleonic wars, so that the fertile province began to be settled by a loyal stock, people in many instances of birth and education. They adapted themselves to the life of frontier farmers whose chief enemy was the forest and whose main outlet for their simple produce was along Yonge Street, the straight road to Toronto, the growing capitol of the Province.

These early settlers and concessionaires, ~~were most~~ being law-abiding and God-fearing people, ~~who desired a~~ felt the want of ~~were in need~~ ministers of the Gospel and ~~an~~ accessible places of worship, ~~in their midst~~, and as many of them ~~belonged to~~ were members of the Anglican Church, ~~there were~~ urgent calls, as time went on, were forwarded through the colonial bishops, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* for young clergymen who were

2

*~~This~~, The original ~~New England Company~~ Society, founded in 1649 with the Hon. Robert Boyle as its first ~~president~~ governor, had as its avowed object, until the separation of the Colonies, "the propogation of the Gospel in New England and the adjoining parts of America".

unafraid of the rigours of frontier and wilderness.

There was need of one of these to cover the townships of Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury, half way between Toronto and 'Penetang', and thus it came about that in the early summer of 1837 Featherstone Lake Osler and his young bride Ellen Free Pickton with all their earthly goods, including a tin box of home-made Cornish gingerbread, found their way north ~~for the thirty-eight miles~~ along Yonge Street as far as Holland Landing, and thence the following day, as will be told, to a hamlet or cross-roads subsequently ~~called~~ known as Bond Head.*

For note

*From the celebrated Sir Francis Bond Head, then Lieutenant Governor, ~~It was~~ he who quelled the insurrection of 1837. Yonge Street was named for Sir George Yonge, Secretary of War in 1791. Bond Head

~~This~~ lay a few miles ~~to the west~~ off the direct overland route to 'Penetang' representing ~~an~~ the extension of Yonge Street ~~circumventing~~ to the west of Lake Simcoe, ~~which was projected in 1825~~ across the great swamp and through the wilderness of Innisfil.

This young couple who hailed from Cornwall were representatives of very different ethnic types, Anglo-Saxon and Celt. The clergyman, whose readiness for a service spiced with adventure may have resulted from several years of apprenticeship in the Royal Navy, was ~~possibly more Anglo-Saxon than Celt,~~ reserved in temperament, de-

void of a sense of humour, stocky, fair, grey-eyed and broad-headed. His wife, a native of London, adopted by an uncle in Falmouth, though ~~was~~ blessed like her husband with a good mind in a sound body, was ~~She~~, however, ~~was small,~~ of short and slender build, and of so dark a complexion that in ~~the~~ later years ~~in Canada~~ many who did not know her ancestry assumed that Indian blood flowed in her veins. But these small, olive complexioned, ~~dark~~, vivacious English people, sometimes called 'black Celts' are thought to be reminders of the original Briton driven by successive invasions into the inaccessible parts of Argyleshire, of mountainous Wales, of Western Ireland, and of Cornwall and Brittany*, the regions of Gaelic speech and crosses.

*Curiously enough, there is a large trace of them also in the fen district north of London. ~~Cf.~~ According to W. Z. Ripley's "~~The~~ Races of Europe" 1899, ~~Europe." 1899.~~

¶ Another tradition, as old as Tacitus, ascribes this brunette type to an Iberian infusion, and it is not inconceivable that the~~se~~ Mediterranean folk who for centuries came for trade if not for conquest, mayhap left behind them, in exchange for Cornish tin, darker skins and lively dispositions quite foreign at least to anything donated to the British character by Angles or Saxons. However this may be, known to her schoolmates as 'Little Pick', "old friends in Falmouth

spoke of Ellen Pickton as "a very pretty girl, clever, witty and lively, with a power of quick repartee, wilful but good-tempered, not easily influenced, very faithful in her friendships, and of strong religious principle."

The Oslers had lived for long in Cornwall, a race of successful merchants and ship-owners for the most part, and the family was strong in traditions of the sea. In a fragment of autobiography left by Featherstone Osler, he says, "My grandfather Osler died in the West Indies from the effects of a wound. One uncle was killed in action with a French privateer. Another was drowned in Swan Pool near Falmouth, and a cousin a lieutenant in the Royal Navy died of yellow fever in the West Indies."

The 'Grandfather Osler' whom Featherstone mentions, was Edward, who had married Joan Drew, the sister of Samuel the Cornish metaphysician, and it is not unlikely that from this source there came into the Osler line a strain which modified the strongly developed family trait which went to the making of hard-headed men of business and venturesome merchants. This Edward and Joan left six children, only two of whom had issue, Edward the father of Featherstone, progenitor of the Canadian branch of the family, and Benjamin whose descendants are now scattered in the United States, South Africa and Australia.*

*The writer has met a member of the Australian branch, whose likeness to Sir William Osler in figure, stature, gesture, feature and shape of head was so striking that he might have passed as a younger brother, though as a matter of fact their common ancestors were this gentleman's great-great-grandfather and grandmother - Edward Osler and Joan Drew. Hence, though Sir William ~~Osler's~~ resemblance to his mother was striking, it is evident that his physical type cannot be laid entirely at her door in view of the close resemblance between such distant cousins.

This second Edward became a Falmouth merchant and in 1795 married Mary Paddy who lived to be ninety-nine and was herself the daughter of a ship owner. Of their nine children there were three particularly notable sons, all of whom showed outstanding ability coupled with strongly developed religious tendencies. Edward, the eldest son, of dark complexion and short stature, after a period at Guy's Hospital became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, a surgeon in the navy, a Fellow of the Linnæan Society, a writer of poems, psalms and hymns, and a newspaper editor who,despite all this, practised medicine long years in Truro, Cornwall. If one may judge from the titles of his three best-known publications*, his heart wavered between the navy, the church

*"The Life of Admiral Viscount Exmouth"; "Church and King"; "Burrowing and Boring Marine Animals", etc. Cf. Dic. Nat. Biography.

and natural history: and in him as physician, naturalist and author may be recognized many marks of resemblance, mental and physical, to those possessed by the nephew with whose traits this memoir is primarily concerned. ¶ Featherstone

Lake, the third son, has just been left with his bride in Upper Canada, where five years later he is to be joined by his younger brother Henry Bath, Edward's fifth son. For he, also, became a missionary clergyman who, after a residence of thirty-two years in Lloydtown not far from Bond Head was transferred to York Mills on Yonge Street north of Toronto. There he continued as rector for another twenty-eight years until his death in 1902 in his eighty-eighth year.* Thus

[*He was made Canon of St. Alban's, Toronto; and Rural Dean of York.

for ~~It~~ the most part an enviable longevity has characterized the Osler family. ~~The Olser family, as will be seen, has a superb tradition of enviable longevity.~~

Probably all Falmouth boys brought up within the sight and smell of the sea come to feel its lure, and so it was with Featherstone Osler, a reckless and daring boy, who when very young had been sent inland to boarding-school lest he should be drowned. But the appeal was irresistible, and in his teens he was at sea on a schooner, the "Sappho", bound for the Mediterranean. A dreadful voyage it was, with storms, a near shipwreck and starvation, adrift for weeks on the ocean. Undaunted by this experience he later joined the Royal Navy and went to sea as a cadet. This time his brig-of-war was wrecked in earnest near the Barbadoes, and there followed yellow fever and a pest ship

on the way home to face a court-martial, as is the custom when a ship-of-war is lost, from whatever cause. Then to sea again as sub-lieutenant on a 'crack' frigate, the "Tribune", and four full years of cruising in remote seas ensued, with much of interest and excitement that might be quoted from the journals which, sailor-fashion, he kept during this period. At the end of this long absence when word came ~~hearing~~ that his father was in poor health and wished ~~hoping~~ to see him before he died~~; so~~, he threw up his prospects in the navy despite a tempting offer from the Admiralty to remain in service, and in 1832 left his ship at Rio and returned to Falmouth.

All this may appear irrelevant to the subject of this memoir, but if the native as well as the acquired characteristics of William Osler are to be understood, his forebears must be introduced. And this man, his father, is found, ~~capable of success in many fields, and, what is more,~~ most adaptable to transplantation, a person capable of influencing his environment more than his environment influenced him. Shelved from the navy by his decision, and having often entertained the thought of taking Holy Orders, after some preliminary studying of Latin and Greek he entered St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge, in October 1833, and was elected Mathematical Scholar of the college at the first examination.

Here, as he says, he 'read very hard and looked forward to the prospect of obtaining a high degree and settling down in England in a quiet parish' - with Ellen Pickton as his wife, it may be added, for they had become engaged not long after his return. But this was not to be: it was made clear that his duty lay elsewhere and he could not refuse the ~~appeal~~ call:

> "At the end of my last College Long Vacation, one Sunday morning, I received a letter to this effect: 'You have been abroad a great deal, and therefore it would not be so much for you to go abroad as for many others. There is a great scarcity of clergy in Canada. . . .' I felt I could not refuse the appeal, though it was very hard to leave home again, but duty had evidently called me and I could not refuse. After much opposition, especially from the friends of my intended wife who pleaded, 'Why should you go to Canada when you can do so well at home?' (to go to Canada was considered then absolute banishment), my duty seemed plain, and I consented to go as missionary of the Upper Canada Clergy Society, for five years."

And so to Upper Canada he went, and to quote from his own account of the journey - an account not unlike that his son William might have written years later of some of his own abrupt migrations -

"It was desired that I should go to Canada early in the spring. Before doing so I had to pass the University Examinations, take my degree, pass the examinations for Holy Orders, be ordained, get married, and make all necessary preparations for leaving England. This I was enabled to do by the University allowing me to pass my examinations a term before the usual time, though by so doing my name would not appear on the Honour List. The Bishop of London also kindly admitted me to examination two months before the ordinary time, and gave me letters dismissory to the Archbishop of Canterbury by whom I was ordained in Lambeth Palace Chapel early in March 1837.

"I had been married early in the previous month, and made arrangements to sail in the barque Bragila some time during April, Henry Scadding (then a Divinity student) to be our fellow-passenger. On April 6, 1837, we sailed from Falmouth for Quebec, and after a tedious passage of seven weeks and a half, having narrowly escaped shipwreck on Egg Island, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, landed in Quebec, and were warmly received by Bishop Mountain. * * *

"After a stay of eight days in Quebec we proceeded on our journey towards Toronto, and, that we might not lose sight of our luggage, took the route from Montreal and via the Rideau Canal to Kingston, thence by steamer to Toronto. Here we were cordially welcomed by the Archdeacon who ~~and the Rev. H. O'Neil, travelling missionary. On asking the Archdeacon~~ as to our future residence, ~~he~~ informed us that ~~Mr.~~ the Rev. H. O'Neil had made all necessary arrangements. We remained four days in Toronto, then resuming our journey northward, ~~accompanied by the Rev. H. O'Neil,~~ reached Holland Landing late that same evening, slept there, and the afternoon of the following day arrived at Tecumseth in safety, after driving over roads such as we had never seen before. So bad were they

that the driver, with a pair of strong horses, after driving us ten miles to what was then called the Corners (afterwards Bond Head) positively refused to take us the remaining two or three miles, declaring it would kill his horses to do so. Here, after procuring refreshments we got fresh horses and drove to the residence of a farmer named Mairs, where Mr. O'Neil had secured for us the only accommodation to be had in the parish. It consisted of a tiny sitting-room and an apology for a bedroom. Our entire luggage had to be stored in a barn. Poor as was our accommodation, we were thankful to have reached our journey's end."

It may be noted in passing, that the next day some of their possessions were set out on a plank to dry in the sun - among them the carefully cherished ginger-cakes which had become soft on the voyage. ~~The~~ Farmer Mairs, alas, had a dog named Brandy, who was less particular, and the cookies vanished.

~~In~~ For the first few months, indeed for the first few years, these young people endured a life of actual hardship. The nearest post office was at Holland Landing twelve miles away; the nearest doctor fifteen miles away at Newmarket; the nearest blacksmith six miles away, and the roads permitting access to them were much of the time wellnigh impassable. The two townships were sparsely settled, and it was a most difficult matter for the young cleargyman to carry out what he regarded as the duties of his pastorate. ~~[illegible]~~

The white settlers in Simcoe County at this time were of many sorts, though the Indians possibly still outnumbered them.* ~~There were doubtless French~~

*These were mostly Chippewas (Objibways), The Hurons whom Champlain found in this country the century before had been exterminated. The counties adjacent to York and Simcoe contained many Iroquois, particularly Mohawks from New York, who ~~under their~~ chief, Joseph Brant, and (Sir William Johnson) (under the influence of) had sided with the British on the revolt of the Colonies.

~~Canadians, though in comparatively small number~~. Among the U. E. Loyalists there was a body of Quaker settlers from Pennsylvania who had taken up grants on the northern slopes of the Ridges, and around Holland Landing was a smattering of Lord Selkirk's colonists, mostly Sutherlandshire Highlanders, who in canoes had despairingly made their way back from the Red River country when lawlessness reigned during the struggle between the Great Companies for supremacy in the fur trade.* ~~But~~ There were too a few French Canadians but, perhaps the majority of the more recent colonists,

*Many years later Sir William Osler purchased and sent to the library at Winnipeg some of Lord Selkirk's journals, which he had ~~been offered for~~ purchased up in a sale in London.

from 1830 on, were Irish with a predominance of ardent Orangemen from Ulster ~~of whom we shall hear~~ who will be heard from again.

- ~~In~~ But in a new country a ~~clergyman is welcome~~ minister ~~clergyman~~, whatever his denomination, is welcome, and in the County of Simcoe where many of the settlers had not seen a Protestant clergyman

1837

for years, their children ~~being~~ remaining unbaptized and uninstructed, ~~Hence~~, whenever Featherstone Osler ~~the new minister~~ appeared, all within reach for miles around, ~~who could do so~~ attended service ~~worship, though like~~ more the less eagerly, that ~~the place of worship must be~~ that the setting ~~for the setting~~ in some ~~one~~ farmer's unchinked ~~enough the services were held in a~~ log barn. A better place of worship was an outstanding need and ~~As churches had to be built~~, he set to work with his accustomed energy to erect a church ~~meet these needs~~, before considering what would seem to be still more essential, a dwelling ~~parsonage~~ for himself.

But the people were poor, money was scarce, and building materials impossible to get, for as there were no saw-mills near, dry lumber was not to be had, and, what is more, as may be remembered 1837 was the year of the disorder associated with the abortive rebellion engineered by William L. MacKenzie the first Mayor of Toronto. Nevertheless, somehow a church for each township was finally got under cover, and as they were only seven miles apart the young clergyman could manage a Sunday sermon in each place, as well as an afternoon service in a stable at Bond Head which lay half-way between. ~~them.~~ ¶ But ~~their~~ their own living conditions were nearly intolerable, even for two stout-hearted young people, and Ellen Osler years later as a grandmother would tell how her husband was 'away from Tuesday till Friday each week as a general thing, riding on horseback through the woods and swamps, over trails and corduroy roads, the bridges over the wetter parts of the swamps, where there was no footing, being made of

Oct.
1837

floating logs fastened together. ~~At one place~~ this log bridge or floating road ~~was~~ at one place being two miles long. ~~Mr. Osler always dismounted and led his horse over, for the footing was~~ and very insecure ~~and~~ it was for the logs dipped and shifted." ~~Once a wolf ran past and snapped at him.' On Friday afternoon in the dusk Mrs. Osler would kneel on a box in the window, her face pressed against the pane, watching for his return, 'and you may think how glad I was to see the first glimpse of his horse among the trees.'~~

¶ The clergyman himself has left a vivid account of these days, not only in a but in a fragmentary autobiographical sketch ~~but in the~~ journal he kept as an aid in preparing his regular reports for his superiors,* which stated ~~From his journal:~~

Steel

Foot-note.

*These journals have been privately printed by his sons - "Records of the Life of Ellen Free Pickton and Featherstone Lake Osler". The Oxford University Press, 1919, 4°, pp. 257.

"Tuesday morning early (Oct. 17, 1837). - Left for Innisfil, having engaged to preach there at half-past ten in the forenoon. Held service there and then started with a guide for Barrie. The road was most wretched, and seven miles of it through the thick forest. Reached Barrie at dark. It is situated at the head of Lake Simcoe, a beautiful situation.

Fall
1837

"Preached on Wednesday morning in the school-house to a small congregation. The key of the church was nowhere to be found. Baptized two children. Met at Barrie Captain Moberley from Penetanguishene, who spoke highly of the place and how anxious they were for a clergyman.

"Wednesday afternoon.- Left Barrie. It was raining heavily, but I was anxious to get home, nor did I wish to remain where I was charged heavily for myself and guide with our horses. After a wearisome journey through the woods and being often bogged and nearly losing my horse, reached Innisfil by dark. Much against my inclination, was obliged to remain there for the night, my horse being wearied, and, under any circumstances, it being highly dangerous to cross the swamp after dark. I went to bed but not to rest, for the vermin were so abundant that after a little while I was blistered all over by their bites, and there was not a bit of candle in the house. I endured the torment until half-past three in the morning, when I got up and dressed myself. The people of the house kindly prepared me some breakfast, after which I gladly departed. At break of day I crossed the swamp. A pack of wolves were howling not far from the road, but they did not make their appearance. A little after eight in the morning I reached home, feeling sick and tired, and not at all inclined to be satisfied with my Barrie excursion."

A note for the Wednesday following states,"Commenced our Canadian winter," and the experience of the winter and spring may be told briefly in the words of his biographical sketch.

1849 - 1864

Which States?

Winter ~~1837~~-8

"At the expiration of our three months we found we had to leave our quarters, and where to go we knew not. At length a hut was found, in which cattle had been kept. Several women of the parish met together and cleaned it as far as it was possible, and into this we moved for the winter, our clothing, trunks, &c., having to be kept in a barn three-quarters of a mile off. The hut was surrounded by dead trees, and, with the exception of wolves, no living creatures were within a third of a mile from us. Part of the winter my good wife spent at Newmarket, where our first son, Featherston, was born, during which time I lived alone, chinking up the holes in the hut with snow and cooking my own food. It was so lonely that no servant would live there.

"When the spring opened even this poor accommodation had to be given up, a farmer needing it for his cattle. After much search a log house about twelve feet square with loose boards as flooring was found at West Gwillimbury. A stable three-quarters of a mile from it was secured, and all our luggage, beyond absolute necessaries, was stored in a barn three miles distant. The utter discomfort to which we were subjected began to affect our health. The hut in which we were living was on the roadside, far from every house, and we had to depend upon the parishioners to bring us wood for fuel. This they would occasionally forget to do, and we had at times to go to bed in the day to keep ourselves warm."

1849 - 1864

~~Spring~~
~~1838~~

~~BOND HEAD: TECUMSETH COUNTY.~~

~~It is tempting to quote more regarding the frontier life and early hardships of this young missionary couple, for the material is abundant and of unusual interest.~~ The next spring an acre of ground was given and money subscribed for a parsonage, 'a cottage 30 x 40, the people engaging to erect a stable.' Here on the crest of a low hill by the roadside, a long mile to the north of Bond Head Corners, they finally took up their permanent residence, and ere long Trinity Church was built near by on the lower slope of the hill. So they may be pictured, he at home with ~~the~~ his family and local parish from Friday to Tuesday, but away on the other days on horseback and alone, with the baptismal register* in his saddle-bag, covering a huge territory to the north

*This register of marriages, baptisms and births is still preserved in the parish church, Bond Head, and contains entries of christenings not infrequently as many as fifteen a day. Among them is that of William Osler. The church contains the white-oak benches from the original building that stood by the Osler parsonage, ~~but~~ of which no trace now remains.

as far as Penetanguishene and as far south as Thornhill, establishing congregations and opening Sunday-schools. His ministrations often took him into districts so remote he could only reach them twice a year, and as there were few post-offices he would have to announce the day of the subsequent visit, three

1849 - 1864

to six months hence as the case might be, 'and without any other notice the congregation would be waiting at the time specified.'

Ellen Osler, meanwhile, not only had the responsibility of a rapidly accumulating flock of her own, but conducted a famed Sunday-school to which children came for miles around. She also established a celebrated sewing-school ~~as well,~~ for:

"Observing how ignorant the girls were ~~of sewing~~ and how untidily they dressed, she proposed to give instruction in cutting out and making their clothes every Tuesday and Friday in the afternoon." Soon a class of twenty-eight girls and young women were gathered together, who instead of coming in the afternoon would come in the morning, remaining the whole day, anxious for instruction. That school did more towards elevating the tone of the people than almost anything else, and to this day many of the women of Tecumseth, now mothers and grandmothers, speak of it as one of the greatest blessings of their lives."

The low-one-story parsonage with such a couple in residence naturally became in time the social as well as the religious centre of the region. The neighbouring farms, most 200-acre grants, began to be taken up by those who became intimates and friends of parents and offspring, for children were born to these early settlers in generous numbers. In the parsonage itself in the course of the first fourteen years all but two of the nine Osler children came into

the world. As his father's journal relates, Featherston* the eldest was born

*The Hon. Featherston Osler (b. Jan. 4 1838-) entered the law, practising in Toronto (1860-1879) until appointed Justice of the Court of Appeal for Ontario (1879-1910). Since then he has been President of the Toronto General Trusts Corporation.

in Newmarket during the first winter, and the second son, Britton*, known in the family as 'B.B.', the following

*Britton Bath Osler, (b. June 19, 1839, d. Feb. 5 1901). Graduating in Toronto in 1862 he entered the law, and as Queen's Counsel and the leading figure at the Canadian bar his name became a household word in Canada where he was called the 'thirteenth juryman.' He is said to have been the most brilliant of all the brothers. Physically he bore a close resemblance to his brother William. ~~"He triumphed not so much from his ability as a lawyer, though this was superlative, but from the strength of his personality. He was big-hearted and kindly, intensely human, witty to a degree, and he appealed to juries as man to man."~~

year in Bond Head. The year 1841 found the father somewhat broken in health, with a bad cough and an abscess in the back caused by the continuous riding on horseback, necessitating a rest and change, so that a sojourn in England and a much-needed vacation was therefore ~~planned~~ taken. ~~His wife and the eldest boy were sent on ahead, whereas he with Britton, known in the family as 'B.B.' followed them in a few months. They received such a send-off~~ and on their return some months later, with their Falmouth-born daughter Mary Ellen, ~~such a welcome as must have gladdened their hearts, for~~ they found 'upwards of sixty wagon-loads of people' gathered at Holland Landing to greet them, and to escort them the

Elsewhere? cf. III, 27.

~~escort them the~~ twelve miles farther to the rectory.

In renewed vigour the active life of a frontier parson was again resumed. With funds donated at home the church was enlarged, and the business ability of his merchant forebears began to show itself in his relations to his parishioners in matters temporal as well as spiritual. He taught them farming, and how to make husbandry pay, loaned them money, drew up wills for them, dispensed spectacles brought from England, which was oftentimes 'like giving eyes to the blind', and in countless other ways tended to their material and physical or were or Spiritual needs.

"For many years there was no medical man nearer than Holland Landing, and I was compelled to act as such. Confidence and a few simple medicines often did wonders, my good wife attending to the women and children. As an example of many: Very early on a bitterly cold morning a messenger came to the parsonage from a Richard Callahan, saying that his daughter was dying, and asking me to hurry so that I might see her before she died. I started as soon as possible, and got to Callahan's about day-break, nearly frozen. I found the girl apparently very sick, and as they were expecting her to die many women were busy making her shroud. I found on examination that there was no sign of death, but they had persuaded her she was going to die, and she believed it. I ordered them to stop making the shroud, told her parents that I saw no immediate danger, prescribed a few simple remedies, made the girl take some nourishment, and

1849-1884

left, promising to return in the evening. When, in the evening, I called as promised, I found the girl sitting by the fire, and in a few days she was quite well, and was known for a long time afterwards in the locality as the resurrection girl."

In a country with an almost unbroken primeval forest, clearing the land for farming is a slow process, and Bond Head largely surrounded by 'stump farms' was still on the edge of the wilderness. The elder children well remember migratory visits of Chippewa Indians to the parsonage, numbers of whom, indeed, were ~~aft~~ drawn by curiosity to attend ~~would come to~~ the Sunday services: and it is related ~~There is a story~~ that one of them, ~~once~~ pointing ~~at B at P at baby Britton who lay in his~~ ~~pointed to a child in its~~ cradle on the parsonage verandah ~~and~~ grunted "Papoose - at a child, on account of complexion or his mother, who lay in a papoose,", ~~This was Britton, the second son, who was dark as his mother, and~~ which aroused a fear ~~she feared~~ that some day they might run away with him.

In 1842, the year after their return from England, the third son, Edward Saltt was born, and three years later Edmund.* In 1847 came twins, Charlotte (the

*Sir Edmund Osler ~~(b. Nov. 20, 1845)~~ inherited through his father the business ability for which his forebears were renowned. As a financier he has been for years an important figure in Canadian affairs, being the head of one of the most important brokerage houses in Canada, President of the Dominion Bank, Director of the Canadian Pacific Railroad and many other companies; and member of the Canadian House of Commons since 1896. In physical type he ~~more~~ closely resembles the father. ~~than do the other sons.~~

~~Of the other two sons,~~ Edward Lake ~~(b. Nov. 20, 1842 - d. 1907)~~ became a barrister and practised in the North West. ~~Francis L. (b. Dec. 6, 1847 -) the fifth son, had a roving disposition which responded to the call of the old maritime spirit of his ancestors.~~

'Chattie' of subsequent letters) and Francis who had a roving disposition and like his father, went off to sea in his early years. The son William was born July 12, 1849, and two years later a daughter Emma, who died in her third year. Walter Farquhar rather than William was to have been this last son's name, presumably in honour of the patron of the ~~Bible Society of Canada~~ Upper Canada Clergy Society, but pressure of an unexpected sort was brought to bear on this subject.

Bond Head was by this time a growing village of some two hundred souls and boasted not only a doctor, Orlando Orr, who officiated at the births of the younger children, but of a schoolhouse, a blacksmith-shop, a tavern and a lodge. For some years it had been the custom of the Orangemen of the district to gather here for their annual fête-day on July 12th; and adorned with sashes, rosettes and yellow lilies it was part of their programme to march, to the tune of "Teeter Tawter Holy water", behind their cockaded leader on his white horse, from the Corners the mile or so to Mr. Osler's parsonage, where speeches were made and felicitations offered in return. In view of this well-established custom, it was inevitable that on their annual visit in 1849 they should insist that the new-comer, of whose arrival they were made aware by his being brought

1849 – 1864

~~1849~~

out in his father's arms, should be "William". He was promptly dubbed the young "Prince of Orange", and an anti-popish acrostic on his name was composed, in the last line of which he is bade to 'Remember all thy Fathers bled to gain.' Hence William he came to be christened, and, decked out in appropriate colours with a broad sash of orange and blue he was brought out on the parsonage verandah on his later birthdays to greet the procession which the other children came to regard as arranged solely in his honour.

Without any written record, the early life may be pictured of these eight children, the youngest of whom was often referred to by his mother as "Benjamin", and by his father in babyhood owing to his complexion and black eyes, as "Little-burnt-holes-in-a-blanket." The earliest recollection of this particular boy, as he used to recount years later, was of being nearly drowned the day his younger sister was born, (there in it was only two at the time it may have been a fragment of his imagination) Both he and ~~the~~ a calf had been tethered in the field adjoining the ~~rectory.~~ parsonage. There was a pail of milk near by, which on hands and knees he proceeded in the course of time to investigate. At a critical moment of unbalance he was toppled head-first into the pail by the calf who shared his interest in the contents. ~~As he was only two at the time,~~

~~this story may have been a figment of his imagination~~. Another story he was wont to tell in after years was of his once meeting a bear in a raspberry patch, but this, too, may have been apocryphal.

It was an old-fashioned household in which regulations were strict and promptitude was expected, beginning with early morning prayers and ending at bed-time. The most difficult problem concerned the children's education. At first a log schoolhouse near by, where one of the neighbouring family of Gavillers taught the rudiments of the 'three R's', was all that the vicinity afforded. Then a Mrs. Hill started a school near Bradford some miles away, which the elder boys attended, and finally a school was opened in Bond Head by a Mr. Marling to which in due course the children trudged. But between the hours dedicated for school and the many chores of farm and household, there was abundant time for such play as healthy youngsters enjoy in the open, unhampered by organized sports - coasting and skating and snow-balling in the winter, fishing and swimming in the pond by the saw-mill at the foot of the hill, frolicking with Rover the Newfoundland dog who was trained to go into Bond Head for the mail, playing Indians in what remained of the great forest of hard wood -

1849-1861

white oak and maple, basswood, elm and beech, with spruce and pine and beautiful red cedar which was split and used for the miles of snake fences.

- That the younger of these children at least, covered considerable ground in these early years may be judged by the following bill from one John Matthews, evidently a cobbler, with a market garden attached.

Oct. 13, 1855 Tecumseth 26a

Recd. F. L. Osler Dr.
to John Mathews

~~Miss Charlotte one shoe one pice and pair silkspases~~.....6
Dec. 23 Sir, your son Frank one boot sold and toe piced.....1-2
Dec. 25 your son Wm. pair boots sold toe piced.....2-2
Nov. 3 Mrs. Osler one shoe mended.....-3
Dec. 7 Your son Frank one boot sold and toe piced.....1-3
December 4 Edmund Osler pr. boots sold hill and toe piced.....3-9
Dec. 4 your son Wm. one boot one pice mended.....1
1856
Jany. 11 one pump leather.....1-11
Dec. 12 Miss Charlotte Osler new pr. boots.....8-9
Dec. 14 Edmund Osler new pr. slip new shoes.....7-0
Dec. 21 Wm. Osler new pr. boots calf skin.....7-1
Dec. 25 Edmund Osler new pr. long boots.....14-11
Feby. 1 Frank Osler new pair calf skin boots.....8-0
March 3 Mrs. Osler pair shoes mended.....-10
April 29 Wm. Osler new pair boots.....7-9
May 16 Frank Osler Do. Do. Do.....7-10
Dec. 16 Miss Charlotte Osler pair boots sold and toe piced.....1-9
June 2 Edmund Osler pr. boots sold hill one fronted.....4-0
Dec. 9 125 Cabbage plants.....1-11
Dec. 13 Rev. F. L. Osler new pr. slipper shoes.....7-9
Dec. 27 Frank Osler pr. boots sold and fronted.....2-9
July 10 Wm. Osler new pair calf skin boots.....7-9
Dec. 1 Miss Charlotte Osler new pr. boots.....8-9
Dec. 17 Frank Osler new pair boots.... 8-0
August 1 quarter veal 15 lb. at 4½ pr. lb.....5-½
Dec. 13 Frank Osler new pr. calf skin boots.....8-9
Dec. 20 Dec.----Dec. pr. boots mended.....1-3
£ (1=9=½

Oct. 8 Frank Osler pair boots sold and fronted 3=4
Settled in full ~~Nov~~. £6=12=½

John Mathews

1849 - 1864

In spite of their hours passed on Mr. Marling's benches, doubtless most of the instruction of these children took place at their mother's knee, and with the Bible as the main source of it. Theological books naturally predominated in the parsonage, for Featherstone Osler, in the absence of a provincial school of divinity, prepared a number of young men, his brother included, for their ordination. There was Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity", Butler's "Analogy", Bishop Burnett's Lives, Bishop Taylor's and Isaac Barrow's Works, the Parker Society Publications (Early Fathers), Bunyan's Works, 1771, with the terrifying illustrations of the "Pilgrim's Progress". There were indeed, as one of the sons recalls, 'solid and indestructible blocks of divinity of all kinds.'

The writings of his brother Edward Osler, the naturalist-doctor, were also well represented as told in this pencilled note found among Sir William's papers some seventy years later:

> **As a boy in a backwoods settlement in Upper Canada, the English post would bring letters from an Uncle Edward for whom we cherished an amazing veneration for on the shelves in father's little study were there not actually books written by him, and poems, and mysterious big articles with drawings about shells, and now and again did we not sing in church one**

of his hymns? The reputation of the family seemed to circle about this uncle whose letters were always so welcome and so full of news of the old home and so cheery. We boys could read the difference in our father's face when the post brought a letter from Uncle Sam, the black sheep of the family.

Then there were of course Locke on the Understanding, ~~of course~~, Josephus's "History of the Jews", Hone's Every-Day book with its fine wood-cuts; and other volumes whose backs and titles were familiar to children of the 1850's. A Macaulay, too, is remembered, and a 1721 Addison; Sandford and Merton; "The Fairchild Family"; an early copy of Tennyson; and an occasional pious novel like Hannah More's "Coêlebs in Search of a Wife" was probably sent out from England in the missionary boxes by the S. P. G., or by friends in Cornwall. There come also stray copies of Sharpe's ~~The~~ Sunday ~~London~~ Magazines, 'old and new', the forerunners of Cornhill and (perhaps) ~~of the Atlantic Monthly~~ ~~was taken, containing some of~~ 'Sketches by Boz' for ~~Thackeray's and Aldrich's early stories, and~~ one of the children remembers his father roaring over ~~Pickwick~~, though this must have been exceptional for he ~~has been~~ is described by another of them as 'a reticent sort of a man, English to the back-bone, who seldom let himself go.'

~~The boy Willie recalled in later years that:~~ -

¶ Then there was George Borrow who is of Cornish ancestry, a missionary, could not have written heartfelt books: ~~and so~~ so 'The Bible in Spain' and even 'Lavengro' were not taboo even on Sunday. Strange, as Osler ~~wrote years later~~ confessed long after, though Sunday reading was remembered as a trial, yet Osler a person with a novel on the Sabbath gave him a reflex shock reminiscent of his early training. Copies of the Illustrated London News are to the end of his life

1849 – 1864

There were a few old books, a Breeches Bible, and an early Stow's Chronicle. Having been at sea, he [Featherstone] was fond of books of travel, of Layard, of Rawlinson, of Livingstone. Sunday reading is remembered as a trial. Even [1918] to see a person with a novel on a Sunday gives a reflex shock - a reminiscence of early training! George Barrow was a delight. As a missionary his books could not be hurtful, even on Sunday, and the "Bible in Spain", "Gypsies in Spain", and even "Lavengro" were not taboo.*

*Introduction to "Bibliotheca Osleriana."

~~The Illustrated London News is~~ also remembered, partly for its pictures of the Crimean War, but largely because this remote episode put up the price of Canadian wheat to $2.00 a bushel. In consequence of this and owing to the fact that the farm manager inconsiderately died in the summer of 1865, Edmund and Britton under their father's direction had to run the partly-cleared 100-acre farm, get in the harvest, store the hay and dispose of the turnips, potatoes and wheat. One of them today, after sixty-four years, recalls vividly the feeling of the straw scratching his bare legs, and the delight of ~~the~~ a swim in the pond two or three times a day.

1849 – 1864

On farms in the vicinity there were many families of gentlefolk, the Williamses, the Gavillers, the Tyrwhitts, the Perrins, the Caswells and others, who became intimates, and there were assuredly many picnics and parties for the children. Mr. Perrin their nearest neighbour used to dabble in chemistry and physics, and another avocation was with the new art of amateur photography. To this, posterity is indebted for a chance picture of some of these children dressed in their homespuns, with a restless child, William, at the end of the line. A few years later another incident occurred at a picnic in the Gavillers' woods. The children were gathering firewood ~~which~~ and Willie, armed with a hatchet, was engaged in chopping the fagots into lengths on a stump. His sister 'Chattie' to tease him would put her small hand on the stump, and finally he said he would count three, and if she didn't take it off she would lose a finger. She lost it, fortunately only a tip, and brother William disappeared to the hay-loft from which he was extracted some hours later. To escape the punishment to which he was entitled on the appeal ~~But he escaped punishment, for his devoted sister begged off for him.~~ of his sister she devoted sister and playmate.

The elders, strict as they may have been with their children, were not given to corporal punishment, and this boy in particular, impulsive and full of mischief as he continually was, was so forgiving and affectionate that he pro-

bably escaped many a deserved wigging. His elder brother Frank relates that the onus for many of his own escapades ~~were~~ was apt to be voluntarily shouldered by Willie, and that the younger brother once deservedly gave him a black eye for some offense, but subsequently shielded him before their parents and took the blame himself for the quarrel. In a family of children essentially unselfish and generous with their small possessions, Willie even as a boy was quick to give the last penny of his scant pocket-money to another who might be hard up.

In an address given in Glasgow fifty years later*, Sir William drew upon his early memories of these days for this following comparison.

*"Pathological Institute of a General Hospital." Glasgow Medical Journal, Nov. 1911, p. 15.

"The most vivid recollections of my boyhood in Canada cluster about the happy spring days when we went off to the bush to make maple sugar - the bright sunny days, the delicious cold nights, the camp fires, the log cabins, and the fascinating work tapping the trees, putting in the birch-bark spouts, arranging the troughs, and then going from tree to tree, collecting in pails the clear, sweet sap. One memory stands out above all others, the astonishment that so little sugar was left after boiling down so great a cauldron of liquid. And yet the sap was

so abundant and so sweet. The workers of my generation in the bush of science have collected a vaster quantity of sap than ever before known; much has already been boiled down, and it is for you of the younger generation while completing the job to tap your own trees."

In the ~~twenty~~ years ~~following~~ since 1837 great changes had taken place in Tecumseth and its adjoining townships, as well as elsewhere in Upper Canada, but the region about Lake Simcoe nevertheless was lacking in much that was desirable for the upbringing of a large family of children. Hence in September of 1854 Featherstone Osler felt impelled to write Bishop Strachan of Toronto to request that he be ~~removed~~ transferred, ~~The elder boys had already been sent away to school at Barrie, and were preparing to enter college,~~ partly on the basis of indifferent ~~bad~~ health which was affected by the necessity of constant travel, but more particularly on the grounds of his children's Education. The Elder boys had already been sent away to School in Barrie and were preparing to enter college and there were six younger children in need of more than Bond Head offered and the force of a frontier parson could afford.

~~Featherstone Osler to the Bishop of Toronto (Strachan).~~

Tecumseth Parish
Sept. 12, 1854

My Lord

After much serious and earnest consideration I feel it to be my duty to ask your Lordship to remove me where an opportunity may occur to a change where my children may be reasonably educated and where I may perform my duty without such constant travelling as is necessary here.

The time was when I did not feel this a labour now it is most painful to me and the almost continual pain in my back warns me that if I must continue to exercise my ministry it must be where much less travelling is necessary. Even the appointment of another clergyman to this

section of the country which your Lordship has kindly promised though a great relief to my mind will afford very little bodily relief as he ought to reside in Nottawasaga. * * * * Another thing which makes it necessary that I should remove to some other place is for the educating of my children. Tho the eldest have received a good education ~~but~~ there are six others who now require it and I cannot afford to send many from home to school. I had expected to receive a comfortable income from private property at home (the villany of an agent deprived me of it) and though the law condemned him to make good any loss and pay every expense, from one who has no visible property nothing could be obtained. Therefore with the exception of £50 or £60 I am entirely dependent on my clerical income. Still I am neither in debt or difficulty but I think it right to state to your Lordship who has ever been so kind a friend to me exactly how I am situated. Mrs. Osler's health too is very indifferent and I think a change might be of service to her.

Your Lordship I trust knows me sufficiently to believe that it is not to avoid work that I seek removal but that I may work somewhere more suited to my present ability. I am aware that an appointment such as I require may not for some time be at your Lordship's disposal but I have felt it a duty to state my wish and my circumstances with the hope that where such occurs your Lordship will add another favour to the many I have received at your hands and give the appointment to me.

I have the honour to be

Sir

F. OSLER.

Jan.
1857 Aet. 7.

Two years later the ~~parishes~~ rectorship of Ancaster and Dundas became vacant, and the Bishop on January 1, 1857 ordered his transfer to these parishes. But a transportation in our long journey and ~~appointed him to the rectory there. That it was~~ unexpected

a hard wrench to leave Bond Head despite its short-comings after ministering years residing there is evident from the ~~this paragraph~~ passage in ~~his~~ Canon's diary; ~~where states that: "In the neighbouring~~

"It was so.

"~~It was one of the hardest trials of my life to leave the place where I had lived happily nineteen and a half years, and the people with whom I had lived without a jar or discord during the whole period, but I felt that the Church would not suffer by my leaving it. In the neigh-~~ bouring townships many churches had been built, and in Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury, my specially licensed charge, where there had been neither church, parsonage, nor glebe, there were now six churches, two parsonages, and two glebes; the one in Tecumseth being especially valuable, consisting of 200 acres. I had 160 acres cleared."

Still

So it came about that the Bond Head farm was sold and the family was ~~transferred~~ moved to a more self-contained community ~~whose~~ where conditions of life were far less primitive and arduous. For Dundas at the time, situated most picturesquely at the very western tip of Lake Ontario, half-way between Toronto and Niagara, promised, owing to its favourable position, to become the metropolis of the new province.

1849-1864

Mar. 1857

Two of the boys had already been sent to a boarding-school in Dundas, and fortune favoured the safe transfer of the others in a curious way, for having journeyed safely by the recently opened Northern Railway from Bradford to Toronto and having made arrangements to go from there by rail the following day to Dundas, the boy Willie, as is related, came down unexpectedly with the croup and the second stage of the journey was deferred. The train they were to have taken on the Great Western Railroad became derailed as it was approaching Hamilton and the coaches plunged through the viaduct into the Canal forty feet below, with great loss of life, - the Desjardin Catastrophe of March 12, 1857, ~~which so shocked the world~~.

Dundas

1857
Aet. 8

DUNDAS

Here in the prosperous and fertile river-valley at the head of the lake there began an entirely new life. With Dundas in the centre of his parish, with good roads making travel comparatively easy, with accessible schools for the children and cultivated people as neighbours, Canon Osler's next twenty-five years were happily passed. A temporary residence in the centre of the town situated in the valley was given up after the first few years, when a permanent move of the rectory was made to the southern heights overlooking the valley toward its still higher northern escarpment called the Mountain, a panorama of rare beauty. There are few more picturesque spots on the Great Lakes, and in a comfortable home in these ~~beautiful~~ charming surroundings with an intimate group of ideal neighbours and friends the years passed happily by for parents and children.

There was an Episcopal~~ian~~ boarding school for girls in Dundas at the time and one of the pupils, then fourteen, vividly recalls even at this day Canon Osler and his wife, to whom the tradition still clung that she was of Indian ancestry.

1857
Aet 8

I can see the little Episcopal Church with the sunshine filtering through the coloured windows. One of our teachers was organist, two others sang in the choir and we were all required to attend services, Lenten too, and often Matins, and early Communion - we were really part of the church. The Rector as I remember him was a good looking rather short "roly-poly" man with blue eyes, bushy whiskers and heavy eyebrows, intoning the service and rows and rows of girls repeating at intervals "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." He was a fine character, though quite ~~unobtrusive,~~ unlike his brilliant sons, but we all loved him though we called him in private "Sneezer" (This is of course entre-nous). Then those Saturday, Easter and Christmas parties! The romantic tales we wove around Mrs. Osler! Of course in our minds she was directly descended from Pocahontas and a beautiful chief wanted to marry her but her father chose the Englishman! How disappointed we would have been had we known the truth.

There was every prospect that Dundas, then a town of some 3,000 souls, possessing a daily newspaper! and seven churches!!, was destined to become the chief city at the western end of the lake. The great highway, Governor's Road or Dundas Street, passed through it to the west, it had a splendid water power, and the Desjardin Canal, cut through the marshes for a distance of five

miles, connected it with the ideal land-locked harbour made by Burlington Bay. All this bid fair at the time to ensure its future growth and prosperity.

One of the most attractive features of the lower valley was the huge marsh, long called "Coote's Paradise" after an early sportsman of Governor Simcoe's time, who spent much of his leisure in shooting game there; and in the course of years, as will be seen, this same marsh became the hunting-ground for zoological specimens by a young naturalist and his preceptor.

The younger boys, promptly dubbed by their new playmates "Tecumseth cabbages" in view of the rural place of origin, were sent to the local grammar-school conducted first by a classical scholar, a Mr. John King of Trinity College, Dublin, who had come out to Canada in 1854, and subsequently by another Irishman, a Mr. J. J. Flynn, as Principal. This grammar-school occupied quarters upstairs in the same building in which a common school held forth on the ground floor, a situation almost certain to lead to trouble, particularly as the head master of the common school was a despot who disliked boys as a class but particularly grammar-school boys. Doubtless Mr. Flynn himself was the victim of many pranks on the part of his own irrepressible

pupils, than whom there was probably none more notorious than a rollicking boy named Willie Osler who, though adored by all was particularly ingenious in evolving and perpetuating practical jokes of an elaborate and unusual sort in which as a rule he took the leadership. ~~But these could be forgiven, as they could not be when the head master of the school downstairs was victimized.~~

¶ Which one of many ~~episodes~~ escapades led to his final dismissal makes little difference - whether it was the flock of geese found one morning locked in the room of the common school; ~~room;~~ or the discovery on a Monday morning of a ~~grammar~~ school-room without furniture, the desks and benches all having been unscrewed from the floor and laboriously hoisted up through a trap door into the garret the Saturday afternoon before; or whether it was some disparaging remarks concerning the head master of the common school shouted through a key-hole.* At all events, expelled he was, with his four accomplices.

*An account of the episode with the altercation which followed it may be found in the local news sheet, The Banner, June 2, 1864, et seq.

¶ His sister recalls meeting him on the way home that eventful ~~evening.~~ day. He was riding bareback on the Canon's horse, picked up at the shop of his friend and confidant, Pat O'Connor the blacksmith, on whom he had called to impart the news; gaily waving his hand and shouting gleefully, "Chattie, I've got the sack!"