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Chapter VII

THE PATHOLOGIST.

1876 - 1879

After the <sup>prolonged</sup> agitation of the preceding years a <sup>community</sup> city smallpox hospital was finally provided for <sup>Montreal</sup> early in 1876, and it is probable that Osler was the last to take charge of this dangerous service at the Montreal General. His own attack of smallpox contracted the preceding month proved luckily to be a mild one which left him with no permanent scars

<sup>to Arthur Jarvis one of his old Scotch nudes?</sup>  
as the following note <sup>shown by</sup> indicates.

To the Rev. Arthur Jarvis from W. C.

Jan [1876]

My dear Arthur: - I have just received your very kind letter and am happy to be able to write in return that I am completely convalescent. My attack was a wonderfully light one the pustules numbering sixteen, all told, and of these only two located themselves on my face; so that 'my beauty has not consumed away.' I have been out of Hospital now a week and am regaining my strength rapidly. The disease has been and is very bad. You need not be afraid of this letter. I will disinfect it before sending. Remember me to all my old friends and with many thanks for your kindness in remembering me

Believe me

Ever your aff. friend

W. C.



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1876

*Smadefox ward*  
 The ~~service~~, nevertheless, <sup>not only</sup> ~~was~~ a boon to him in ways other than ~~by~~  
<sup>had seen</sup> ~~of giving~~ him a chance to show his worth as a hospital attendant, <sup>but</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>but the</sup>  
<sup>boon</sup> ~~it carried with it the~~ remuneration of \$600 <sup>(for his services)</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>it carried forward a boon which</sup> enabled him to meet ~~the~~  
 an obligation entered into the preceding April. In his pocket note-  
 book of the period is this statement: "In account with Hartnack, Paris.  
<sup>a</sup> Received batch of 15 microscopes. Net price fr. 2107.50."

His 1876 account-book <sup>shows a scarcity of</sup> ~~has few~~ entries: consultations, <sup>very</sup> ~~few~~ and far between,  
 and an occasional group of house visits <sup>are noted</sup> ~~occure~~ with "Howard laid up" written op-  
 posite them as an apologia. He was still in his small room on Beaver Hall Hill  
 at a rent of \$10 a month, boarding meanwhile elsewhere at another \$20, a month,  
 with the occasional variation of a dinner with Arthur Brown at "the Terrapin"  
 on St. James Street. His income for the year, of \$1178, including his professio-  
 sional salary, tells its own story.

It is interesting to find him at this early time beginning to write  
 letters to the papers expressing his approval or disapproval of their atti-  
 tude on some public question. It is not to be thought for a moment that, in



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in view of his charitable disposition, he was any more free than others from waves of indignation; <sup>though he avoided 'silly and sarcasm' which Johnson warned against</sup> and there was nothing of what Carlyle would call 'mealy-mouthedness' about him.

The Toronto Globe had not only opposed the Medical Council in its efforts to raise professional standards in Ontario by rigid examinations, but had freely permitted advertising quacks to utilize its columns for their propaganda. On seeing an editorial on the subject in the Toronto Medical Journal, it was like Osler to sit down promptly and write a note <sup>on the</sup> in support of the editor's position:

"Lack of Professional Esprit-de-Corps."

~~To the Editor of the Canada Lancet.~~

Sir, - It is a matter of surprise and regret to me to see medical men writing to the Globe on medical subjects. The action of the Globe towards the profession has been such that I and many others have written to the manager, withdrawing our names from the list of subscribers, and stating our reasons. I fail to understand how men can quietly pocket the insulting epithets and remarks lately made by the Globe in regard to the profession, and signify their friendly appreciation and support by discussing medical matters in its columns.



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I was very much pleased to see a letter on this same subject in the December number of your journal.)

Yours, &c.,

W. O.

In February of this year he gave the Somerville Lecture before the Natural History Society, on "Animal Parasites and Their Relation to Public Health"\*, a topic which indicates two other sources

\*"Trichina Spiralis." Canadian Journal of Medical Sciences, 1876, i, 134 et seq.

of his activity in Montreal - his naturalistic and his public health <sup>interests</sup> ~~re-~~ lationships. This lecture also serves to illustrate his accumulative method of assembling material for the purpose of publication, for the subject of trichinosis on which he chiefly dwelt dates back, as has been seen, to notes and experiments made while a student in the dissecting-room in Toronto. In <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ 1873 note-book <sup>Kept in Berlin, where he had seen a case in Traube's clinic,</sup> he had jotted down:

"So far as I can learn only four or five cases of Trichinosis have occurred in ~~this country~~ [Canada], one in Montreal, three in Hamilton, and two cases in which I discovered <sup>the parasites</sup> ~~them~~ post-mortem in



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Toronto. Others may and probably have occurred, but have been mistaken for something else."

~~This note must have been made in Berlin, for in his lecture he states that the only case he had seen in the human subject was in 1873 in Traube's clinic.~~

The disease at this time was little known in spite of Owen's and of Paget's early descriptions of the lesion: ~~am~~<sup>in</sup> his paper, which he sent for publication ~~to Toronto~~<sup>by</sup> to his friend Zimmermann, then corresponding editor of the Canadian Journal of Medical Sciences, he reviewed the subject in general, ~~gives~~<sup>gives</sup> his own experiences and records<sup>ed</sup> the ~~five~~<sup>performed</sup> experiments he had made in Toronto to which reference has already been made.

He had been elected a member of the Natural History Society Oct. 26, 1874, had been put on the Library Committee the following May, and at this time had just been chosen as a member of the Council. <sup>Moreover it is apparent that</sup> During all <sup>at this time he looked upon</sup> this time, as is evident, ~~he is~~<sup>was</sup> regarding his medical work more or less



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from the standpoint of a naturalist, with the microscope always ready at hand; and some younger members of the Natural History Society soon formed a junior body which became the Microscopical Club, of a combined scientific and social character, <sup>at</sup> whose meetings were held at the residences of the members in turn. Of this he was made the first President.

The Natural History Society <sup>itself</sup> was an active body whose transactions and papers appeared in a quarterly journal of science: The Canadian Naturalist. Principal Dawson, as <sup>previously stated</sup> ~~has been said~~, was for some years its President, and though papers presented before it represented work in many different fields into which natural science has since become greatly subdivided through specialization, there must nevertheless have been much to interest Osler, and it is probable that with regularity he attended the meetings. Though one might have thought that his early biological pursuits would have been superseded by this time, they nevertheless continued throughout his Montreal period to occupy some of his working hours.



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1876

*Stentor bicarnea*  
He moreover was a born collector, of <sup>the</sup> Hunterian type; as his specimens <sup>Glen's</sup>  
<sup>to his industry as a collector, though hardly</sup> treasured in the McGill Pathological Museum testify, <sup>for</sup> though it <sup>does</sup> is not appear  
 likely that he was particularly interested in the Museum of the Natural  
 History Society itself, which Samuel Butler, who visited Montreal in 1875  
 described in his famous "Psalm of Montreal." <sup>this place</sup> indeed, one may <sup>assume to have been</sup> presume it  
 was not unlike <sup>there is which most</sup> most natural-history collections of the period, <sup>was himself</sup> Butler  
 having found the custodian engaged in stuffing an owl in a room to which  
 the Discobolus had been banished.

And I turned to the man of skins and said unto him, "O thou man of skins,  
 man of skins,

Wherefore has thou done thus to shame the beauty of the *Discobolus*?"

*Discobolus*?"

But the Lord had hardened the heart of the man of skins,

And he answered, "My brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."

Spurgeon."

O God! O Montreal!

"The *Discobolus* is put here because he is vulgar,

He has neither vest nor pants with which to cover his limbs;

I, Sir, am a person of most respectable connections -

My brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."

O God! O Montreal!



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May  
1876

When Osler on his final sick-bed read that amazing story of Butler's life by Henry Festing Jones in which these verses are reprinted, he chuckled with delight and said he remembered well the old caretaker.

It had been a time-honoured custom at the Montreal General Hospital for each member of the Medical Board to make the post-mortem

examinations on his own patients, but on May 1st of this year a new position of Pathologist to the hospital was created, as far as can be judged, to make proper use of William Osler, and in the autopsy-room of that institution he laid the foundation ~~stones~~ of his subsequent brilliant career as a clinician. 'A three-months' summer session for students was offered this year, beginning the first of May, "with opportunities afforded in the M.G.H. wards," and the <sup>prospective</sup> advertisement after stating that Ross, Roddick, Gardner, Buller and Girdwood were to be the participants, goes on to say:

"And last, though not least, we have Dr. Osler, who is an enthusiast in his department, who will give a course of twenty-five lessons in Practical Histology, and also a course of Practical Pathological Demonstrations in the post-mortem room."



July  
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To E. Sharpey Schäfer from W. O.

Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal.  
[circa July 1876]

My dear Schäfer: - A student of mine, one of our last year's Graduates, Mr Ritchie, will shortly hand you a letter of introduction. He wishes to work in U.C. Laboratory and take the Physiological courses. I want him to spend a year with you and a year in Germany and then come out as my Assistant. He took my Pract. Histology last winter but you will find he does not know very much, as it was a short course, and chiefly Pathological. I think he has fair abilities and good fingers but you will form your own estimate very soon. At any rate he will be, I hope an apter pupil than I was. I have been very much pleased with the Histological section of Quain and Sharpey which reached me about a month ago.

I am busy with our Summer Session having a Practical Histology course and one on demonstrative Pathology at the Hospital. Is there any likelihood of your coming West for the Centennial? If so do let me know and I will go to the Niagara Falls with you and try to show you anything of interest in Canada.)

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

WM OSLER.

It was during this summer, therefore, that he began his more serious studies as a morbid anatomist, which were to continue almost with-



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out interruption for the next thirteen years - until he went to the Johns Hopkins. He had of course been greatly influenced by Howard, who fully realized the importance ~~of personal~~ post-mortem examinations for the successful clinician; <sup>of making his own</sup> he had been still more influenced during his brief sojourn in Berlin by Virchow; and his familiarity with the microscope, unusual for the time, made him easily excel his fellows in modern methods permitting the minute study of the processes of disease. But aside from all this, he felt the same profound fascination in unravelling the mysteries of a fatal malady that had kept Bichot, Laënnec and <sup>many</sup> other brilliant and industrious young men for years at the autopsy table.

His industry <sup>became proverbial.</sup> was prodigious. Though he went through the form of dictating notes to student assistants in his course, when it came to completing the report it was set down in detail in his own hand. The three large quarto volumes in Montreal of these manuscript notes, with the cases numbered and fully indexed, remain a monument to his genius - to his capacity for work. During the succeeding year, from May 1, 1876 to May 1, 1877, there were 100 autopsies, fully worked up. Many



of the more interesting observations were from time to time reported at the meetings of the Medical & Chirurgical Society, and at the end of the year they were assembled and printed in book form, representing the first serious report of the kind from any ~~American-hospital~~ <sup>(in the continent)</sup>. Many of the more interesting specimens were preserved and form the basis of the pathological collection in McGill, of which Dr. Maude Abbott has written so fully; and he came to know the material <sup>which passed through his hands during</sup> of this and succeeding years so well that he constantly drew upon it for his later writings. It is doubtful whether anything other than interest and love of the work led him to study this material in such detail; he could hardly have realized until his later years that a long apprenticeship in the pathological laboratory always has been and always will be the only way to reach the very top either for surgeon or physician - the way followed by <sup>Addison,</sup> Hunter, Bright, Stokes, Paget, Fitz and a host of others.



He had, moreover, the imaginative type of mind which made him prompt to grasp the problem laid bare by whatever he touched, and with this visualization came the desire to make some record thereof. It was this characteristic, handed on in goodly measure to his pupils, that made him (and them in turn) so prolific; and in the end, owing to his abundant and well chosen general reading, he acquired a literary style admirably suited to his purposes. ~~For this is not a God-given quality:~~ <sup>Howard</sup> ~~it is the result of laborious endeavour.~~ But one would hardly have expected to find him reading a book so unrelated to his subject as St. George Mivart's "Lessons from Nature" and loaning his volume to Henry Howard\* and sending another to Father Johnson.

\*Cf. Henry Howard's "Remarks on Haeckel, etc." before the Medico-Chirurgical Society, Jan. 21, 1881. Canada Medical & Surgical Record, Mar. 1881, ix, 153.



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Sept.  
1876To W. O. From W. A. JohnsonThe Parsonage, Weston,  
4 Sept<sup>r</sup> 76.

My dear Osler: - A young man at Mess<sup>rs</sup> Hart & Rawlinson's handed me a parcel a few days ago & I so often get parcels from them that I little knew what it was: however I find now I am indebted to you for it & much indebted too. After much effort (for I fear I am very obtuse) I have managed the two first chapters. I wanted to make myself master of them, but it has all ended in a conviction that there is something w<sup>h</sup> fits in uncommonly with that I "feel" I cannot say "know" to be right: but w<sup>h</sup> I fail in explaining to myself: & yet ought to be quite clear to me, because it may go on to conclusions w<sup>h</sup> I must accept or refuse; but w<sup>h</sup> will be dependent on these difficult premises. Perhaps they are the more difficult because new to me. This originating knowledge from mere consciousness, correct as it may be, is new to me. We have been so much accustomed to look on our consciousness as a sort of necessity without a value, that when called upon to accept it as the true foundation of all future knowledge we do not know how to arrange our ideas to think of it; at least I (an old man) find it difficult. Sight always seems to be the sense by w<sup>h</sup> we learn most, & earliest; but here consciousness w<sup>h</sup> seems to have nothing to do with sight, entirely displaces it. I look for a great treat as I advance in the book, I am sure it will interest me greatly, though I feel sure you have over estimated my ability to comprehend such subjects. There is nothing more perplex-

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ing to an old man than this entire destruction of root, foundation ideas. Yet to have correct general ideas is all important... Our conclusions surely can not be correct unless our first principles are so. Moreover, it does seem so late in the world's history to say that "knowledge much be based on the study of mental facts or *etc*" Every word of such a proposition is a stumbling block w<sup>h</sup> my old limbs can with difficulty clear...

I am really delighted at the gift, while ashamed to acknowledge my inability to comprehend the subject adequately. I feel sorry at the expense your affection put you to, while at the same time I am proud to acknowledge it as shewn towards myself. ~~It was very thoughtful & very kind of you, & added another & yet stronger testimony of the affectionate recollection you have of the pleasant hours we have spent together.~~

What a loss it is that in this country we have so few who will read & converse upon such subjects as Mivart brings to the surface. If one could talk of these things one might soon come to understand them. I hope to see you again, if I can get away at the end of Sept<sup>r</sup> The "Retreat" is the 26<sup>th</sup> & four following days. My kind remembrances to M<sup>rs</sup> Francis & with many thanks & affectionate acknowledgements of your love & esteem believe me

Ever your very sincere friend

W. A. JOHNSON.



Sept.  
1876

*Each Father Johnson*  
~~That George Muirart had struck a common chord is evident - from another letter written a month~~  
 In the spring before, Johnson's son after graduating from McGill had  
~~letter to his son 'Jimmie' who, having graduated from McGill in the spring, was now abroad and about to~~  
 gone abroad for further study and had entered the London Hospital. This  
~~last the same dangerous step had been taken. The letter~~

Father Johnson confused with University College, which, as we have seen, had  
 been founded with the expectation of being called London University, though  
 this was thwarted by the Anglican Church through the establishment of the  
 rival truly Sectarian institution of King's College. Father Johnson's  
 feelings regarding what he persisted in calling London University are shown  
 in a letter to his son of October 5th which explains his misgivings, to put  
 it mildly, regarding his former Head Prefect:

... For my part I am glad you went to London University, *though it*  
 I may be right or wrong that I do not know. I have never had an  
 opportunity of knowing. London University is manifestly & I  
 believe most intentionally an infidel foundation. It was begun  
 (I watched it) is continued, & is intended to prosper solely by  
 man's ingenuity knowledge & skill. Like the rods of the magicians  
 before Moses it will do great things, but in the end will not  
 succeed. Still with this knowledge, with this key by <sup>h</sup> to under-  
 stand it & use it, what advantages you might gain. There is this  
 difficulty: every man delights to speak of his coll. with respect



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if not love. Neither one or the other will you ever observe in men from London U<sup>n</sup>. There is no "Esprit de corps" in it. It has great men, very great, but they are individually great. Self is the end. It is the man that makes the institution there, not the institution the man. I wish I had time to shew you what I mean & know "in re" London Uni<sup>v</sup>. Suffice it to say if you go there you will find many excellent opportunities you can not find

elsewhere most particularly infidel ideas. What would I give to be well versed in such ideas: but only to disprove them in other people. Probably it is a dangerous school for you my Son. Unquestionably W. Osler shews it was so to him: but there is no good without its evil "no rose without a thorn" When you know this much go, & go on freely, only do not accept as true what seems on every side to be so. Would that you had time to read "Mivarts Lessons from Nature" & you would say "woe to Darwin Huxley & C<sup>o</sup>." I must close. . . .

With the opening of the fall term Osler's course in physiology was resumed, and he threw open to the class the privilege of attending autopsies at the Montreal General where his appointment as ~~pathologist~~ now gave him a foothold. One of his students, Dr. Beaumont Small, has given these recollections of the methods he pursued.



~~gical conditions.~~ During the session of '77 he commenced his demonstra-  
tion course in pathology/<sup>was</sup> modelled upon that of Virchow in Berlin with  
whom he had recently worked. <sup>The course being optional and</sup> ~~This was not yet in the curriculum, nor~~  
~~had pathology been allotted a separate course.~~ It was optional. It  
was nominally for his class in physiology, but many <sup>of</sup> ~~in~~ the senior years  
~~attended to take~~<sup>took</sup> advantage of an opportunity that had been lacking in for-  
mer years. This class met for an hour on Saturday mornings in his lecture  
room in the college. His method was to select three or four of his class  
to perform the autopsies during the week in the Montreal General Hospital;  
from these autopsies a certain number of specimens were selected for the  
Saturday clinic. Before the class met the specimens were all arranged  
on separate trays and carefully labeled. Each specimen in turn was care-  
fully discussed and all the important points clearly indicated. At the  
close of each case, questions were asked for and answered, the whole being  
most informal and conversational. The facts elicited in the autopsies  
were carefully correlated with the clinical histories and notes of the  
cases as taken in the wards. In order that his teaching should be of the  
greatest value to those in attendance, he furnished each one with a written  
description of each specimen, and with an epitome of the remarks which he  
had prepared. There were always four pages and at times eight pages of  
large letter size, written by himself and copied by means of a copying  
machine; there were from 30 to 40 copies required each Saturday, so that  
the demand such a task made on his time must have been heavy.



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Meanwhile W. A. Johnson has finished Mivart, and if he had come to <sup>the</sup> read <sup>the</sup> ~~this gentleman's~~ "Genesis of Species" <sup>by the same author</sup> one wonders whether his reaction <sup>of course</sup> would not have been the same as Huxley's.\*

\*"For Mr. Mivart, while twitting the generality of men of science with their ignorance of the real doctrines of his church, gave a reference to the Jesuit theologian Suarez, the latest representative of scholasticism, as following St. Augustine in asserting, not direct, but derivative creation, that is to say, evolution from primordial matter endowed with certain powers. Startled by this statement, Huxley investigated the works of the learned Jesuit, and found not only that Mr. Mivart's reference to the Metaphysical Disputations was not to the point, but that in the "Tractatus de opere sex Dierum", Suarez expressly and emphatically rejects this doctrine and reprehends Augustine for asserting it."

<sup>Huxley</sup>  
"By great good luck [he writes to Darwin from St. Andrews] there is an excellent library here, with a good copy of Suarez, in a dozen big folios. Among these I dived, to the great astonishment of the librarian, and looking into them as 'the careful robin eyes the delver's toil' (vide Idylls), I carried off the two venerable clasped volumes which were most promising."

"So I have come out in the new character of defender of Catholic orthodoxy, and upset Mivart out of the mouth of his own prophet." ["Life and Letters of Thomas H. Huxley." By his son Leonard Huxley. New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1901. <sup>Vol I</sup> p. 392.

From Rev. W. A. Johnson to W. O.

"The Parsonage"  
Weston 19. 10. 76.

My dear Osler. At last I have got through Mivart. I have been strongly tempted to put other things aside to enjoy his thoughts. My first feeling now is thankfulness to you for thinking of me at all,



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then for the kind of book you selected, what it is & what it leads to & what it has done respecting my former ideas. I really esteem your favour most highly & am very thankful for it. . . .

As to the book itself I look upon the first chapters now as the best part of it. To me they are in the highest degree instructive. That the ego is demonstrable from my consciousness never struck me. Long ago I was of opinion but did not see how that all that was peculiar to adamic man was the result of the contact or breathing into by the Creator. Now what is that but Mivart's moral consciousness? The first chap<sup>s</sup> though difficult to master are very important. In the remaining chapters I suppose the very numerous instances brought to prove his points are valuable to those who understand & can appreciate them; to me, there is more proof than is necessary, but this of course is owing to my ignorance of peculiar forms & to my being satisfied of the correctness of his argument generally. I must read his "Genesis of species" if I can find it some day. Everything I see attests to evolution in some sense, but surely not chiefly by natural selection. The last chapter I would rather had never been added. Mivart's reverence for the Church makes him claim too much for it, at least so it seems to me. I can believe that devout unbiassed monobibliological students from St. Aug. to Suarez & to this day if they stated a formula of creation would be compelled so to word it so as to include evolution; but I do not at present believe what Mivart seems to, that the Ch. is divinely appointed or called to formulate truth, & science is to work up to it. ~~He may not~~



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mean this. I may misunderstand him; but it seems like it. Believing as I do, what I mean is that the book of Nature & the book of Revelation are alike God's books. The one appealing to our sight the other to our hearing, or faith, a correct formula from one will agree in essential principles with a correct formula from the other. There is this difficulty to be met though. If you use the book of Revelation to formulate on the sciences, Geology we may say, the formula would be very brief, yet leaving room for all present discoveries, or all facts that may ever arise, & suppose a correct formula made first by Geologists, it will not be found to contradict revelation. For the purposes of moral enlightenment it is quite different. Here the formulæ are very comprehensive & agree in every part with experience. Mivart would have us believe that if the Pope expressed a formula on scientific subjects it would be found correct. I do not want to deny him. He may be quite right; but it does not follow, as I think Mivart tries to shew, that every formula enunciated by a Pope must be correct because the Pope is divinely appointed for that purpose. I wish that the last chapter had been left out.

Do like a good fellow try to make my peace with kind Mrs Francis. I longed to be down & tried to get down to Montreal but really it was too expensive. Hoping to get down I delayed answering her, until I was ashamed to. Jimmy has gone to London Hospital & grinds with Dr Cook of Westminster. I see Dawson of Mont<sup>1</sup> is an agent for Cooks plates. If you think of it look at the four on comparative anatomy & tell me what you think of them. Everything flat and calm here, from the weather to



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the Village. My best wishes for you. If anyone is coming up send me something interesting for the microscope. I am all alone as usual but have an invaluable woman keeping house for me. Yours very affectionately,

W. A. Johnson.

~~Osler~~ <sup>Osler</sup> His Christmas of 1876 must have been passed at home for he has left <sup>where he spent his Christmas holidays</sup> a tell-tale of <sup>the fact</sup> this in an obituary note\* concerning one of his old doctor

\*Canada Medical & Surgical Journal, 1877, v, 478.

friends, ~~James Hamilton of West Flamboro~~ who died a few months later.

~~Out of~~ What others would regard as needlessly taking trouble he made into a pleasure, and a volume could be written on the subject alone of the un-

expected but cherished visits he made to bring cheer and comfort to some

physician who was in trouble or laid low by illness <sup>on advancing years. In a well known address</sup> From 1820 till the <sup>delivered at a Canadian Bazaar</sup> time of his death Dr. Hamilton had lived, as Osler says, 'about two miles <sup>later Osler recalled the day, and the scene, and its</sup> from Ancaster on one of the most beautiful sites in Western Canada, im-

mediately above the town of Dundas and overlooking Burlington Bay and Lake

Ontario.'

On his offering.



On Xmas afternoon, 1876, I walked up the Galt road along the north side of the valley, and at the summit of what we called the Mountain, turned into a beautiful oak grove, in the centre of which, overlooking the valley was a comfortable old frame house with a wide verandah. Here in an arm-chair wrapped in his furs was the Nestor of the profession of the district, Dr. James Hamilton, who through me as a conductor greets you across a century this evening. In 1818, fresh from Edinboro, he had settled in this district, at first at Ancaster and in 1820 in West Flamboro, on this beautiful site overlooking the valley. To the Grand River on the south and for twenty miles on either side of the lake extended the area of his practice. And he had had a singularly successful life, for he was a hard-headed, good-hearted Scot, equally careful of his patients and of his pocket. On the visits to my home, both as a student and a young doctor, I had been in the habit of calling on the dear old man - I have always loved old men! - and I enjoyed hearing his anecdotes about Edinboro in the palmy days of *Monro primus*, and of his early struggles as the pioneer practitioner of the place. This time I saw that he was hard hit, with the broad arrow <sup>on?</sup> ~~on~~ his forehead. He spoke pathetically of his recent losses, of which I had not heard, and quoted the well-known verse beginning "Naked I come, &c." The scene made an enduring impression. The veteran after sixty years of devoted work, beaten at last by a cruel fate. Call no man happy till he is dead! He had been an exceptionally prosperous man. One of the founders of the Canada Life, Surgeon for years, and afterwards one of the directors of the Great Western Railway. The savings of a lifetime had gone in mills! He died in March 1877.\*

[\*"The Future of the Medical Profession in Canada." 1918. (unpublished.)]



Dec.  
1876

For nearly a year before his death symptoms of declining vigour were apparent to his friends, and signs of grave disease of the heart were discovered. The death last year of his son, Dr. Andrew Hamilton, of Melbourne, Que., was felt very keenly by him, and he never fully recovered from the fatigue of a hurried railway journey undertaken at the time. To the end, however, he was cheerful and resigned, though loth to depart, and on Christmas day, when the writer of the present sketch saw him for the last time, and on leaving spoke of his long and honourable career, he replied that nothing would please him better than to exchange his rusty old body for a young and active one, and work on for another eighty years. #

\*Obituary of James Hamilton. Canada Medical & Surgical Journal, 1877, v, 478.

Whenever possible during all this time he made what progress he could with his zoological studies, and on January 29th his long-deferred paper on the "Canadian Fresh-Water Polyzoa" was read before the Natural History Society.\* He refers therein, as already stated, to his researches

\*It was not published until six years later. (Canadian Naturalist, 1883, new series, x, 399).

with Johnson in 1867, and to those a year later when a student of botany



23

Jan.  
1877

with Professor Hincks at Trinity. He <sup>affair</sup> had given the paper scant preparation, <sup>for the next day he wrote his Cousin Jennette:</sup> as told in the following letter.

To Miss Jennette Osler from W.O.

Tuesday P.M.

My dear Jennette

As I told you in my Post card of yesterday, Marian has an attack of Rheumatism. She is much better today & the pain has almost left the shoulder & ankle & no other joints are affected. Her temperature was normal this A.M. & she had a very fair night. . . . Mrs Innis is still here & I take the first part of the night till 3, & she the rest. The amount of liquid M consumes is extraordinary, & she turns in the night & just says, "drink," takes a pull & goes off again. I have been suffering from the dire effects of procrastination and in consequence have determined to eschew that vice forever & aye. I had a lecture to give on Entozoa at the Veterinary School on Saturday evening, which was not begun on Friday morning. Last night I read a paper on the Fresh-water Polyzoa at the Natural History Society, which was prepared - well, between Saturday evening & Monday at 7 P.M. Howard is himself again & looking well. By the way you must cure all your colds in the head with the following powder which is doing me good service at the present moment. . . . Will write again tomorrow. Yours

Willie.



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One might assume that he had already spread himself <sup>thin</sup> enough, but there <sup>was</sup> ~~there~~ <sup>contact he had made.</sup> ~~this~~ <sup>letter to his cousin gives occasion to refer to still another interest</sup> was still another interest which engaged him and to which he referred in this letter. It will be recalled that while in Toronto he was <sup>want to visit</sup> ~~visiting~~ the veterinarians in connection with his study and tabulation of animal parasites, and it is evident from the titles he first uses at this time ("Professor of Physiology in the Veterinary College, Montreal" and "Vice President of the Montreal Veterinary Medical Association") that his interest in comparative pathology was still sufficiently alive to have induced him to ally himself with this other school.\* Accordingly on January 27th he had

*Footnote*  
\*The veterinary students attended the lectures of Dawson on botany, Girdwood on chemistry and Osler on the "institutes". Subsequently the Veterinary College, which had been purely a private venture became officially a faculty of McGill and on Osler's suggestion was named "The Faculty of Comparative Medicine".

lectured at the Montreal Veterinary College and was somewhat apologetic for his lack of preparation, though the subject was <sup>at his leisure end,</sup> ~~familiar enough~~, to him.

Several papers on comparative pathology were published during the next few years. In the first of them\*, read before the Veterinarian Asso-

\*"Verminous Bronchitis in Dogs with Description of a New Parasite." The Veterinarian, London, June 1887, i, 387. <sup>It is</sup> ~~introduction before introductory paragraph begins~~ "Early in the

*Conclusion first note next type*



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ciation on March 29th, he described a form of bronchopneumonia in dogs due to a previously unknown parasitic nematode. This he incorrectly named, having mistaken its generic identity, and it was subsequently renamed by Cobbold in 1879 the "Filaria Osleri."\* He theorized regarding the mode

\*Osler's original designation was Strongylus canis bronchialis, but the nematode has none of the characters of Strongylus. Indeed, despite Cobbold, it has so little in common with Filaria that recently a new genus, Oslerus, has been proposed for it. Cf. "Two new genera of Nematodes, etc." Maurice C. Hall. Proceedings of the U. S. National Museum, Washington, 1921.

of infection, and probably lack of time prevented him from subjecting his view to the experimental test. ~~The occasion of this study is told in his introductory paragraph.~~

1924

Early in the month of January I was asked by Principal McEachran, F.R.C.V.S., to aid him in the investigation of a disease which had broken out among the pups at the kennels of the Montreal Hunt Club, and which was believed to be of a pneumonic nature. On proceeding to the place we found that the affection was confined almost exclusively to animals under eight months old, and that it had already proved fatal in several instances. . . .



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*Of his other*  
 Other papers on *comparative* experimental pathology, appeared in subsequent years,

the more important of ~~them~~ <sup>dealt</sup> dealing with hog cholera, echinococcus, bovine tuberculosis and the parasites in the Montreal pork supply, <sup>until his last day, when left in Toronto with Duncan McEachran</sup> and it is of ~~even though this line of work~~ <sup>greatly</sup> diverged, and it is perhaps not <sup>entirely</sup> surprising that only a ~~interest that the~~ year before his death, <sup>unsolicited</sup> he wrote a review of General Mennessier de la Lance's "Essai de Bibliographie Hippique", a volume which had come to his attention. This appeared in the London Veterinary Review, and <sup>in</sup> the last paragraph of the article <sup>he refers to the fact that there has been a</sup> is as follows.

Students of the horse in all its relations owe a deep debt of gratitude to General Mennessier de la Lance for this comprehensive and valuable work, so full of accurate and careful scholarship. As a former teacher in a Veterinary College I <sup>and naturally feel</sup> may be permitted to offer <sup>the author</sup> him on behalf of the profession in Great Britain <sup>the</sup> our congratulations on its completion, <sup>this great work,</sup> and our heartfelt wishes that he may be spared to see final victory crown the Army of which he has been so distinguished a member.

*Miss E. L. L.*  
*Jan 1918*



Apr.  
1877

As in the preceding spring, so again this year he spent a week during the April recess in Boston, familiarizing himself with the Harvard Medical School, where, through the influence of Charles Eliot in the face of strong opposition, sweeping changes in <sup>the</sup>matriculation requirements and in methods of teaching were under way in the effort to "fix a standard of general education for the men who aspire to be her graduates." He was accompanied this time by Ross and Shepherd, and they devoted themselves largely to a detailed study of the methods of instruction in vogue in the school. H. P. Bowditch's course in practical physiology, Woods' method of teaching chemistry, the course in pathology given by J.B.S. Jackson and his then assistant Fitz, a demonstration in surgical anatomy by David Cheever<sup>Sr.</sup>, and a recitation in anatomy by O.W. Holmes were all attended and commented upon in an account of the visit subsequently written by Osler and published by his friend Zimmermann.\* *He*

\* "The Harvard School of Medicine." Canada Journal of Medical Science, Toronto, Aug., 1877, II, 274.



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Much of their time was evidently spent with J.B.S. Jackson, a pioneer pathologist of pre-microscopic days, then in his seventy-second year, of whom Osler says, 'It is a rare and truly pleasant thing to see combined in one man the enthusiasm that too commonly fades with youth, and the ripe wisdom of old age.' Of Holmes he wrote:

"Anatomy is still presided over by Dr. Holmes - better known to us in his literary than in his professional capacity. I was not so fortunate as to hear him lecture, but attended a recitation, the equivalent of the weekly examination or 'grind' of our schools. The subject was the cranial nerves, and the answering, for first-year students, was creditable. I noticed, however, that very many names were called before a respondent was found, silence being apparently with them the 'not prepared' of our students. The humour of 'The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table' glanced out here and there and enlivened the hour. Good sensible questions were put, but no special minuteness in answering seemed to be demanded."

He concluded the account with <sup>the following</sup> this paragraph and it is not without portent that at this early age he had begun to show such an interest in medical education and to urge its improvement.



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It is a matter for surprise that some of the leading colleges in the United States have not followed the good example of Harvard. No doubt it would be accompanied for the first few years by a great falling off in the number of students, and consequent diminution in income, and this, in many instances, is avowedly the chief obstacle to so desirable a step. One or two of the smaller schools have adopted the graded system, and I see by a recent American journal that the University of Pennsylvania has decided to pursue it, though in a modified and curtailed way. These are indications that the medical schools in the United States are being stirred up to some sense of the requirements and dignity of the profession they teach. It is high time. The fact that a Canadian student, after completing his second winter session (not even passing his primary), can go to the University of Vermont, and, I doubt not to many other institutions, spend ten weeks and graduate, speaks for itself, and shows the need of a sweeping reform. ~~\*\*\*~~

He must have been well aware, though he seems no where to have made written reference to the fact, that at this time elaborate plans were on foot for the establishment of a large hospital and medical school under the provisions of the Johns Hopkins Trust in Baltimore. Indeed two years before, an elaborate volume containing the plans and specifications of the buildings



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which were to be erected had already been published by John S. Billings, in which statements had been made to the effect that this future school was to aim at quality and not quantity, and that the "seal of its diploma should be a guarantee that its possessor is not only a well-educated physician in the fullest sense of the word but that he has learned to think and investigate for himself, and is therefore prepared to undertake, without danger of failure from not knowing how to begin, the study of some of the many problems still awaiting solution". He said further:

"It is not desirable that the classes should be large. In fact, as the results of such a school become manifest and the value of its diploma is understood, they may become too large for convenience in practical clinical instruction. A class of half a dozen such as I would wish the graduates of this school to be, would be a more satisfactory result for a year's labor than as many hundred turned out on the ordinary pattern."

The means of attaining this end are sufficiently well known: a high standard for admission; a four years' course; rigid and impartial examinations, preliminary, intermediate, and final; and practical work in the laboratory and apothecary's department, the microscope and photograph rooms, and the dispensary and wards of the Hospital.



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Thus was a new note sounded which could hardly have failed to reach Montreal even had not this same Dr. Billings pursued the subject by many subsequent published notes and addresses which were so numerous and which were sent out so broadcast that many people during the next few years must have believed that the Johns Hopkins Medical School and Hospital were already in full operation.

We have seen that Osler soon after becoming established in Montreal started among his colleagues a Journal Club for the circulation of foreign periodicals, and it was in this spring of 1877 that through his influence the McGill Medical Society was organized for the special benefit of the undergraduate students. Both of these organizations were of the same type as those he so successfully supported later on in Baltimore. Of the Students' Society Dr. Beaumont Small has written:

Its object, as defined by himself in his opening remarks at the first meeting on April 23, 1877, was to 'afford opportunities, which after graduating you never obtain, of learning how to prepare papers and to express your ideas correctly, while your meetings will also



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secure for you a training in the difficult science of debate.' Osler was its first President, but all the other officers were undergraduates, and the whole proceedings were in the hands of the members.

Osler, however, never missed a meeting; he joined in all discussions and <sup>Customarily</sup> ~~generally~~ closed each <sup>meeting</sup> ~~meeting~~ with a general review in which he combined much criticism and suggestion. A literary character was often imparted to the meetings by the reading of short selections from notable authors ranging from Shakespeare to Dickens.

During the summer session, up to July 17th, weekly meetings <sup>of the more social</sup> were held

and on the reopening of the school in the fall they were resumed with a

fortnightly interval. <sup>Indeed during the short summer session from May to July, there was a number of</sup> The somewhat informal teaching of these <sup>supplementary</sup>

and extra-curricular courses <sup>offered to the students - which were</sup> from May to July was always entered into with

vigour and enthusiasm by the younger members of the faculty; and <sup>one of them, one of the best</sup> Osler's

special course on "The Microscope in Medicine," which grew in later years

into the regular prescribed course in clinical microscopy now adopted by

all schools, was <sup>the</sup> <sup>fall</sup> most popular, and the fee of \$15 from each student doubt-

less added considerably to his meagre income.



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A month's vacation later in the summer was passed at Tadousac at the mouth of the Saguenay where he acted as the hotel physician, taking the place of Arthur Browne who, having served in this capacity the year before had expected until the last moment to return. The Governor General, Lord Dufferin, had his summer residence there, and as the Government wished to have a dependable doctor near by, one or another of the younger McGill faculty members volunteered for the position. The incumbent was given his board, picked up what practice he could in the summer colony, attended the Governor's family in case of need, and incidentally made pleasant acquaintances.

From W. O. to his cousin, Mrs. Francis.

[Tadousac, Canada]  
Friday 9 A M  
[July, 1877]

My dear Marian

I am rapidly getting too stout for my clothes ~~and by the~~ time my two weeks are out I expect to be of the build of a friend at - n. s. w. There is absolutely nothing to do here but loaf and eat and sleep. I have had no fishing yet but Robt. Shepherd is coming this evening and we will go up the Saguenay together trout-fishing. Yesterday morning was close & hot but in the evening a cold fog came up, making such a change. Mrs Ogilvie I find a pleasant little woman. I went for her last evening to the Urquharts who have a nice house here. Mrs Howard and her bairns keep well though little Muriel is rather cross & shy among the other children. Two very agreeable American girls - Bostonians -



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arrived yesterday and we have struck an acquaintance One - Miss Greenough - is very jolly. I had to lie, in my usual accomplished style when she asked me if she spoke like an American. I replied unblushingly that her accent was rather like the Midland countries, and delightfully English. The "vurries" betray her, more than anything else. The only patient I have had was a poor French child with inf of lungs following whooping cough - which is very prevalent among the natives. There are not many people at the Hotel. Monsig. Conroy[?] arrived last night creating quite a sensation in the village. It turns out that the Rev. Mr Higginson - Lord Dufferin's Tutor, was curate at West Flamboro. some 18 years ago. He saw my name in the book and called. I have a faint recollection of him. I have got one or two nice things for the Microscope but there are not many animals about. The water is fearfully cold. I made up my mind for a dip this a.m. but the tide was out too far. I wish you and Jack were here & the other chickabids It is such a nice place for children. . . )

Love to Jennette & the chicks

Your affec coz

Willie

On the memory of <sup>an</sup> ~~one~~ American girl <sup>whose "vurries" betrayed her,</sup> is left a lively recollection of

a young man of rare charm and gaiety, which, however, is not particularly

apparent in <sup>a</sup> this rather devout note which <sup>she has tenderly</sup> ~~has been~~ preserved, and which announces, ~~with mention of Tadousac,~~ <sup>that the sending of a little volume, because</sup> the pleasant memory of Tadousac, which "should have been sent before, but there has been an unavoidable delay in getting a copy, as our 'Proper Sessions' differ from those in use in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States"



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To Miss Greenough [Mrs. Barrett Wendell] from W. O.

1351 St. Catherine St. [Montreal]  
Oct. 8th [1877]

My dear Miss Greenough: The paper you kindly sent, containing the notice of your sister's death, arrived on Saturday. Please accept my sincere sympathy in this your bereavement, and express the same to your Father. I send today a little volume which will recall the pleasant memories of Tadousac. It should have been sent before, but there has been an unavoidable delay in getting a copy, as our 'Proper Lessons' differ from those in use in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. I have added to it Keble's "Christian Year." Yours sincerely,

W<sup>m</sup> Osler

The annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association was held this year in Montreal, September 12-13th, and as Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements he had much on his hands. Nevertheless he took an active part in its proceedings, gave the report on necrology, participated in a paper on Addison's disease with George Ross, in another with John Bell on pernicious anaemia, and responded at the dinner to the toast of the local profession. With the view of insuring the annual publication each year of the Society's Transactions, he provoked a discussion which had the custom-



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any sequel of such a suggestion, for he was promptly appointed Secretary of a Publication Committee and in this capacity edited the volume of Transactions which appeared the following year. As in most thankless tasks of this kind things get done in direct ratio to the activity of the Secretary, which in this case amounted to being Chairman as well, and on <sup>when</sup> his withdrawal the next year the "Transactions" promptly lapsed, ~~for a period of twenty~~ years. (?)

*He has certainly been appointed Registrar of the Medical School and in this capacity, on*  
On October 1st, at the opening of the session of 1877-8, as Registrar <sup>of the</sup> school he delivered before the assembled students the customary "Introductory Lecture."\* It was a serious and somewhat laboured effort

\*Canada Medical & Surgical Journal, 1877, vi, 204-10.

and, for him, a long address; <sup>for</sup> ~~and~~ to each class of students in turn he ~~must needs~~ <sup>explain</sup> explained the several changes which had been made in the curriculum with their purport and the advantages to be derived. He bade them banish the future and live for the hour and its allotted work, quoting again his favourite line from Carlyle. ~~Some of the paragraphs, of which his later talks~~



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to students on "A Way of Life" were merely an accumulative echo, may be quoted.

... And now let me add a word of advice on the method of studying. The secret of successful working lies in the systematic arrangement of what you have to do, and in the methodical performance of it. With all of you this is possible, for few disturbing elements exist in the student's life to interrupt the allotted duty which each hour of the day should possess. Make out, each one for yourselves, a time-table, with the hours of lecture, study and recreation, and follow closely and conscientiously the programme there indicated; I know of no better way to accomplish a large amount of work, and it saves the mental worry and anxiety which will surely haunt you if your tasks are done in an irregular and desultory way. . .

Of his own course he said:

And lastly, the amount of material at our command will enable us to extend the pathological teaching of the school. The system we have followed heretofore was good but incomplete. It is impossible properly to instruct students how to perform post mortems and at the same time demonstrate fully the lesions met with. I purpose this winter establishing a weekly demonstrative class, in imitation, however feebly, of the course conducted by Virchow in Berlin, in which the mat-



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erial collected may be thoroughly instructive to the final men among you. Pathology is the ground-work of clinical medicine, and if you wish to obtain a true insight into disease never neglect an opportunity to see and handle its effects on the various organs and tissues of the body.

He closed with an appeal for the living of upright, honest and sober lives:

... Above all things be strictly temperate. I will not say that you are in duty bound to give up the use of stimulants altogether - though my own convictions on this point are very strong - but this I do say, that the slightest habitual over-indulgence is as the small flaw in some dyke that forms the barrier to a mighty flood, which widening day by day, sooner or later drowns every fair promise and brings inevitable ruin.

To the thoughtful among you the speculative aspect of modern science will sooner or later prove attractive. Do not get entangled too deeply. I had rather give each of you good old Sir Thomas Browne's advice: not to let these matters stretch your pia-mater. Lastly, you will not only be better but happier . . .

'Knowest thou Yesterday its aim and reason?  
Worked thou well Today, for worthy things?  
Then calmly wait Tomorrow's hidden season,  
And fear not thou, what hap soe'er it brings!'



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In this fall of 1877 he abandoned his bookish landlord, the Shakespearean Mr. King, and moved into ~~some~~<sup>the</sup> second-floor ~~room~~<sup>front</sup> at 1351 St. Catherine Street in the house occupied by his colleague Dr. Frank Buller who had established himself in the ophthalmological practice to which Osler had once aspired. They were soon joined by two students. The first of them, E. J. A. Rogers, had been a Weston schoolmate of Osler's ten years before, and had made this late resolution to study medicine. He has written an engaging description not only of Osler's recognition and reception of him after the delivery of his introductory lecture, but also of his own personal feelings, a mixture of 'resolute curiosity and suppressed horror', in being made to participate immediately afterward at an autopsy. His account continues:

Leaving the hospital we walked back to his rooms, which I was told were from that time on to be my headquarters. He was then living with Dr. Buller on St. Catherine Street in ~~the~~<sup>an</sup> ordinarily built-in city ~~city~~ house with a front and back room on each of three floors, the back parlour on the first floor being Buller's consulting-room, the front room a waiting-room, used in the morning as a break-



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fast-room. The second-floor front room was Osler's; the other rooms were used as bed-rooms. Osler said I was to become the third member of the family. Buller acted more deliberately, and it was some little time before these latter rooms were rearranged and I was given the third floor front as my bed-room and study. Here, until I left Montreal after my graduation, I lived all through my studentship.

Osler never did anything by halves. From those who were willing and ready to work with him his demands were unlimited, but for this he more than repaid in the opportunities and good fellowship that he returned. I thus had every opportunity for the most intimate knowledge of all his mental and physical activities. Soon I found that through his whole-heartedness his friends had become my friends, but not, of course, through any virtue of mine; his pleasures and joys he shared with all those about him, talking freely of all that he had on hand, for in his ebullient enthusiasm he was still a school-boy. In his course of life he was more regular and systematic than words can tell; in fact, it was hardly necessary, living in the house with him to have a timepiece of one's own. One could tell the time exactly by his movements from the hour of his rising at seven-thirty until he turned out his light at eleven o'clock after an hour in bed devoted to the reading of non-medical classics.

His cheerfulness and equanimity were surprising. He never lost an opportunity of saying a word of cheerful encouragement. Nothing ruffled his wonderful temper. We three had breakfast together at



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eight o'clock. The only impatience I can recollect his ever showing was when the housekeeper was a little tardy in putting our breakfast on the table. . . . \*

\*"Personal reminiscences of the earlier years of Sir William Osler." Colorado Medicine, April, 1920, Vol. ? pp. ?

This 'housekeeper', it may be interpolated, was an elderly English-woman named Cook whose husband was a labourer of sorts. The janitor of the medical school, who as curator of the dissecting-room came closely in contact with the medical students, was also named Cook. This Cook a few years later disappeared through natural causes or otherwise, and Osler as Registrar of the school promptly substituted the other Cook - nicknamed "<sup>ph</sup> <sup>Cook</sup> Damfino" <sup>^</sup> by the students - in his stead. He and his wife, who had been housekeeper at the St. Catherine Street abode, <sup>became</sup> ~~were~~ well known characters at McGill for the next two decades and they did much to perpetuate Osler<sup>ian</sup> traditions among the successive generations of medical students. All medical schools appear to have 'trusties' of this kind, who more often than not are characters of real merit and wield actual power, of which Cook's <sup>familiar reference to</sup> "Me and the Dean" was significant.



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Dr. Rogers has written further regarding Osler's room and habits.

He used the upstairs front room as his study, library, sitting room and consultation room. Here he did practically all of his reading and writing. The desk, a flat office one, stood in the middle of the room and he sat with his back towards the two windows in front. The desk and floor about it and also an occasional chair or stand were always piled in apparent confusion with books and papers. It was his habit to bring in volumes from the library and elsewhere for reference upon the subject at which he was working and they usually remained convenient until the subject was disposed of. The college library at that time had a considerable number of current books and many bound volumes of old journals and he had taken complete charge of it all. \*

This room was not arranged for or inviting to patients; indeed very few patients ever came to it. He had little desire that they should come, for he seemed to have no inclination to take charge of any patient. He at that time occasionally saw patients outside in consultation with Dr. Howard and other physicians but always as a consultant. He had no desire for a private practice and was amply satisfied for the time being with his income through the college.

Patients were a secondary consideration. A consulting practice could wait, and when access to him was finally forced as in the later days in Baltimore, they came in such shoals as finally to drive him away. But



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he was certainly having enough to do, so much indeed as to make a necessity of the regular habits which his house-mate Rogers has pictured. Registrar of the school; pathologist to the hospital; on the council of the Natural History Society; participating in the clinical reports of many of his colleagues by adding a pathological note, usually the most important feature of the conjoint paper; writing papers of his own; the activating spirit of the Medical & Chirurgical Society; translating foreign medical articles for Fenwick's journal; editing the Transactions of the Canadian Medical Association; preparing for his elaborate pathological report; - and with all this he not only kept up with his ~~natural history~~ studies on the polyzoa but, as Dr. Rogers has stated, acted as voluntary librarian for the medical school as an advertisement <sup>of the day</sup> in the McGill University Gazette indicates.\*

*As Osler from this time until his death continued to be actively interested in some one or more libraries beside his own the ad-  
vertisement in  
question is  
in fullness.*

1877. A circular has been issued by the Graduates' Society calling attention to the smallness of the library fund, and requesting subscriptions from Graduates, for the purpose of increasing the revenue of this most important adjunct to an Institution like McGill. The annual revenue of the library is now, the circular states, about \$600, and with the exception of the Redpath and Alexander collections, the books are of a miscellaneous character. We sincerely trust that the appeal of the Society will meet with a generous response from all interested in the College. It would not be a bad idea to have every future Graduate pledge himself to subscribe fifty or one hundred dollars, within four or five years after graduation, to the library fund. Almost every one could afford such a sum, and though inconsiderable when viewed separately, the contributions would make a handsome total. Let the Class of '77, which has inaugurated so many reforms in College, take the lead in this matter!

Graduates, who have not received the circular, may obtain copies by addressing Dr. Osler, 26 Beaver Hall, Montreal.

*from the* McGill Gazette, 1877, Vol. III, P. 49.

*Footnote*



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But Osler was far from being a literary and laboratory recluse, and at the proper time was as ready for play and relaxation as any other. One opportunity for diversion was at the gatherings of the Dinner Club *which has been* already mentioned. He always took a more or less detached and non-gastronomic interest in the various dining clubs to which he belonged, and many years later he scribbled in pencil on the blank leaves of the publisher's 'dummy' of some collected addresses\* a list of his several

["\*Aequanimitas", the second edition, published in 1906.

"Clubs and Dining Clubs" to which is appended this note.

Though not a Club man in the usual sense of the term, many of my happiest recollections are associated with Clubs. Not a drinker, not a billiard player, and slow to make friends, the Club served as an hotel.



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In '74 - '76 I dined (usually with Arthur Browne) at the Terrapin, St. James' St. or at the Ottawa Hotel; afterwards I joined the Metropolitan Club in Beaver Hall and dined there for five or six years. We had a social club of <sup>twelve</sup> ~~ten~~ - Ross, Roddick, Rodger, Gardner, Alloway, Buller, Browne and Shepard Blackader, Pettigrew, Molson - and dined once a month through the winter. There are Apicean memories like those of the old surveyor in the introduction to the Scarlet Letter - mine to confess rarely lasts from one day to another. The calendar of my life is not rubricated with dinners, the sweet savour of which return to tickle my third ventricle. Indeed only two do so with faithful regularity whenever I see anything specially tempting, as currant dumplings or an old-fashioned suet pudding. One Saturday morning in the mid sixties a long, lank parson arrived at the Rectory and announced to father, the Rural Dean of the district, that he had come as Incumbent of Watertown which he thought was a couple of miles away. In reality it was 12 or 14 and I had to 'hitch up' the buggy and take him to the village. It was in the spring, the roads were awful, it was cold and raining, and he was a hungry Evangelical who persisted in bothering me about my soul. At that stage of boyhood I had not acquired a soul, and I was scared by the very unpleasant questions he asked. I had never had anyone attack me in this way before, and my parents were not the type of Xtian that could worry a growing boy with such problems. I was in despair as he had reached the stage of wishing to pray for me when I saw a wayside tavern - clapboard, desolate-looking, but it had the cheery sign - I see it now - John Rieman & Accommodation for Man and Beast. It was half past two and with the sensations of that hour much intensified. A nice warm kitchen, and in less than 15 minutes a meal fit for the gods! - ham and eggs, a big loaf of home-made bread - hot! - a pat of butter and



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a pot of green tea. The parson had <sup>a</sup>change of heart. The frying-pan was still on the stove, and the kitchen was still hazy with the ambrosial atmosphere. We could not resist the offer of more eggs. After more than 50 years stomach and brain combine to remember that as the very best dinner on their record. I delivered the Incumbent to his churchwardens and to my great relief was not billeted that night in the same house.

The other occasion recurs neither so often nor so acutely. One day Dr. Buller with whom I lived in St. Catherine St. said, "I am not going to have an ordinary dinner at the Club - we shall have an oyster supper here instead." It was the middle of November and the faithful Cook - "me and the Dean" remembered as ~~such~~ by three generations of McGill medical students - was sent to the dock for three barrels of <sup>Carraguet</sup> ~~Carraguet~~ oysters, which in those happy days sold at about \$1 (4 s.) a barrel -

Here the note abruptly ends. One could wish he had continued, but the memory of the occasion may have overcome him for this particular club meeting is remembered as a rarely festive affair. The note will serve to explain, to those who knew Osler at the table, his sentimental devotion to currant dumplings and a stodgy suet pudding, on the appearance of which he invariably burst into a <sup>Gugonian</sup> chant of exaltation keeping as nearly on the key as his unmusical ear permitted.



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It is perhaps worth noting that servants always adored him, nor did he ever forget them - <sup>herds</sup>Shepard's housekeeper, the 'Hypotheneuse', <sup>ph</sup>"Damfino" Cook and his wife; and so it was to the last, and to this day the servants at Christ Church and the Oxford Museum speak of him with <sup>most</sup>tears in their eyes but with a smile on their lips. His cousin Jennette of the letters, "the little Auntie" of the Francis children, writes:

"My remembrance of him as a student and a young professor is of one gifted with abounding vitality, hard-working for the love of work, prompt, alert, always cheery and always kind; thinking no evil of anyone and refusing to listen to ill-natured gossip and censoriousness. Of self-conceit or boastfulness he had not a trace; he thought for others and seemed to forget himself. The servants would gladly do anything possible for him; he had the happy knack of friendliness to rich and poor, young and old, learned and ignorant; and what he was in character as a boy and young man he continued to be throughout his life, an out-giving, expressing nature, sympathetic and true.

The volume of pathological reports\* representing his first year's

\*"Montreal General Hospital Pthological Reports." Montreal, Dawson Bros., 1878, pp. 97.



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work as pathologist to the M. G. H. up to May 1, 1877, was apparently completed for the press Dec. 10, 1877 - at least his preface is so dated from 1351 St. Catherine Street. The bulk of the report had appeared serially during the course of the year in the local journal\*, and a large number

\*Canada Medical & Surgical Journal, July 1877, vi, p. 12 et seq.

of the more important observations and rarer cases had been reported before the Medico-Chirurgical Society or at some other meeting, in conjunction with the clinician who had the case in charge.\* On the title-page he

\*It is largely due to this fact that such an amazing number of titles appear for the years 1877 and 1878 in Miss M. W. Blogg's enlarged "Bibliography of his writings, issued in Baltimore 1921. A bibliographer is interested chiefly in dates and places of publication, whereas a biographer's concern lies with the purpose of the writing and the date and place of preparation and delivery - a bio-bibliography -, and during 1877 there were no less than forty-nine entries on this basis in his bibliography. It is impossible to give more than a general idea regarding the character of most of these communications. Their chief value, as is true of the writings of most young men, lay in the personal training which the author received thereby; and throughout the rest of his life he continued to draw upon, and to make reference to, his pathological observations of these early years. Some of the studies were unquestionably important, and some of the observations original, but he was a person who always took the greatest pains to point out priority of observation on the part of others and rarely if ever made any claim in this respect for himself. The more important of the studies were doubtless those upon the anaemias, those upon aneurysms, and those on endocarditis and valvular diseases of the heart. These three topics were ones which he subsequently developed and wrote upon in detail.



quotes Wilkes's statement: "Pathology is the basis of all true instruction in practical medicine"; and the volumes bore this dedication:

To my Teacher  
James Bovell M. D.  
Emeritus Professor in Pathology in the Toronto Medical School  
This first pathological report from a  
Canadian Hospital  
is gratefully and affectionately dedicated.

He says in his preface:

Records of exactly one hundred autopsies have been entered in the post-mortem book of the General Hospital for the year ending May 31st. A few of special interest occurring in private practice have been included.

I may mention that the post-mortems are performed under my direction by the students attending the hospital, and the system of inspection followed is that of Virchow at the Charité, Berlin, and fully given in his "Sections-Technik." The notes are taken on the spot from dictation.

I propose in the following Report to give brief summaries of the cases of practical and scientific interest. Some of them have already been published in the pages of this journal, to such mere reference will be made.

When possible a synopsis of the clinical features will be given. I have grouped the cases under the various organs affected, believing



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this to be a more convenient method than dealing with the individual diseases, and in each case the organs are dealt with in the order of their pathological importance.

~~He~~<sup>while</sup> was at home in Dundas as was his custom for the Christmas holidays, ~~and while in Toronto~~<sup>he</sup> paid his usual visit ~~to~~<sup>an</sup> Father Johnson who was in somewhat broken health owing to an infection received ~~while~~<sup>during a</sup> caring for smallpox cases<sup>epidemic</sup> in Weston. ~~for want of a physician.~~<sup>Johnson</sup> He had written earlier in the year:

. . . . You observe about my Lenten Services. They were more than I can manage again. The additional work in consequence of not having a D<sup>r</sup> to attend to small-pox cases made it necessary for me to be on the go incessantly, so many saying "we will not keep you a moment, but do call & tell us if so & so has small-pox," & of course every one thought they had it. I am still overdone but getting well, & all you D<sup>rs</sup> could say of me is, Oh, he is tough, he will be well if he rests awhile, but somehow that rest awhile does not come. I am netted up, or webbed up with these poor people, & they are my children in some sense, & without knowing it they depend upon me for more than they know, & my constant habit of being found in the Vestry leads more & more to come to me about some trifle or other. The



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absence of a medical man with a little common sense & fellow feeling increases my work too. There is nothing noticeable hereabout. Prices high, war prospects increasing. An occasional cracked skull from too much whiskey, & on the other hand some one failing for want of a little. It is hard to hit the happy medium.....

Shortly after Christmas Johnson writes to <sup>his son</sup> 'Jimmie' still in England:

...Your dear Mother, Arthur, Willie, Dr. Bovell, all well when I last heard. Osler was with me a few hours two or three days ago. He is going to Germany next spring again, & to New York to read an article on the Hog disease of America on the 23 inst. before the Pathological Society there.....