Notes for Bibliophiles

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Edited by

LEONARD L. MACKALL

Sir William Osler 1849-1910 THIS new department cannot be in-

sugurated more appropriately than by giving here some slight account of one of the greatest of modern bibliophiles, to be followed by extracts from his essays on books.

William Osler was born at Bond Head, Ontario, Canada, July 12, 1819; was graduated from Trinity College, Toronto, took his M. D. at McGill University in 1872, became professor there and, in 1884, at the University of Pennsylvania, moved to Johns Hopkins in 1889 as its first professor of medicine, and went to Oxford in 1905. He was made a baronet in 1911.

As a great physician, a genius at diagnosis, an inspiring teacher and the author of what is still the standard textbook on the practice of medicine in English (translated into French, German, Spanish, and even Chinese), beside innumerable special studies, his medical fame was and is world-wide and based on actual work done well. He himself wished to be remembered chiefly as having taught medicine at the bedside of the patient and as one who loved his fellow men. When he died at Oxford on December 29, 1919, "The London Times" well said that it was the "power of evoking the love of his fellow workers that most distinguished him."

He suffered keenly and long under the very widespread but strangely fantastic distortion of a harmless whimsical reference (when taking the st Johns Hopkins in 1905) to Troitopes forgotten n Fixed Period." The newspapers never mentioned Trollope, whose book is still inaccessible, but the crucial passages may still be found where they first appeared, anonymously, in "Blackwood's Magazine" for October, 1881, pp. 419, 429. (°)

For seven years, until his death, he was president of the Bibliographical Society of England and America and its debt to him in many ways is great. He was a member of the fanous Roxburghe Club, the oldest and nost discriminating of the book lubs. He was a curator of the Bodian Library, and "The Bodleian uarterly Record" was started at his ggestion and with his generous pport.

After his only child, Edward vere Osler (a direct descendant of ul Revere), was killed in action September, 1917, not then twentyyears old, the broken-hearted her presented all his books to the ans Hopkins University, with a table endowment to form a Tudor Stuart Club there somewhat simto the Elizabethan Club at Yale.

Ur. Osler's masterly monograph, "Incunabula Medica; a Study of the Earliest Printed Medical Books, 1467-1480," unfinished at his death, has recently been completed and was issued last year by the Bibliographical Society, with a personal preface by the re friend A W Pollard (the

notes, of his wonderfully rich, historically arranged, scientific and medical library, bequeathed to McGill University, Montreal. Naturally there are still many gaps in the collection, but the number of historically important and rare or unusual books is large and Dr. Osler's notes on them are interesting and informing. The "Catalogue" has been carefully completed as far as possible, is being printed by the Oxford University Press and will be published soon. Its most striking feature is the first group, a "Bibliotheca Prima," designed to show:

1. The evolution of knowledge in science and medicine;

2. The life and work of the men who made the great original contributions:

by arranging in a comparatively small number of works the essential literature grouped about the men of the first rank, arranged in chronological order. It begins with Lucretius (as giving a general view and as apparently the first to give "a correct account of man's origin"). anthropologists, etc., for "The Beginnings"; then Egypt, etc., and ends with Röntgen (No. 1702). Then comes the "Bibliotheca Secunda" (less important writers, arranged alphabetically-now in proof through Carl Ludwig, No. 8282, in all), to be followed by groups "Histories," "Bio-graphica," "Bibliographica," "Incunabula" and "Manuscripts"---some 750 pages in all, probably, of which about 300 are already in revised proof.

Dr. Osler was not only a singudisministing enliector really significant or interesting books, but he always took special pleasure in teaching bibliography and an intelligent love of books informally, but with rare knowledge, judgment and a grasp of the human as well as of the historical elements. In Bal timore, as in Oxford, he invited his students to his hospitable home, showed his most interesting books and told them stories in connection with their authors and the history of the subject so simply and yet so vividly that even the least interested of his many hearers became thrilled and never forgot the impression of the chief facts. Similarly, at the Johns Hopkins Hospital Historical Club and elsewhere, he made many an old book and its author really live again. He might have called these talks and demonstrations "book clinics:" Now others would probably call them masterly applications of the "case system." His various printed addresses and essays dealing with books and men are singularly charming. His favorite author was Sir Thomas Browne, whose quaint humor and strange conceits delighted him always.

In Baltimore Dr. Osler formed a so agreeable that when he was leav- many problems in medicine be apsented him with a magnificent "Hen- the student who dates his kr

num opus-an elaborate catalogue, I T IS hard for me to speak of the with historical and biographical Value of libraries in terms which would not seem exaggerated. Books have been my delight these thirty years, and from them I have received incalculable benefits. To study the phenomena of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea. while to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all. Only a maker of books can appreciate the labors of others at their true value. Those of us who have brought forth fat volumes should offer hecatombs at these shrines of Minerva- Medica. What exsuccous, attenuated offspring they would have been but for the pabulum furnished through the placental circulation of a library. How often can it be said of us with

trath, "Das beste was er ist verdankt er Andern!" , . . But when one considers the unending making of books, who does not sigh for the happy days of that thrice happy Sir William Browne, whose pocket library sufficed for his life's needs; drawing from a Greek Testament his divinity, from the aphorisms of Hippocrates his medicine and from an Elzevir Horace his good sense and vivacity. There should be in connection with every library a corps of instructors in the art of reading, who would, as a labor of love, teach the young idea how to read. An old writer says that there are four sorts of readers: "Sponges which attract all without distinguishing; Howreglasses which receive and poure out as fast; Bagges which only retain the dregges of the spices and let the wine escape, and Sives which retaine the best onely." A man wastes a great many years before he reaches the "sive" stage.

may not suffice to save a man from becoming a poor, mean-spirited devil, without a spark of fine professional feeling and without a thought'above the sordid issues of the day. The men I speak of keep alive in us an interest in the great men of the past, and not alone in their works, which they cherish, but in their lives, which they emulate. They would remind us continually that in the records of no other profession is there to be found so large a number of men who have combined intellectual preeminence with nobility of character. This higher education so much needed to-day is not given in the school, is not to be bought in the market-place, but it has to be wrought out in each one of us for himself; it is the silent influence of character on character, and in no way more potently than in the contem,lation of the lives of the great and good of the past, in no way more than in "the touch divine of noble natures gone."

I should like to see in each library a select company of the Immortals set apart for special adoration. Each country might have its representatives in a sort of alcove of Fame, in which the great medical classics were gathered. Not necessarily books, more often epoch-making contributions to be found in ephemeral journals.

("Books and Men. Remarks made at the opening of the new building of the Boston Medical Library Jan. 12, 1901." Boston Medical and Surg. etc.)

The very marrow and fitness of books | Journal, 1901, vol, 144; repr. in Osler's vol. "Acquinimitas," 1904, etc.)

> Bedside Library for Medical Students A liberal education may be had at a very slight cost of time and money. Well filled though the day be with appointed tasks, to make the best possible use of your one or of y ten talents, rest not satisfied with your professional training, but try, to get the education, if not of a scholar at least of a gentleman ... Before going to sleep read for half an hour and in the morning have a book open on your dressing table. You will be surprised to find how much can be accomplished in the course of a year. I have put down a list of ten books which you may make close friends. There are many others; studied carefully in your student days these will help in the inner education of which I speak.

- I. Old and New Testament.
- II. Shakespeare.
- III. Montaigne (Temple Classics of Everyman's Library).
- IV. Plutarch's Lives.
- V. Marcus Aurelius.
- VL. Epictetus.
- VIL Religio Medici (ed. by Dr. Greenhill, Macmillan's Golden Treasury Series).
- VIII. Don Quixote.
- IX. Emerson.
- X. Oliver Wendell Holmes-Break fast Table Series.
- (Osler's vol. "Aequinimitas." 1904.



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used a of the ecor. rectives of the premature senility which is so apt to overtake him. Self-centered, self-taught, he leads a solitary life, and unless his every day experience is controlled by careful reading or by the attrition of a medical society it soon ceases to be of the slightest value and becomes a mere accretion of isolated facts, without correlation. It is astonishing with how little reading a doctor can practice medicine, but it is not astonishing how badly he may do it.

There is a third class of men in the profession to whom books are dearer than to teachers or practitioners-a small, a silent band, but in reality the leaven of the whole lump. The profane call them bibliomaniacs, and in truth they are at times irresponsible and do not always know the difference between meum and teum.

. . Loving books partly for their contents, partly for the sake of the authors, they not alone keep alive the sentiment of historical continuity in the profession, but they are the men who make possible such gatherings as the one we are enjoying this evening. We need more men of their class, particularly in this country, where every one carries in his pocket the tape measure of utility. Along small informal dining club, which he two lifes their activity is valuable. named "The Ship of Fools." It proved By the historical method alone can ing for Oxford the members pre- proached profitably. For example,

the market practitioner a well-Fo

His own zest and enthusiasm were infectious and he was unfail- ing in the sympathy with which he- cheered those who were doing the spade work, for which it was im- possible that he himself should find time. More than this: He worked	by voltaire to his physician, Dr. de Silva—a fitting application by others of the principle on which he him- self always so generously and unself- ishly acted: "The true bibliophile has a keen pleasure in seeing an im- portant document in its proper	a very correct, but he has a very in- complete, appreciation of the subject. Within a quarter of a century our libraries will have certain alcoves devoted to the historical considera- tion of the great diseases, which will give to the studient that the	BOOKS ON EVERY PHASE OF AMERI- CAN history; genealogy; local history, BOOK SHOP, 312 W. 34th Street, N. Y. BACK NUMBERS OF METROPOLITAN newspapers and magazines, HENRY P. McGOWN, 1487 Broadway. BOOKS ON GENEALOGY AND FAMILY history, Researches made, CHARLES A. O'CONNOR, 21 Spruce St., New York City. INSTRUCTION	raphy or give literary or library serv- ice. Likewise assist student of litera- ture. Advertisfr had to give up actives newspaper work on account of failing eyesight. Address Y 2433. Heraid SCIENTIFIC BOOKS SETS OF SCIENTIFIC PERIODICALS and books on natural history bought and sold by HENRY FIEDLER. 19 Vesey St.
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