

ONE staggers at the thoroughness with which Dr. Harvey Cushing, the distinguished surgeon, has presented in two large volumes the life and career of his friend and fellow worker, Sir William Osler. To appreciate how a man of such an eventful and crowded professional career, as has been Dr. Cushing's, could undertake such an exhaustive work, one must know something intimate of his younger days here at Yale College. Whatever he undertook then, he did with like thoroughness. His habits of life were scientific in their approach, whether in the class room or on the baseball field. He was the kind of a young man for whom his classmates and instructors predicted instinctively a career of distinction.

The intellectual and physical quality of resolution, fired by a love of research, the aptitude for industry and his appreciation of the same characteristics in others, fitted Dr. Cushing for the task of preserving for posterity the unusual attainments, professional, personal and social, of his friend Sir William. How superbly he has discharged it those know who have read his volumes—others can know by seeking the pleasure of their acquaintance—literally a work of love and admiration. The world of literature has, in consequence, been enriched by a contribution in which both the professional and the layman find exhilaration. Associates, neighbors and comrades, these two men had more in common, in and out of their labors, than falls to the lot of most men—hence the brilliantly conceived and executed biography.

It is, however, difficult for a layman to do the work justice for much of it is technical, but, even so, the charm of the recital thrills. From the family background in Canada—the Province of Ontario—the years at Johns Hopkins, and the longer period at Oxford, England, Dr. Cushing weaves a story which makes its appeal to all three communities. A man of many experiences, habitats and moods, Sir William demanded a man of like nature to look into his very soul and comprehend him. This Dr. Cushing has done, and with such radiant affection! A review of the volumes in the Bulletin of The New York Academy of Medicine—October, 1925—said in part: "Dr. Cushing has performed a difficult task and he has done it well. He has had to write for readers in both hemispheres; for those in England, he gives Osler's setting in the back woods of Ontario at Bond Head, where his father was a Church of England missionary, and pictures the conditions of life in general in Canada and the United States, not to speak of telling the state of medicine in those countries. And for Canadians and Americans, he portrays Osler in the midst of the university life of Oxford and describes the medical activities of London in which Osler took such a prominent part. \* \* \* It seems to us that Dr. Cushing has written a book not only for today, but a century hence it will stand forth both as the biography of a great man and also as one of the best chronicles of medical life, of the rapid advances made in the art and science of medicine, and of such matters as the anti-typhoid and anti-tuberculosis campaign, during the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries."

The two striking features of "The Life of Sir William Osler," which arrest the attention and provoke the admiration of the lay reader, are, first, its thoroughness in richness of detail, and, second, its modesty. It is nothing short of amazing in a work of this character, filled with details of an intimate nature, that the first personal pronoun will be searched for all but in vain. It is there only when it must be there, and then in a shy and shrinking spirit. This quality, rarely met with in an undertaking of this sort, stamps the biographer as an artist in that field of activity as his distinction in his chosen field of surgery stamps him as the artist there. We leave it to others to discuss this dual capacity—to us it bears the hall-mark of positive genius. The volumes cannot be too highly commended to those who find fertile intellectual soil in the field of biography, and rejoice in the recital of the battles of life with its hero marching on triumphantly to nobler victories. Nor will the discriminating reader overlook the fact that Osler and Cushing move onward and upward together.