

cos47/25.7

1920

No. 148
(Article copied from "THE PERIODICAL"
Vol. VII, No. CIV)

SIR WILLIAM OSLER, Bart., F. R. S.

Dr. Osler was world famous before he went to Oxford as Regius Professor of Medicine in 1905, and became a Delegate of the Press. He was born at Bondhead, Ontario, on July 12, 1849. After graduating in Canada, he continued his medical studies in London, Leipzig, and Vienna, and held professorships at Montreal, Philadelphia, and at Johns Hopkins University, where he was also phusician to the Hospital and practised as a consultant.

He had great forerunners at Oxford in Acland and Burdon Sanderson. "He found the Medical School", the Times says, "at a very important period of its development, and he at once recognized its possibilities and devoted himself to the solution of its problems. His own enthusiasm and the charm of his personality made it comparatively easy for him to harmonize the divergent interests which formed an obstacle to the success of the school. He brought about more close and intimate relations between the University and its graduates in London teaching schools of medicine, and thus prevented the possibility of a breach, which was in some danger of arising."

He has been described at "the beloved physician", and all tributes to him speak of his personal charm, his wonderful influence, and his versatility. Last year he delivered the presidential address to the Classical Association, and for the last seven years he had been president of the Bibliographical Society, in connexion with which he was engaged on a work dealing with early medical works printed in the fifteenth century. He was a Curator of the Bodleian Library as well as a Delégate of the Press.

A charming selection from his writings, compiled by C.N.R. Camac, was published in 1908 under the title Counsels and Ideals. In the general publications of the Press - his bent was more particularly to historical and antiquarian books - the Regius Professor took a lively interest which was much appreciated by his co-Delegates.

"C. A." in NATURE states that two days before Sir William Osler died there had arrived in Oxford the "Festschrift", compiled by his friends for his seventieth birthday. "This volume, which had been presented in form but delayed in completion, he was never to see; it is now a monument, one among many, to his memory." Another, it may be stated, is an anthology of poetry compiled by friends who kept in mind what they understood to be his special tastes.