

W.O.'s notes:

CUS417/3.10

Nov. 22, 1911.

Bodley Investigation by Curators of Nicholson's behaviour.

F. Madan's statement. and clearly. Nov.? 1st date for illness, Decline 2nd half 1910. July 1910 looked ill and complained illness, away, Goldsby, came back work Aug. 15- Oct. 10, was worse, partial illness ~~till~~ Nov. 7 to Dec. 24. Improved, broke down, March 6, 1911, away ill till April 27 - whole term. Till Aug. 31 able to be at Library every day. Sept. 1 away, back Oct. 16, looked well, at Lib. on and off part of ev (evening?)

2nd absence. Always and ever L. (Librarian) has said work of Lib severe, has had to overwork and staff overworked. At one time 70 days stat(ed) holiday too much and suggest(ed) 40 days. Staff of 70+ persons. Lists per receipt ? daily 200.

and serious. Av. for 1900-09 is 74 or 75 days i.e. within stat. time. 1910 ave. 1st half 37 days; 2nd half 113 = 150, not all of each day; 6 hrs = a full day except when we close at 3, the 5 hrs. In 1911 (up) to present days of absence = 163

150

313 = in 2 yrs

not total, comes fr. part of days, not closed days included, or Sundays. No days of full hrs in the day = 1906-9. 150 days in each year. Full hours 1910:- Jan.-June 56 full, July - Dec. 6.

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1911 - in 1st half 5 days; in 2nd half to date 3 days. 1st w. 5¹/₂ hrs; 2nd w. 4³/₄; 3rd w. 4¹/₂; 4th w. 2¹/₂; 5th w. 1¹/₂; 6th w. (this week) only a (2)? ¹/₂ hrs.

3rd (absence). Work done, most imp. Under stim(ulus) of Cur (ator) pressure? he can do work; will-power great, can go 1 hr Cur(ator) meeting. When stimulus removed he can do nothing This reaction staff see it all. Curators cannot see it. See Gibson and Somerset. Will come and sink into chair, averse to writing. When tries to do work spends his time in revision of catalogue and of music -asks "is anything I must see?". Five-sixths of his time proofs of catalogue. Full of odd tricks, not under self control(?). Carries (?- off all sheets of paper, puts down and puts hand on it, turns over 15-20 times. At worst gets up sideways and plumps down. Cannot get into door 15" before be caught in, any staff knows, not stair. Day of visitation was at his best, 4.30 in Library, there alone - doing nothing - turning paper over: work done which should not be done. He that is his position (1) reg. of Camera reading, 2nd, action in copyright bill Cam. 10 - 10 and much work. Since July 1910 only these twice. V.C. asks "how do you know that?" Wheeler and Miller test it - once for a short time in eve Oct. 1911, once half morning with Goudy. 2nd print copyright bill Nov. 8th sent memo to Warden of All Souls. B. Lib. wrote to Warden referring to evidence given in 1898 on 13th. Lib. dictated notes to Gibson and memo to Warden and a report in 5 lines "read it". £200 for Univ. needs, value as department as national literature was invaluable. Asked Gibson why and said Lib. not in a condition to draw up a memo. Other headings not dealt with - (1) Bible exhibition - no steps taken; (2) case rej. of the Dyer MSS; (3) Ref. of Mass? of Hartmann; (4) shortage of boys; (5) finance of Cat. revision - price fellows donation; (7) Repaid MSS binding; (8) Report 1910, less than one page by Lib. the rest elsehow written and only corrected; (9) Discourtesy to readers - 7 or 8 - no rhetoric or peroration.

Dr. Cowley when nom. 12 years ago and appointed to work with him and very disappointed to take any other position. Things changed since 1910. Agree with Mr. Madan:- (1) Understand B. Lib has no knowledge of accounts of this year but the position of extra staff, 18 persons who cost last year £1293. In that cost of this should be kept in hand - no one supervises it - no regulation - occasionally consults Gibson diaries not kept. (2) Cat. revision - 12 persons working - cost £1020 - chief trouble is no scheme in existence, either what or way; at present he reports once in 3 mos and Lib. does not understand. (3) Underground storage - there again no scheme as to books or classes of books to be transferred. Camera basement a disgrace to any Library. (4) In Staff calendar certain duties put down as Lib. duty for year - among them selection of foreign books now altogether. (5) Book catalogue, neglected (6) List of history books, ex-price fellows' books. (7) Copy-right report or August not yet sent for May. "Inquire of the inevitable Gibson". (8) Routine matters come to me in way of correspondence and take up all my time, and take me from Oriental side. Mr. Madan has told you he has been coming later and later.

W.O.'s notes Nov. 22, 1911 - continued.

Sen. Proctor. Ill from 1910 - work satisfactory and normal to 18 mos. ago. What is the practice in illness? Never ill - dies now if ill - take it as ordinary holiday. Ass. allowed not to count illnesses as holidays. Goudy says no Staff calendar lays it down. Mr. Madan tells how large, and staff overworked. Is it understaffed? M. says has never had it in charge. C staff can work it? One more - has business increased? (M.) Not yet, but normal work not begun. Jackson chips in

Jun. Proctor asked about 18 extra staff? Vary from time to time.
 ✓ A.L.S asked about Prize Fellows Modern History works. F. Part 1909 £63 expanded. 1910 only mem. is in finished part shows £45 spent. 1911 more spent - not yet handed over for 1911, not asked for.

Nov. 24, 1911.

After Nicholson's return in October 1911, he was better for a time, but then the phobias and tricks returned and he was so much away that the Curators decided to hold a Committee of enquiry. On this I declined to serve, as I was seeing him ⁱⁿ a semi-professional way. To this meeting I was summoned as member of the Standing Committee. Madan's report had evidently been prepared with the greatest care. I really think it would have been more decent if he had not given evidence as he and Nicholson have been at loggerheads for years. Nicholson has volumes of Madiana full of all sorts of accounts of M.'s "brutal" treatment of him. If we try to dislocate N. he will bombard the University with these stories and there will be a pretty row.

March 4, 1912.

This term has about finished poor Nicholson. His phobias were very bad, and kept him working hours at night making compensation for all sorts of trivial actions. He got to the Library for a few hours each day but was not fit for any continuous work. At the Standing Committee he was often very muddled but he had no actual delusions. His last appearance at the Library was at the Curators' meeting, Feb. 10. Though he looked very ill he made a very clear statement of his condition, attributing it all to lack of sleep, said he was getting better and asked to be allowed to take it easy for a few months. He was really a very pathetic figure - a broken man at the very end of his career, still hopeful, still unable to see what was so evident to all that the game was up. The V.C. asked him to retire, and it was decided after discussion that he was to be asked to take a year's leave with full pay. The strain of the Meeting knocked N. out badly and he took to bed and for two weeks kept pretty well, except that his pulse began to slow down dropping to 26 and 30 with well marked intervening beats at the heart. He sent a nice reply to the V.C.'s letter accepting the terms, but asking for a few conditions. These were read at a special meeting Saturday, Feb. 24. And the V.C. sent an explanatory letter on Sunday, the 25th. N. dictated a letter to the V.C. accepting the terms. That day he began to have delusions and he has been mad as a hatter ever since. He thinks the spiritualists have combined

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against him, and the spirits come to his room in , they have got his wife and the nurses on their side. On Wednesday about 7 p.m. he thought they were planning an attack on him, and he rushed downstairs, got a knife and locked himself in the dining-room. In a few minutes he escaped through the window and got out on the street in his night shirt. With difficulty he was got to bed, and until last eve he has been pestered terribly with these delusions. I sat with him for an hour yesterday. His distress was most painful, distrust of the nurses, anxiety as to what the spirits would do next. They had put a tombstone on his bed but when he felt it changed to canvass. The room was filled with and phantasmagoria. And he would look intently and say - "See that old man with a grey beard standing by the window making faces at me? I can go up to him, pass my hand through him, smooth his face, - but it is nothing but a . I could not make out what he thought the spirits would do but he dreaded bodily hurt and said he would not go to sleep unless someone whom he trusted stayed in the room. He told me with extraordinary detail and clearness the story of the episode on Wednesday night and then sat up in bed and dramatically said "What will people say - what can they say - Bodley's Librarian out in the street at 7 o'clock in his night shirt with a knife in his hand! They must say I am crazy. Ah! if they only knew. If the Bishop, or Dr. Sanday, if any really good man could come, he would see these spirits and see how real they are". I said "Nicholson, am I not good enough to see them?" A broad smile spread over his face, and in a most natural way he put up his monocle and said "You do not believe in them, you can do no good". I promised to send him a secret answer if he wrote for any but to deceive the spirits; if I meant what I wrote a cross would be on the envelope, if it was the opposite a circle.

March 4th? The Spirits have not been so troublesome, but he is worried about this house and some transfer, and he hears men boring holes in the basement. Last night he went on a voyage with the nurse for six hours. The ship is the second storey of the house with the framework of the lower storey. It floats out, sails down the Banbury Road over beautiful clear water. He could see the tramcar tracks 10 or 12 feet down. The High, Carfax, the corner at Cat Street where he gets a good view of St. Mary's, are favourite places to stop. But there are landing stages and passengers and much baggage is put off. A dream could not have such movements.

W. OSLER

March 17, 1912, 8 p.m.

Annie, Nicholson's faithful maid, has just come in to tell of his death at 5.30 this afternoon. Yesterday I saw the end was near. He was cyanosed in the face, and the hands and feet were purple, the pulse scarcely perceptible, and the heart an irregular tic-tack. He ^{was} clearer in his mind and had had a good night. He

said in a very natural way "How do you think I am? Better? There is no danger, is there? I feel stronger". He had a great dread of dying and mercifully knew nothing of the seriousness of the condition. He spoke of the mental tricks and said they were better - the spirits had gone but he saw things occasionally, and had many fancies. Only a few days ago he told me that he should be back at the Library next year in first class form. There was so much to do and he only could manage it. Had he seen Madan in his chair, as I had done an hour before, it would have killed him. Mrs. N. told me, and he told me often himself, that he had been deeply wronged by Madan for years. M. has the same opinion ✓
 Nicholson! I wonder where his Madiana are! He was a strange character. Mrs. N. tells me he never missed his prayers night and morning, and last summer in Wales he would say them in the woods! I really believe he had a good heart when once you got inside the pericardium. I got on well with him by talking plainly. He could be appallingly rude, and there are scores of stories about his rough treatment of visitors to Bodley. Nothing could have been more ungracious than his reception of me one day in 1901 or 2 when I called to see a John Locke MS. I had no introduction. He said it was impossible. I told him it was absurd to stick to rules and keep me a day or two getting the necessary introduction. ✓ At last he yielded but with very ill grace. Then he said the MS was not in the Library, but when I told him it was and that it was wrongly catalogued he was furious; but I insisted and he sent for the number I gave, made a correction and gradually softened.
 ✓ The next move will be interesting - Who is to be Bodley's Librarian? Madan has earned it in Scholarship etc. but he is too old in years.

(P.S. 8.XI.17.

I was mistaken. He was not and has made an A 1 Librarian) W. Osler.

June 1, 1912.

Meeting of the Curators of the Bodleian:- V.C. (Heberden), the Proctors, Murray, Goudy, Jackson, Anson, Poynton, Scott Holland, Driver, Wilson and myself. Four candidates, Sayle of Cambridge, of the British Museum, Madan and Cowley. The two outside men soon ruled out. Goudy discussed Madan and Cowley. He and Wilson and Murray discussed Madan, age 61, but urged that he was a strong, vigorous man, and had the great advantage of knowing the Library well. Jackson spoke of his tact and skill. No one else spoke. I did not think it worth while to say anything - nor did I think it right to speak of the risk of putting a man at 61 in charge of so big a job. Then, too, Madan has been a faithful worker in the Library for 32 years. He and Cowley are now on good terms which is important for the future. A ballot was taken and the vote was unanimous. We sent for M. and told him. He made a

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very nice speech, spoke of his age, but said he was well and strong and - like a presenile, said he was as good a man as he ever was! and had always taken plenty of exercise.

WM OSLER

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