

WILLIAM OSLER

Dr. Osler's address at the dedication ceremonies of the Phipps Clinic deserves and will hold a permanent place in literature, not merely medical or professional, nor simply as a sort of intellectual marker along the road of science, but as a profound study of human progress. It is not the address of a doctor, though to have written it a man must have mastered not only all the technique but the whole soul of that profession; but it is the address of a seer, of one who can predict the future with authority because he knows the past; of the diagnostician of the ages, who has studied not merely the human body, but the human race. It is the highest and the best word of science because it is the summing up of the philosophy of the whole world, of all time and of all history. The bright, keen thrusts, the lightning flashes of scorn, the practical wisdom, the virile literary style and the overflowing suggestiveness will strike every reader. But its chief characteristic is its wonderful breadth, its splendid vision, its fitting together into a complete unit of the things which we call humanity and progress. The greatest of statesmen might envy this address; there are few of them who could have delivered it; the greatest of philosophers could have been proud to make it, because it speaks philosophy's latest word in language that philosophy rarely equals.

One sees now, if he never realized it before, that Dr. Osler would have been great in any field—in the pulpit, in politics, in literature, in journalism, in law—because God gave him a great and exceptional and many-sided mind and a spirit which such minds often lack—the inspiration, the courage and the honesty of the prophet who has walked on the mountain top and swept the whole world with his eyes, and who can deliver a message that is as unbounded as his vision.

Baltimore is glad and proud to claim some share in this man. England has recognized him as her own, and the splendid tide of a great English inheritance sweeps through his veins and produces the magnificent harvest of his brain. But we can claim that American influences and Maryland influences gave direction and energy and concentration to his genius, and that he is the greater today because he was an American first and an Englishman last.

Be this as it may, we know what he has given us, and we remember that before England honored him with his title we knew and acclaimed him as one of the leaders of men.