

IV. SUNDAY AT OXFORD.

COS417/37.24

(Extrct from letter of Sir Geo. Savage).

A week-end at Oxford was a very happy and pleasant experience. His house, handsome and well furnished and always in good order, where the servants moved inaccord with their master, was delightful. Lady Osler was a veritable helpmeet, and added to the charm of the home. While his boy lived, the family affection was very very evident. The son was attached to the father as a chum, and the rivalry between them in sport and general interest was a picture to see; and I shall never forget the scrambles that I saw between Sir William and his son, both rolling upon the floor in the dining-room. The relationship that seemed to exist between him and his son reminded me very much of the recorded sympathy between Roosevelt and his sons. The loss of Osler's son was a terrible grief, and though, for a time after it, he seemed deeply depressed and as if it were impossible for him to shake off the misery, yet very soon he calmly faced the trouble, and looked upon himself only as one of many who had suffered similarly.

When spending a Sunday at Oxford there were several points of interest: possibly a service in the Cathedral in the morning, and a stroll in the parks; later in the afternoon Lady Osler would have an At Home and afternoon tea, and it was then that one had the opportunity of seeing any distinguished Americans who happened to be in Oxford, or staying with the Oslers. Later on, I preferred the evening meal at home, though sometimes he rather insisted upon one dining in College. At home for this evening meal, a certain - or uncertain - number of Rhodesian and other scholars turned up. At once they all seemed at home: you would have thought it was really their parental home that they were coming to. A thoroughly well cooked meal was provided, and during the meal a servant would bring in a few books and place them by the side of Sir William. He then would



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quietly lead on the conversation to these books. There was generally some very distinct point about them: either the books themselves were very interesting because of their antiquity, or from the people to whom they had belonged. Next, they might be of special interest in reference to some subject that was agitating the medical world at the time. At all events, quietly and without any fuss, book after book would be opened, and with unfailing precision, Sir William would point out the most important items to which he wished attention to be paid. There were many rare and valuable books, many first editions, and many that had belonged to famous men of more recent times, and in quite a number of these Sir William had obtained the autographs of the authors. All these books on old or new medicine were as good as they could be. But if you wished to see Osler warm up with pride of possession, it was only necessary to refer to the writings of Sir Thomas Browne, a copy of whose works in all known languages were his pride. Not only did he possess these books, but he could refer to any part of them at once, and it astonished me to find how far and wide and how general was his knowledge, even on subjects which did not personally interest him.