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The Verbosity of Biographers.

The Oxford University Press has just issued the biography of that great doctor, Sir William Osler, written by Harvey Cushing. But, oh what a length! Two stout volumes containing between 600 and 700 pages each. Surely Mr. Cushing did not imagine that this verbosity was necessary to impress us with the greatness and charm of the personality of Osler. Unfortunately it is a weakness which often characterises the writers of official "lives," and did they but know it they often thus fail to gain honour for their hero. Busy people want to get to the heart and mind of a man without reading 1,300 pages.

Osler was a great doctor: he was a charming personality and an interesting talker. President Hadley, of Yale, gives his impression of him:—

"In two hours of conversation I learned more about medical history and more about the persistence of certain queer traits in human nature than could be got from months of study. What he said was like Smollett and Gibbon, Smollett's frankness without his coarseness, and Gibbon's erudition and lucidity without his conventionality."