

# OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

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## THE ROSENCRANTZ COLLECTION OF OSLERIANA, SAN FRANCISCO



The Rosencrantz Collection of Osleriana in the Library of the University of California Medical Center, San Francisco, grew from the devoted and painstaking attention of one collector, Dr. Esther Rosencrantz, who retired in 1943 after 30 years as a member of the medical faculty of

that University. After receiving her bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1899, she studied medicine at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, graduating in 1904. It was at Hopkins that Dr. Rosencrantz came under the influence of Sir William Osler; during her second year, Osler stimulated the establishment of a society devoted to the study of tuberculosis, The Laennec Society, which met monthly to present papers, hold discussions and promote investigations. This in turn stimulated her life-long interest in tuberculosis.

In 1940 Dr. Rosencrantz promoted the establishment of the Osler Club among undergraduate medical students at UCSF. The Club met at her home during its organizational period and papers presented at these meetings are now a part of the Osler collection. The author of numerous papers on tuberculosis, her last two publications appeared during the year before her death and both dealt with Osler: "Osler Diseases" and "Posthumous Tributes to Sir William Osler." Shortly after the latter paper was sent off to the publisher, she wrote to Norman B. Gwyn, a Toronto physician and a nephew of Osler: "The paper has gone – Bill should have written it." "Bill," of course, was W.W. Francis with whom she carried on a lively and abundant correspondence, as she did also with John Fulton, in relation to Osler material; from both of them she received much information, aid and gifts for her collection.

At the conclusion of her teaching career, Dr. Rosencrantz embarked in earnest on her Osler collection. Her voluminous correspondence for the years from that time to her death in 1950 attests to an ever-increasing concern to make her holdings as complete as possible. Family, friends and colleagues, well aware of her preoccupation with Osler, contributed items and news of publications. And she was as generous with her materials to others interested in the great man, frequently sending off duplicate volumes and copies of photo-

graphs to those with similar interests. In a letter written in 1946, Dr. Rosencrantz described her hopes for the collection: "I am trying to make the Osleriana comparable but of course in a very limited way to the Folger Shakespeare collection in Washington. It is a joke – but I do admit that Shakespeare was the greatest mind of all times, but I do not know whether his soul was so fine." It might be said that the collection she developed was to display the greatness and humanity of Osler's soul both by what he had written and what had been written about him. The major part of her collection was given to the history section of the UCSF Medical School Library in 1941, and she continued to augment her gift until her death. Funds were made available to her by the University to catalogue the collection during these years.

The Osler collection occupies six seven-foot cases with double glass doors, part of the special collections section of the History of Health Sciences Division. Physically it consists of 522 volumes, 53 boxes all handmade, by a professional binder, of buckram and hand-blocked Florentine paper, and various memorabilia, i.e. a tall glass medicine jar used by Osler when he was a locum tenens at Dundas (a gift of Norman Gwyn), and a souvenir in the form of a mortar and pestle from Osler's farewell dinner given in his honour by the medical profession in New York in May, 1905.

During her last years, Dr. Rosencrantz oversaw the cataloguing of the collection according to a system she devised. The catalogue, which occupies three standard catalogue card drawers, is divided into three sections: (1) Osler's scientific writings; (2) his literary efforts; and (3) a section dealing with his Centennial and tributes to him, both contemporary and posthumous. The catalogue is a subject arrangement of the contents of the entire collection, and is based in part on the Maude Abbott bibliography and in part on the section on medicine in Osler's *Principles and Practice of Medicine*. The majority of the reprints, some in multiple copies, are arranged in boxes and shelved chronologically so that, given the date of a journal article by Osler, it can be readily retrieved. The monographs are arranged by title, and then chronologically by edition and printing dates.

The scientific writings section of the catalogue contains entries for both the original monograph and journal publications of Sir William Osler which are represented in the collection in bound volumes and separate issues, as well as photo copies when the original could not be obtained. The collection includes a copy of virtually every printing of each edition of the *Principles and Practice of Medicine*. Among these are copies of the pirated fourth edition (1901-2) of the textbook and translations into French, German, Spanish and Cousland's Chinese edition. This is also true for Osler's other monographs, which include translations. Many of

The historiated letter used in this issue is taken from Georgii Agricolae *Medici Libri quinque de Mensuris & Ponderibus* ... Paris, 1533. *Bibl. Osl.* 672.

these volumes, as is the case with most of the items of the collection, have some association value, either to the subject or the collector, and many are annotated, containing letters and bookplates of interest as well.

The catalogue contains some 3,600 entries, and even allowing for duplicated and analytical entries for the textbooks, the number of items represented in the Rosencrantz collection is exceptionally complete. The scientific writings alone account for 1,200 items. Each of these reprints is numbered and filed in special boxes. More importantly, they too contain the annotations of the collector regarding provenance or facts concerning their production which could be known only to the author, his intimates or an indefatigable admirer. The Cushing-Soley collection, given to Dr. Rosencrantz by Mayo Soley, M.D., a member of the faculty of UCSF, is such a cache. These are the annotated reprints and items used by Cushing when he wrote his biography of Osler and which went from Cushing to Soley who had been his student. The breadth of Osler's interests, although well-known, are readily displayed in the range of journals represented by the separates in this collection.

The uniqueness of the Osler collection is found in its memorabilia, and here the extent of Dr. Rosencrantz' devotion to its assemblage is most clearly displayed. The varia is a treasure of great richness. It encompasses an holograph manuscript by Osler of one of the chapters in his textbook, with comments by McCrae, its later editor, and the Thomas copy of Osler's portrait, many photographs of Osler, his family and his home, and biographical material on his fam-

ily. Also included are 13 holograph letters signed by Osler, among which is one about the death of his son, Revere, written in 1917 to Norman Gwyn. Copies of menus from posthumous memorial banquets; biographical notices, whatever the source of length; dedications; illustrations of plaques, buildings and tablets in Osler's honour; and special issues of journals dedicated to him, are also to be found. Maude Abbott's bibliography contains only Osler's own works. The definitive bibliography which minutely covers and brings up to date the continuing flood of materials about him is still to be compiled – and this collection may contribute materially to such a work. Dr. Rosencrantz wrote of it in 1948: "I've been told that my Osleriana is the most complete in existence outside, of course, of the Bibliotheca Osleriana in Montreal."

The History of Health Sciences Division at UCSF is currently adding to the Osler collection, as has been done since Dr. Rosencrantz' death. The additions are largely monographs and separates and only occasionally reprints. The increased publication rate of journal articles has made almost impossible the type of collecting Dr. Rosencrantz was able to do 20 years ago – and of course we lack the aid of interested and knowledgeable intimates and fellow conspirators!

Contributed by Mrs. William M. Zinn,  
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## GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY

The Library is grateful to the following who donated books or other gifts during 1970-71: F. Bloch; Mrs. F.R. Scott; Baroness de Hueck-Dogherty; S. Hamarneh; J. Welton; L.D. Parish; F.B. Rogers; D.M. Schullian; W.S. Atkinson; P. Salles; E.H. Bensley; J.M. Schneck; O.C. Gruner; R.V. Christie; D.I. Lansing; E. Lesky; W.R. Penman; E.E. Simpson; M. Fransiszyn; R.C. Crozier; P. Romanell; N. Roth; D.R. Shanklin; D.G. Bates; P.T.K. Lin; J.K. Crellin; Herr Kurtz; K.G. Huston; V.M. Jolivet; W.M. Fitzhugh; M. McMullen; S. Leblond; F.L. McNaughton; D.W. Richards; W.R. Rose; A.T. Bunts; H.W. Willoughby; C.G. Roland; Institut für Geschichte der Medizin der Universität Tübingen; Ross Laboratories; Bibliotheque Nationale, Montreal; Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine Library; Canadian Academy of the History of Pharmacy; Instituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, Florence; Lakeshore General Hospital; Unive degli Studi, Ferrara; South Carolina Medical Association; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Chirurgie; Osler Society of McGill; Syntex Laboratories; Association of Nurses of the Province of Quebec; La Fondation Carlsberg; McGill Medical Journal, National Society for Medical Research.

## OSLER AND THE SWEET PEAS

A recent gift to the Library was a letter from Sir William Osler to Dr. Duncan H. McIntosh (MD, McGill, 1889), donated by Dr. McIntosh's niece, Mrs. Helene F.M. Bennett. In her accompanying letter, Mrs. Bennett passed along this delightful anecdote about Osler which she has agreed to let us share with our readers.

"I remember a Johns Hopkins nurse telling me that one day he (Osler) was lecturing his students there on diabetes. The students had placed a bouquet of sweet peas on his desk, and as he sat down he looked up and said he was delighted that they had such a good grasp of the subject."

## CAN YOU HELP US?

The Osler Library is very anxious to complete its holdings of *Isis*. We are missing 1948, vol. 39, parts 1, 2, and 3, and 1956, vol. 47, parts 1 and 2. If any of our readers or sister libraries have copies of these issues for sale, could you please let us know?

## THE OSLER SOCIETY

On April 26, 1921, a group of 14 medical students, headed by C.J. Tidmarsh, gathered at the home of one of their professors, Dr. Whitnall, to found the Osler Society of McGill University. Their stated aim was to perpetuate the memory and teachings of Sir William Osler by the reading of papers and discussion of topics reflecting his ideals of a liberal medical education. This meeting appears to have been purely organizational, but on October 19, 1921, the first regular meeting heard two papers – "Osler – His Medical Work" by A.K. Geddes and "Osler – His Literary Work" by H.V. Ward. At this time, of course, Osler's books were still in Oxford and the Osler Library had yet to be built in the Strathcona Medical Building. Meetings of the Society were held in various places during these early years and it was not until January 1933 that the first meeting was held in the Library amidst Osler's precious volumes and under the friendly guidance of Dr. W.W. Francis. Through the years the Society has continued to meet, and the Minute books contain the names of many former members who have gone on to achieve illustrious careers in all fields of medicine. This year's activities, again held in the Osler Library, were presided over by co-presidents Robert Rothwell and Bruce Strader, MDCM IV.

The highlight of the Society's activities has always been its annual dinner. This year the Society's 50th Anniversary was celebrated at the Banquet held on April 1, 1971 at the McGill Faculty Club. The guest speaker for the occasion was Dr. E.H. Bensley of the Department of the History of Medicine whose reminiscences of "W.W. Francis – Patron of the Osler Society" we hope to share with our readers in a later issue of the *Newsletter*.

## AUCTION SALE OF DUPLICATES

The long-awaited auction by Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc. of Osler Library – Medical Library duplicates took place in New York on April 6th. The 166 lots (involving over 300 titles) were dealt with in about an hour and a half in the sale which also included duplicates from the Boston Medical Library. Gross income for the McGill libraries was \$19,400. The highest price in the entire sale went to Richard Bright's *Reports of Medical Cases* (1827-31), Garrison and Morton no. 2285, which sold for \$3,500; the next two highest prices were \$1,250 for John Mayow's *Tractatus Quinque Medico-Physici* (1674) and \$1,200 for William Harvey's *Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium* (1651).

## BOARD OF CURATORS

The 35th meeting of the Board of Curators was held in the Library on the morning of May 26, 1971 and a number of items of interest to our readers were dealt with. Two new *ex officio* members attended their first meeting, Dr. Robert E. Bell and Mr. David Bishop having been appointed Principal of McGill and Medical Librarian respectively since the Board last convened. The Curators also welcomed to elected membership Dr. H. Rocke Robertson who, as Principal of McGill, had formerly served in an *ex officio* capacity but who had recently been elected by a unanimous mail vote. At their meeting, the Curators unanimously elected Dr. Harold N. Segall of Montreal and Mme Thérèse Paternelle from the University of Montreal to serve on the Board.

A report was given on the results of the sale of duplicates through the Newsletter and by auction (see elsewhere in this issue) and the Curators approved the distribution of income proposed between the Osler Library and the Medical Library. The Board also heard encouraging news concerning the reprinted *Bibliotheca Osleriana*. To date 530 copies have been sold and the sum of money advanced by the University for use as working capital has been repaid.

Permission was granted to Dr. Nicholas Dewey of the City College of New York to include the unpublished manuscript notes of Osler's reminiscences of Walt Whitman (*Bibl. Osl.* no. 7660) in an anthology of Osler's bibliographic and literary writings which he is preparing for publication. In a mail vote prior to the meeting, the Curators had expressed unanimous approval in principle to allowing a donor's name to be attached to a physical structure or object related to the Osler Library. At the meeting this decision was formally noted and the matter further discussed.

## ARE YOU MOVING?

At this time of year, many of our readers, particularly students, interns, and residents, are on the move. If you are changing your address, could you please let us know?

Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*: Ellen B. Wells, Editor; Nancy Grant, Associate Editor; E.H. Bensley, M.D., Advisor; Karl Holeczek, Photography.