once expressed to the writer his extreme regret that he had not secured a pomander stick which had belonged to a medical member of the Gurney family. It came into the possession of the late Sir William Osler, who was mightily pleased when he got it. It now reposes in the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

The distinguished physician of Harrogate is deeply versed in the lore and history* of these canes and has classified them into three orders according to the form of the head or scent-box.

Pomander is a combination of the Latin word for fruit and the word amber, and at one time was spelt pomamber. By “amber” is meant ambergris, the concretion of the sperm whale, which is still used in the composition of perfumes. The physicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, were only following a lead given by the court ladies of earlier times. It is recorded that in 1321 the wife of the Earl of Hereford and Essex possessed a poume de aumbre or scent-ball. Henry V had a musk-ball of gold, and in Elizabethan times men wore scent-balls suspended from a long slender chain about their necks, and women wore theirs from their girdles. They were made in the form of a hollow perforated sphere and were quartered like an orange with the quarters hinged at the base, so when a segment was loosened sweet and disinfectant odours were exhaled, and my lord and his lady could mingle uncontaminated in the crowd. Another variant was an orange stuffed with cloves and other spices, and in the portrait by Sir Anthony More, Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange, carries in his left hand a pomander resembling an orange.

For years in the last century surgeons were never without their little black pepper-pots of iodoform—these are now in bad odour! What will it be next?

Archibald Malloch


THE LIFE OF SIR WILLIAM OSLER*

Canadians especially have eagerly awaited the advent of these volumes and we venture to say that now the biography is published they will have no disappointment but the greatest pleasure in following Osler’s career step by step throughout his life of three score years and ten. The author, the Professor of Surgery at Harvard University, was well chosen. Someone in England once remarked that it was curious that a surgeon should be Osler’s biographer, but if the surgeon is big enough, and liberal-minded enough, Medicine in its broadest aspect must come within his purview. Besides, Dr. Cushing was peculiarly fitted for the task; he knew his hero well during the Baltimore days both within the walls of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and as his next-door neighbour for several years in West Franklin Street; they had much in common in their love of rare old medical books and their authors; and even when the Atlantic lay between them there were visits from both sides and a constant stream of letters and post cards in both directions. Many of Sir William Osler’s letters to his biographer are published in these volumes without the fact being made known that they were addressed to Dr. Cushing.

In a general way outlines of the chief events of Osler’s life are known to most of us:—his birth at Bond Head, Ontario, in 1849, his school days at Weston, his student days at Toronto and Montreal, post-graduate studies in London and Europe, his appointment as Professor of the Institutes of Medicine at McGill University in 1875 and his work as pathologist and physician at the Montreal General Hospital, his appointment as Professor of Clinical Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania in 1884, as Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University in 1889, the publication of his magnum opus (The Principles and Practice of Medicine) in 1892, and his call to Oxford in 1905 as Regius Professor of Medicine where he remained until the time of his death in 1919 after two years of the greatest sorrow caused by the loss of his only son in the war.

Dr. Cushing has performed a difficult task and he has done it well. He has had to write for readers of both hemispheres; for those in England he gives Osler’s setting in the backwoods of Ontario at Bond Head where his father was a Church of England missionary, and pictures the conditions of life in general in Canada and the United States, not to speak of telling the state of medicine in these countries. And for Canadians and Americans he portrays Osler in the midst of the university life of Oxford and describes the medical activities of

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London in which Osler took such a prominent part. No doubt these volumes, of which the second deals entirely with the Oxford period, are full, very full, of detail, but was it not Johnson who said that biography is "the art of writing trifles with dignity?" The author, however, has not only made the best possible use of Sir William Osler's letters but he has also quoted quite extensively from some of his most characteristic and best medical papers and occasional addresses which are now hidden from most of us in old volumes of medical periodicals.

It seems to us that Dr. Cushing has written a book not only for to-day; but a century hence it will stand both as the biography of a great man and also as one of the best chronicles of medical life, of the rapid advances made in the art and science of medicine, and of such matters as the anti-typhoid and anti-tuberculosis campaigns, during the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Almost month by month we can learn from these volumes what was going on in the medical world. There is much too about the evolution of medical education in the United States and of Osler's introduction there of the method of teaching at the bedside.

One of the turning points of Sir William Osler's life was his abandonment of the study of theology after a short time for the study of medicine. We can only imagine what a struggle this caused in his mind, for in later years it was one of those things he would not discuss. Dr. Cushing has done well to point out that this occurred when the world sided with, or against, the opinions of Darwin and Huxley. Whilst Osler left theology for medicine, his teacher, Dr. James Bovell, of Toronto, to whom he was devoted all his days, quitte the ranks of medicine and entered the church. We can scarcely compute the loss to medicine had Osler taken holy orders.

Dr. Palmer Howard who shares with Osler's two other teachers, "Father" Johnson and Dr. James Bovell, a place in the dedication of The Principles and Practice of Medicine, writes that even in the early Montreal days Osler acted as a "ferment" amongst them. In Montreal, in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, and finally in England he had the power of "starting things," of getting young men to take notes and to publish, of creating book and journal clubs, of helping medical libraries and encouraging medical societies, of interesting men in points of their own local medical history, of making others subscribe (after he himself had given) towards the painting of a portrait of a doctor or librarian who was about to retire, of initiating great activities such as that of a special department in a hospital for the treatment and study of tuberculosis, and a host of other things too numerous to mention. Dr. Cushing writes:—"But it is not easy to keep on his track when, as was often the case, he played an influential and helpful rôle behind the scenes while others occupied the stage. His method of helping to get things done when he saw the need, was an admirable, indeed an enviable one. Few have the primary imagination, the knowledge of the right people whose interests at the outset should be enlisted, the ability to give the initial impulse, and the unselﬁshness to withdraw and let others take the credit of the fail accompli. This is of course the great secret of getting things done in the world as many know; but he practised it, as many do not."

No one, we think, did his duty towards his fellow man better than Osler, but he realized too that he had a duty towards himself. When quite young he saw that to educate himself, and to get time to do this, he would have to withdraw and seek a quiet spot for himself, and his book. He loved companions but no matter who his visitors were he would go off to bed comparatively early and read for half an hour or more—and it was not mere lolling in bed with a light novel but close attentive perusal of the works in prose and verse of the world's greatest writers. And scarcely ever did Osler read without jotting down notes in his commonplace-books.

It was the realization of this duty towards himself, which led him to leave Baltimore and go to Oxford. He felt that, at the pace at which he was compelled to live by the demands from every side for his medical skill and his help in many other sorts of ways, he could not last much longer. This move required courage. In fulfilling this duty towards himself and towards his family by going to the Old Country he found a little leisure to cultivate extensively his taste for medical history and for bibliography. Indirectly the medical world at large has benefited much from this for his lectures upon The Evolution of Modern Medicine and numerous historical essays were prepared in England. In
Oxford he also set about adding judiciously to his library so that when he died he left one of the choicest collections to be found anywhere of books illustrating the history of medicine and the ancillary sciences. He bequeathed this library to McGill University and it is still being catalogued according to his own and very original plan. One of the most valuable points in these volumes is the way in which Dr. Cushing has told, year by year, of the books Osler was reading and of their authors. Very often the titles are given in foot-notes and the young physician who wishes—and has perseverance enough—can give himself the same sort of pleasant companionship with the authors and education from their works as Sir William Osler did.

A charming feature of this biography is the inclusion of many of Osler's brief epistles to little children. He was the friend of old people—and he hated to hear the advance of their days alluded to—but he was the playful companion of those of tender years. Only one gifted with the greatest sympathy and imagination could get down on the floor and frolic with children even in his latest years and could write such amusing letters to them. Often he "made pretend" as when he assumed a mock serious tone and signed his note "John McAdoo, Chief of Police." Indeed these communications are only "trifles" but we beg to think they reveal much of this great man's character. Mention, too, must be made of the quotations from the letters written by Lady Osler which are indispensable in filling in the background. She was his companion all the way and towards the end of his life the road wound so much up-hill that he had still greater need of her. Her way of taking hold of things and her deep interest in all his interests made it possible for him to give himself up to his many and varied activities.

The illustrations, most of them from photographs, are as well produced as we have ever seen them in a book and the printing and paper are such that even the Clarendon Press (of which Sir William Osler was a Delegate) should be proud. The index is full and of itself almost forms a dictionary of medical biography and medical history.

In reading these volumes, on almost every page of which appear the names of new people and new places, we see Osler as if in the flesh. We see him as a "propagandist of public health measures" and as such Dr. Cushing feels he performed his "greatest professional service"; we see him as a biologist and pathologist, as an almost unrivalled clinical observer and teacher, as an author of the most considerable text-book of medicine of modern times, and as an author of many essays which will not soon cease to inspire medical men with a love for their profession and its ideals; we see him as a bibliophile and sympathetic historian of medicine; and finally we see him as he moved in and out among his fellow men (always lending a helping hand) living his motto Equanimitas in joyful times and sad. His life was so beautiful in all its aspects and in all its actions that when we are placed in difficult or trying circumstances we feel as if we should ask ourselves: "What would Osler have done in our place?" The reading of these volumes will give us the answer many and many a time.

ARCHIBALD MALLOCH

Reduction of Increased Intracranial Pressure.—Max M. Peet, Ann Arbor, Mich., says that the slow reduction of increased intracranial pressure in the absence of shock, hemorrhage, vomiting or dehydration is satisfactorily accomplished by the oral or rectal administration of magnesium sulphate. The rapid reduction of intercranial tension, in acute intercranial traumas unassociated with shock, is best accomplished by the intravenous administration of hypertonic Ringer's solution. Glucose may be given later to maintain the lowered intracranial pressure. Hypertonic glucose solution administered intravenously is indicated when acute intracranial pressure is associated with shock or hemorrhage, and in the less acute cases when complicated by dehydration, nausea and vomiting. Glucose has the following advantages over any of the salt solutions: prolonged action, no terminal rise in pressure, nontoxicity, nondehydration, increased blood volume in shock, and the control of acidosis.—Journal A. M. A., June 27, 1925.