

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

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Finding Osler's Letters in the Osler Library: A Preliminary Report and Some Discoveries

Weir Mitchell, Sir William Osler's long-time associate and colleague, once wrote, "My own opinion about letters is that *selected* letters tell you very little about the character of the person, but if you had all the letters and all the notes and more-over all the *checks* a person ever wrote, you might then have an opinion."¹ Were that indeed so, few people's lives could be more thoroughly reconstructed and studied than Osler's. After reading his morning mail and scanning the daily harvest of journals, Osler might write a dozen or more notes and postcards to members of his family or to other medical men.² Cushing remarks upon "this habit of impulsive note-writing: for whenever occasion offered, a card always convenient to hand was scribbled and posted."³ The postcard was a favourite medium; with the passage of time, and as the pressures of work mounted and his circle of acquaintances grew, the postcard became virtually his only style of correspondence.⁴ Nonetheless, he occasionally found time for longer letters. These were usually undated and casually punctuated, but often incisive and astringent, and sometimes touchingly revealing. A bout of bronchitis or a cold was a welcome pretext for this sort of activity.⁵

Cushing's running titles – "Countless flying missives", "A shower of postcards" – bear witness to the enormous role that correspondence, and his correspondents, played in Osler's life. It is therefore rather curious that no inventory of Osler's letters has ever been attempted. Many individual letter collections have been published or noticed,⁶ but we have no clear picture of the extent, scope, location, or character of the correspondence as a whole. Amazingly, not even all the letters to and from Osler in the Osler Library have been identified and listed. As the Library serves as a major clearing-house of information about Sir William Osler, this defect makes our reference services much less effective than might be wished. In view of this, a project was launched in the summers of 1986 and 1987 to locate and briefly describe every piece of correspondence to and from Sir William Osler in the Osler Library. Some notion of the difficulties and complexities of this task, as well as of its surprises and rewards,

will, we trust, be conveyed by this preliminary report.

An important percentage of Osler's incoming correspondence is preserved inside the books which make up his library. He used his library as a sort of classified filing cabinet, inserting letters that he felt were worth keeping into an appropriate or memorable place in one of his books. The practice was continued by W. W. Francis, with the result that Osler's books came to be heavily annotated with his personal memorabilia. The letters, when not loose, are usually found glued to the end-papers or fly-leaves, but occasionally they are bound in next to, or tipped into the relevant page of the text. Sometimes the letter is from the author of the book itself, sometimes about the author or the work, and sometimes simply on the same general topic. Responses to inquiries after information or bibliographical references, and notes from booksellers, also find their way between the covers of the *Bibliotheca* books.

The first phase of our project involved locating and briefly cataloguing every letter currently attached to a *Bibliotheca Osleriana* book. Only true correspondence was included in this inventory: correspondence to other people (e.g. W. W. Francis), inscriptions, calling cards and Sir William's casual jottings are not recorded. When an item of correspondence was found, it was recorded on a specially designed worksheet with its location and reference number within the Library. The call number of the "host" book is given, together with the book's author, title, and publication data, and the exact location of the letter within the volume. Much attention was devoted to the state of the item. Is it an original letter or a copy? handwritten or typed? if it is a copy, is it a transcription or a mechanical copy (carbon or photostat)? What form of correspondence is it (letter, postcard, telegram...)? Finally, what is the physical size of the letter and how many pages does it contain? The names of author and recipient are recorded, both in the form in which they appear on the letter (e.g. "Willie") and in their full, established form ("William Willoughby Francis"); this is followed by the addresses of both parties and by the date.

The "Contents" rubric on our worksheet is the general heading for information concerning the subject matter of the correspondence. At the outset of the project, we attempted to give a fairly detailed description of each item, but in the light of our need to gain some glo-

The lead article of this issue of the *Newsletter* is by Dr. Faith Wallis, History of Medicine Librarian, and Mr. Blake Gopnik, a history student at McGill University who, over the past two summers, has been working on the Osler Letters Inventory Project. Mr. Gopnik's work on this project was made possible by a grant from the Canadian government's "Challenge" programme for student summer employment.

bal impression of the extent and quality of our Osler correspondence, we decided to abandon this procedure in favour of a much briefer, telegraphic summary. To compensate for this restriction, we have noted the literary genre of each item of correspondence (e.g. invitation, query, sale offer, etc.) and indicated the general character of the contents (e.g. medical, historical-medical, financial, editorial, bibliographical, etc.). Although a piece of correspondence logically "belongs" to its recipient, we have filed the worksheets by author and date, since the recipient of the overwhelming majority of the letters covered by this project is Sir William Osler himself.

To date, all the books in the *Bibliotheca* save those of folio and elephantine size have been combed for letters. 9672 volumes have been inspected, and 1054 letters found, totalling 2412 manuscript pages. However, quite apart from the remaining *Bibliotheca* books, there are still many more places in the Osler Library where we will find Osler's letters. In the course of cataloguing the *Bibliotheca* books over the years, we have removed letters and other papers not pasted or bound into the volumes and transferred them to a special accession in the archives division of the Osler Library, where they are stored in acid-free boxes and envelopes in *Bibliotheca Osleriana* number order. Another major repository of Osler's incoming letters is the so-called "Osler Papers", Osler Library archives accession 326. For the most part, these papers stem from Osler's Oxford years, and were probably picked up by Francis from 13 Norham Gardens. Some work has been done on individual sections of the "Osler papers" such as the book bills,⁷ but most of this collection is accessible only through a preliminary listing of the major file headings and groups of correspondence (e.g., letters concerning angina research, or telegram books); the individual letters remain to be catalogued.

Many of the letters addressed to Osler probably finished up in his waste-paper basket, for he had a reputation for casually tossing out papers that were no longer of immediate import, with little concern for posterity. This contrasts sharply with the devotion with which the recipients of his postcards and notes guarded his writings. Many of his correspondents, or their heirs and families, have presented us with letters from his hand. These can take the form of a fairly extensive series of correspondence (such as the group of letters from Osler to George Dock recently donated to the Library by Dr Edgar Mauer of Los Angeles), or a single card. Occasionally the letters have been gathered into elegantly bound scrapbooks, like Aubrey T. Mussen's album of *Cherished Letters from Sir William Osler*. Moreover, Osler's letters, in varying numbers, may be found embedded in the personal papers of other individuals (e.g. Maude Abbott or Edward Archibald) housed in the Library.

A very special case is presented by the Cushing papers, and in particular by the research files assembled for *The Life of Sir William Osler*. The organization of these files mirrors the strict chronological arrangement of the biography, and they harbour, besides notes and extracts from printed sources, a considerable number of letters. Most of these are typed transcriptions prepared by Cushing's secretary from the originals loaned by Lady Osler or others. Cushing worked from these transcriptions, and the excisions he performed to abbreviate the letter for quotation are marked in his neat, diminutive handwriting and jet-black ink. However, the papers also contain original correspondence which family and acquaintances gave to Cushing. These include, for example, holograph letters from Father W. A. Johnson, Osler's revered teacher at Trinity College School.

How many Osler letters are there in the Osler Library? Basing an estimate upon the 1054 found thus far in the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* books, together with an impressionistic sounding of the loose *Bibliotheca* inserts, the "Osler Papers", the Cushing archive and the numerous other archival accessions connected with Osler, his friends and his family, we think it not unlikely that we may find as many as 8,000, and perhaps more. Each of these will be listed in the final product of the Osler Letters Inventory Project: a printed catalogue, organized, in all likelihood, by date, but with author, recipient, and subject indexes.

The value of such an inventory for researchers is evident, and we ourselves have already been delighted and surprised by some of our discoveries. One of the more intriguing finds thus far is a missing piece in the story of the relationship between Osler, the American novelist Henry James, and James' fellow-novelist and long-time friend, Edith Wharton, as it developed in the course of James' illness in the spring of 1910.

In 1946, Ludwig Edelstein published a study of Sir William Osler's philosophy which signalled for the first time the import-

ant influence upon his thought of the pragmatism of William James, the eminent psychologist, educator and philosopher of religion.⁸ William James' brother was Henry James. Edelstein points out that Osler came into personal contact with the James family, and cared for William and his daughter in their illnesses. He does not mention, however, that Osler also helped Henry James through a very serious nervous breakdown in 1910. This omission is the more remarkable in that Edelstein reproduced two letters from William James to Osler, found in Osler's copies of James' *Pragmatism* (*Bibl. Osl.* 3074), and *Some Problems of Philosophy* (*Bibl. Osl.* 3075) which refer to the novelist's "melancholia".⁹

Osler's intervention in James' case has been discussed, however, in some recent biographies of James, notably in Leon Edel's encyclopedic account.¹⁰ Henry James fell ill early in 1909, apparently of heart trouble. He appealed for help to his brother William, who wrote to Osler; Osler arranged a referral to Sir James Mackenzie, a renowned cardiac specialist of the day. By January 1910, however, Henry James' condition had seriously deteriorated. He suffered from gout and anorexia, the latter apparently due in part to his obsession with "Fletcherism", or excessive mastication of his food. It was very plain that his trouble was not simply organic, and his friends became very concerned.

One of the people closest to James was Edith Wharton, then living in Paris. Knowing James' financial difficulties – his latest literary ventures had not been successful, and this probably contributed to his depression – she made him a discreet offer of financial aid to offset medical expenses. James gently refused, but promised to contact her if he was in grave need. In March of 1910, Osler was contacted by Harry James, William's son and Henry's nephew, who was living with his uncle at the time. On the 14th of that month Osler examined Henry James in person in London. The diagnosis was nervous breakdown, and Osler's prescription was massage and exercise.

The quality of the relationship between Henry James and Edith Wharton, one of the most intriguing literary friendships of modern times, is nowhere more clearly manifested than in Wharton's solicitude for James during his breakdown. She was in constant communication with James, sending flowers and letters almost every day, and even coming over from Paris for personal visits. She dropped by Lamb House, James' residence in Rye, Sussex, in late March of 1910 to find him much improved by what he described as "a thorough and cheering examination in London by Sir William Osler."¹¹ Her offer of funds has been noted, but what has hitherto escaped the notice of critics who have studied the Wharton-James friendship is that Edith Wharton took the initiative of contacting Sir William Osler herself and soliciting his involvement in James' case.¹²

It is not known whether Osler and Edith Wharton ever met, but Osler certainly knew and appreciated the novelist's work before the events of 1910 brought them into corre-

spondence. Osler owned a copy of Wharton's 1908 novel on euthanasia, *The Fruit of the Tree* (*Bibl. Osl.* 5578A); apparently he purchased this book on his own, from Foyle's in London. The second of the two Wharton books in the *Bibliotheca* is no. 617, *Artemis to Acteon and Other Verse* (New York: Scribner's, 1909); this is a presentation copy from Wharton to Osler, dated, significantly, March 1910. Osler included this book in the *Bibliotheca* for the sake of one of its poems, "Vesalius in Zante", a work with which, as we shall see, he was already familiar. Glued to the back fly-leaves are two letters from Wharton to Osler, which we transcribe here.

March 7th 1910, Paris

Dear Professor Osler,

My friend Mr Henry James is very ill, and he promised me some weeks ago that if his illness were prolonged, and if in any material way I could be of service to him, he would let me know when the moment arrived.

I have just had a letter from his nephew Henry James Jr, who tells me that Mr. James has just had another bad relapse, and that they are now hoping, rather against hope, to build him up sufficiently to get him up to London to see you. Mr. James himself wrote me last week that he had a great wish to see you, and I wrote back at once, begging him to ask you to come down to Rye as soon as you could do so. – In reply to this letter of mine, young Harry James has just written, telling me of his uncle's last relapse, and of their hope to get him up to London – explaining that it would not do to ask you to come down to him because "it would be pretty formidable to Uncle Henry, who would be bothered by a sense of hospitable responsibilities which he couldn't discharge."

Mr. James and I are old friends, & have talked together about his financial situation, and I think the "bother" of having you come to Rye may be complicated for him by the fear of the expense.

Therefore it seems to me that the moment has come when I may act upon his promise to let me be of service to him, and relieve him of the material "bother" connected with your visit. It seems to me – as far as I can judge at this distance – that it would be of infinite advantage to him to see you as soon as possible, and without the preliminary risk and fatigue of the journey to London; & so I write to ask if you can arrange to go down either to Ashford or to Folkestone, on the pretext of a consultation, and then run over to Rye, letting Mr. James think that you had taken him in, as it were, incidentally.

I have written Harry James that I intended to propose this to you, and that I wish to bear the expense of your visit to Mr James. I have enjoined him not to tell his uncle anything of the proposed arrangement, but simply (should you consent) to let him learn from you that, on a given day, you will be in his neighbourhood, and will come over to see him.

I have ventured to act rather authoritatively, as you see, because Mr. James has no one

near him but his young nephew, who might naturally hesitate to take the initiative in such a case – & because I feel from Mr. James's letters to me, that he is profoundly discouraged, and needs to have, as soon as possible, the mental stimulus which a visit from you would give him.

Believe me, dear Professor Osler,
Sincerely yours,
Edith Wharton.

[P.S.] Harry James has probably told you how worried his uncle is at the thought of having to put off his play at the Repertory Theatre.¹³ This troubles him more than anything.

What Osler replied to Edith Wharton is not known, but its tenor may be inferred from her answer of March 11, also included in the Library's copy of *Artemis to Acteon*.

March 11 [1910]

Dear Dr. Osler,

It is kind of you to write me as you have, for I sent my letter with some embarrassment, which I overcame only because no obstacle counts as against my wish to be of some use to Mr. James.

I am glad indeed to hear that it is possible to move him to London, & that the move may have been made already; and I needn't say how grateful I should be if you could spare the time to let me know the result of your visit.

Your allusion to Vesalius gave me great pleasure, for it was a proud moment of my life when the Librarian of Johns Hopkins wrote me, last year, that you had instructed him to unearth a copy of my verses for the library!

They have now been put into a little volume, which I am sending you only because it contains that poem, & not with the base design of making you read the rest! –

Please don't take the trouble to acknowledge this small offering – and accept my thanks for the address on Servetus of which you announce the approach.

I am probably going to London on March 17th for a few days – chiefly to see Mr. James – & it would be a great pleasure if I could see you too.

Sincerely yours
Edith Wharton.

It would seem, then, that Osler wrote to assure Wharton that her offer would not be necessary; that he simultaneously took the opportunity to compliment her literary work, and to promise her a copy of his forthcoming *Michael Servetus*,¹⁴ is a reflection not only of his tact, but of the interpenetration of literary interests and medical practice in his life. Edith Wharton was plainly charmed and reassured by Osler's response, as the relaxed and almost informal tone of her second letter indicates.

The Edith Wharton letters transcribed

here are, we feel, a pledge of further discoveries to be made amongst Osler's correspondence in the Osler Library – discoveries which will not only add nuance and detail to our knowledge of Osler's life and his circle, but which may make some valuable contributions to the history of medicine or of literature in general. We may not have anything close to "all the letters and all the notes and moreover all the checks" that Osler ever wrote or received, but the projected inventory will certainly enable us the better to "have an opinion" about the man.

Faith Wallis
Blake Gopnik

Notes

1. Quoted in Harvey Cushing, *The Life of Sir William Osler* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925): vol. 2, p. 729.

2. *ibid.*, p. 400.

3. *ibid.*, p. 487.

4. *ibid.*, pp. 392-3, 1181.

5. *ibid.*, pp. 727, 800, 816.

6. Some of the more important examples include Howard L. Holley, *A continual Remembrance. Letters from Sir William Osler to his Friend Ned Milburn*. (Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1968); Earl F. Nation and John P. McGovern, *Student and Chief. The Osler-Camac Correspondence*. (Pasadena, Castle Press, 1980); and most recently Leonard Weistrop, *The Life and Letters of Dr Henry Vining Ogden, 1857-1931*. (Milwaukee, Milwaukee Academy of Medicine Press, 1986). Others may be found through the index to Earl F. Nation, Charles G. Roland and John P. McGovern, *An Annotated Checklist of Osleriana*. (Kent, Ohio, Kent State University Press, 1976) under the heading "Letters".

7. Ellen B. Wells, "Books for the *Bibliotheca: A Study of Sir William Osler's Book Bills*." *Osler Library Newsletter*, no. 26 (October 1977).

8. "William Osler's Philosophy." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 20 (1946): 270-293.

9. *ibid.*, pp. 292-293.

10. Henry James: *The Master, 1901-1916*. (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1972): 438-439, 443-445.

11. Quoted in R.W.B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: a Biography*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975): 283.

12. This involvement is not noted in any of the biographies of Wharton or James, nor does it figure in Millicent Bell's *Edith Wharton and Henry James: The Story of Their Friendship*. (New York: George Braziller, 1965).

13. The play in question was *The Outcry*, and the difficulties of casting and producing it culminated in May 1912, when the death of King Edward VII closed the theatres for the period of mourning and funeral, and dealt a death blow to Charles Frohmann's imperilled repertory company; see Edel, *op. cit.*, 385-6, 440, 446.

14. *Michael Servetus* was published in book form in London and Baltimore in 1909; however, as it was still early in 1910, it is possible that the bound copies were not yet available in bookstores.



Dr. Harold Segall (left) and Dr. Charles Roland at Dr. Segall's 90th birthday celebration, October 24, 1987.

Dr. Harold Segall Celebrates 90th Birthday

On October 24, 1987, a special celebration was held at the newly-renovated Windsor Hotel in Montreal to mark the 90th birthday of Dr. Harold N. Segall, cardiologist, teacher, and medical historian. An impressive gathering of family members, colleagues and friends, were joined by representatives of the Osler Library, including Dr. E. H. Bensley, Honorary Osler Librarian, Dr. Faith Wallis, History of Medicine Librarian, and several members of the Library's Board of Curators. It was a particular privilege for us all to participate in this splendid birthday party, for the Osler Library counts Dr. Segall amongst its most treasured friends. Dr. Segall's personal generosity and attentiveness, as well as his wide circle of contacts, have made important contributions to the growth of our collections; thanks to him, we have received everything from early editions of Harvey through obscure reprints to rare, original Osler letters. He has served on our Board of Curators for a number of years, and contributed to the *Osler Library Newsletter*. His own archives – a uniquely comprehensive record of seventy years of medical study, research and practice – are now deposited in the Osler Library, where they will serve as a primary resource for a forthcoming biography of Dr. Segall by Dr. Charles Roland, Hannah Professor of the History of Medicine at McMaster University, and a fellow member of the Library's Board of Curators.

Harold Segall received his M.D.C.M. degree from McGill in 1920, and in the following year was appointed demonstrator in Pathology and Assistant Curator of the Medical Museum, then under the direction of Dr. Maude Abbott. Association with Dr. Abbott not only laid the foundations of Dr. Se-

gall's interests in cardiology, medical history and teaching, but also introduced him to the writings of Sir William Osler; it was from Dr. Abbott that he received the book that was to transform him into a confirmed Oslerian, *Aequanimitas and Other Addresses*. Following postgraduate study in the United States and Europe, Dr. Segall returned to Montreal in 1926 to join the staff of the Montreal General Hospital and of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill. He also joined the fledgling Osler Society at McGill; he has remained ever after a loyal supporter of this group, and has twice been elected Honorary President. When Osler's library arrived at McGill in 1929, Dr. Segall lost no time in seeking out Dr. W. W. Francis, and in cementing a relationship which has endured and deepened to the present day.

Meanwhile, Harold Segall was building a reputation as the busiest and most innovative cardiologist in Montreal. Over his 55 years of active practice, he pioneered many important medical enterprises. Four cardiology clinics owe their foundation to him, as does the Montreal Cardiac Society, from which emerged the Canadian Cardiovascular Society and the Canadian Heart Foundation. Dr. Segall brought the first ECG machine to Montreal, and developed an important system for the notation of heart sounds. Amidst all these activities, he yet found time not only to support the Osler Library, but to make use of it for his own medical-historical researches. These have mainly concentrated on cardiology. His study of the Russian surgeon N. C. Korotkoff, who first described a method for taking blood pressure readings using an inflatable cuff, have attracted much attention, and he is working at present on a history of cardiology in Canada.

When, at that fateful farewell address in Baltimore in 1905, William Osler invoked the notion of the "fixed period" and argued in favour of chloroforming "useless" scientists who had passed their fortieth year, he was, of course, speaking in jest, although the sensationalist press took him in earnest. As all of us who work at the Osler Library know, Dr. Segall's energy and enthusiasm at the age of 90 are living proof that Osler's joke was pure satire. It is typical of Harold Segall that he gave his friends a present on his own birthday: a specially printed copy of an address originally delivered to the 1953 meeting of the Canadian Heart Association entitled "Some Opinions on Longevity", in which he gathered some of the fruits of his reading and set out some of his own reflections on this topic. Typically as well, Dr. Segall requested that his friends and family should, instead of personal birthday gifts, offer a donation to the Osler Library, and a list of those who contributed follows. Our gratitude for Dr. Segall's continued presence amongst us is very deep. Taking our cue from his own "Opinions on Longevity" that "no healthy life can be too long", we wish him health in abundance, that he may be with us much, much longer.

Donations to the Osler Library in Honour of Dr. Segall's 90th Birthday:

Franklin Arbuckle
Bob & Rosemarie Asch
Meera Ashtakala
Beverly Avadenka
Beverly Baserman
R.E. Beamish
Ella Benjamin
Judy & Michael Benjamin
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Benjamin
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Heather Guest
Frank Guttman
Joseph Guttman
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Guttman
B. Hyams
Edward D. Joseph
Mich Kabay
David & Faye Kahn
Jonathan Kahn
Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Kahn
Nancy Kahn
Sarah Katz
Mary C. Keith
Andrew Kelen
Marian Kelen
Leo Klag
V.A. Kral

Anne Lazarus
Lester Lazarus
Mr. & Mrs. Charles L. Lazarus
J. Leavitt
Gilles Leduc
Harry Lehman
Mr. & Mrs. Wilfred Leith
Nathan Letovsky
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Levine
Irving & Rona Levitt
Fay Liverman
John Low-Beer
M.C. Macgillivray
Donald G. Mackay
Dr. & Mrs. Lloyd D. MacLean
Harry Magder
John O. Mearthur
John Mccans
Maurice McGregor
Kurt R. Miller
Ruth Miller
S. Miller
Mitzi Muenz
David Naylor
Gregory M.A. Neiman
Nestor Securities Inc.
C.J.F. Parsons (in memoriam)
G.R. Paterson
N. Proctor
Peter N. Quinlan
Adina Rappaport
Debbie Ullman Rappaport
Margaret & Irving Rappaport
Dr. & Mrs. James J. Reardon
Charles Roland
Marjorie Barton Rooney
Harold J. Rosen
H.D. Rosenberg
Jeannie Rosenberg
G. Ross
Nathan Ross
Ruby, Stein, & Wagner
Anita Rudberg
Judge Melvin Salmon
Yvette Salomon
Mr. & Mrs. Schaefer
The Family Schopflocher
Paul Schuster
Elaine & Tony Seagrove
Sydney Segall
Trudi Sekely
Lillian Shragovitch
Herbert E. Sibli
W.R. Slatkoff
Charles Smith
T. K. Snitka
Kaethe Solomon
Isidore Stein
Edward Tabah
Anne Tyler
Dr. & Mrs. Saul J. Usher
Robert H. Usher
Philip F. Vineberg
William C. Viner
Lester J. Wallman
E. Ainslie Webster
Lillian Weisz
Eric Wesselow
Philip Witman
Romeo Wlochowicz
M.L. Wollock
A. Zeiber

A Visit To The Open Arms

When, as a McGill medical student, I received final word that my one month elective in medical ethics at Green College, Oxford had been confirmed for the summer of 1987, I was delighted. Not only would this afford me the opportunity to experience the university and city life at Oxford but, even more thrilling as president-elect of the McGill Student Osler Society, the opportunity to experience the environment in which Sir William Osler spent the last of his years.

Armed with a note of introduction provided by Dr. William Feindel and a prearranged meeting through the kind efforts of Dr. Edward Bensley, I was bound to make Osler connections as I met the Warden of Green College, Sir John Walton. I made the acquaintance of Sir John on a sunny July morning and, following a brief tour of Green College, we made the pleasant five minute stroll over to 13 Norham Gardens, the Open Arms.

As we rounded the slight eastward bend in the two-way street, the beauty and majesty of 13 Norham Gardens suddenly erupted out of the lush green foliage on the right side. For a moment I had transcended time and could see vividly in my imagination Sir William come bounding down the front steps welcoming the new student to Oxford and the Open Arms.

Inside, my tour was limited to the main floor, the other rooms being rented out. The high ceilings, paintings, woodwork, fireplace, and spiral staircase all contributed to the Oxford atmosphere. Out on the back terrace, reclining in the original furniture, it did not take much of a prodding for me to again think of the days when the Oslers and guests dominated that very place.

The disappointment of 13 Norham Gardens, I am sad to report, is that its upkeep has been largely neglected since Sir William's time. As Sir John Walton and I returned to Green College, he explained that the ever increasing cost of maintenance in the face of unavailable funds has translated into unarrested structural deterioration. However, Sir John was quick to say - as I am quick to write - that fund-raising and restoration plans are already well under way. With the responsibility for maintaining 13 Norham Gardens having been recently given to Green College, there is renewed optimism for its restoration, certainly a worthwhile investment in the past for our future! It was most reassuring that Sir John himself is a true Oslerite and, under his supervision, I am sure that the future of 13 Norham Gardens is once again bright.

I am indeed thrilled to have had the experience of personally visiting the Open Arms and am indebted to Dr. Bensley, Dr. Feindel, and Sir John Walton for playing their part in bringing this dream to life!

David Clarke
President, Osler Society of
McGill University, 1987-88.

Editor's Note: As David Clarke has pointed out, funds are needed for the restoration of 13 Norham Gardens. Readers who wish to contribute should communicate with Sir John Walton, Warden, Green College at the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford OX2 6HG, England.

A Reprint of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*

The *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, first published in 1929 at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, is the catalogue of the library which Sir William Osler bequeathed to McGill University and which forms the nucleus of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine. The catalogue, following Osler's own scheme of classification and enriched with his annotations, was completed in the decade following his death by W.W. Francis, R.H. Hill and Archibald Malloch. By 1969 the *Bibliotheca* was long out of print and a new reprint was published by the McGill-Queen's University Press. This was provided with a new prologue, by Lloyd G. Stevenson, and addenda and corrigenda. The 1969 *Bibliotheca* has been out of print for several years, and in view of this, the Osler Library has arranged for the reprinting of 200 copies of the 1969 edition. The reprint is attractively bound with Osler's coat of arms embossed on the cover; it employs permanent, acid-free paper, which has the additional advantage of being thinner, so the volume is easier to handle. Copies are available from the Osler Library for \$140 (Canadian) or \$110 (U.S.); Friends of the Osler Library may purchase the volume for \$125 (Canadian) or \$95 (U.S.).

Frances Groen Honoured

McGill's Life Sciences Area Librarian Frances Groen has been elected President of the Medical Library Association which has more than 5000 members in 70 countries and is based in Chicago. Amongst Mrs. Groen's predecessors as President is Dr. W.W. Francis, our first Osler Librarian.

Willie: A Dream Now on Videotape

Newsletters of 1983-84 (nos. 43, 46, 47) contain references to *Willie: A Dream*, a dramatic monologue portraying Sir William Osler written and performed by Dr. Joseph Lella, Chairman of the Department of Humanities and Social Studies in Medicine of McGill University. The first performance was held in the Osler Library on May 11, 1983. Described as a "socio-historical-psychological interpretation", this innovative portrayal of Osler proved highly popular, and Dr. Lella was invited to perform elsewhere at McGill University and in other centres in Canada and the United States. The monologue, polished by repeated performances, has now been recast as a videotape (in preparation for which Dr. Lella grew an Oslerian moustache and shaved the front part of his scalp!) The director, Carlos Ferrand, made extensive use of the architecture, photograph collections and books of the Osler Library to evoke an intriguing and perhaps controversial portrait of "Willie". The videotape is available on loan from the Osler Library. Readers wishing to purchase copies should contact Dr. Lella at his

new address, Academic Dean, King's College, 266 Epworth Avenue, London, Ontario, N6A 2M3.

Reprint of Osler's *Men and Books*

Dr. Earl Nation collected twenty-six short pieces written by William Osler for the "Men and Books" section of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* and in 1959, with the permission of the Editor of the *Journal*, published them in an elegant volume printed at the Castle Press. The book has long been out of print and difficult to find. Now, under the imprint of the Sacrum Press of Durham, North Carolina, Professor G.S.T. Cavanagh of the Duke University Medical Center Library has published an equally elegant and very welcome reprint. The original edition was dedicated to the memory of George Dock. This new edition is dedicated "by the editor to the memory of George Dock and the publisher to the memory of William Willoughby Francis". Copies can be obtained from Old Galen's Books, Box 3044, Durham, North Carolina 27705

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The Library gratefully acknowledges the support it has received from Friends, both old and new, who have responded to the appeal for funds for the 1987-88 academic year. To date 275 Friends have given a total of approximately \$11 500.00. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have come also from Australia, Belgium, England, Switzerland, West Germany, and the West Indies.

The names of Friends whose contributions are received after January 31, 1988 will be listed in the June issue of the Newsletter.

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