OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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W.O. and the O.E.D.

During all of Osler's years in Britain the *Oxford English Dictionary* was being produced by the University Press. By the time he arrived in England in May, 1905, more than half of the dictionary had been published, and when he died fourteen years later the work was still nine years from completion.

Taking into account Osler's strong literary bent it seemed likely that he would have taken an interest in the Dictionary, and worthwhile to explore his relationship and possible contribution to it.

He was, of course, well placed to observe and even to play some part in its work for he assumed, almost at once, and important place in the University. Within a few months of his arrival he had ingratiated himself with his new colleagues. As H.A.L. Fisher, the historian, remarked:[1]

"Oxford does not easily capitulate to strangers, especially if their claim to distinction rests upon scientific rather than on literary grounds, but Osler left Oxford no choice, and from the first the surrender of the University was absolute and immediate."

As if to confirm Professor Fisher's statement, Osler, quite apart from his duties as Regius Professor of Medicine, entered wholeheartedly into the work of three important University activities. He was appointed to the twenty-one-member Hebdomedal Council, in effect the University's governing body, which had met every Monday for twenty weeks in the year since it was instituted by Charles the First in 1631. Sad to relate, after the early flush of excitement in participating in the work of this august body, Osler tired of the meetings. He resigned his post half way through his six-year term, presumably because he could no longer abide the never-ending wrangling over what he termed the "complicated academic machinery" to which academic politicians are prone to devote so much time.

With his appointment as Regius Professor, Osler became an *ex officio* Curator of the Bodleian Library. This task was clearly much more to his liking. As Curator, and a member of the busy Standing Committee of the Library, he was throughout the whole of his career at Oxford actively involved in every phase of the work.

While his experiences on the Hebdomedal Council and the Bodleian library committees broadened Osler's knowledge of and influence in the University, his nomination by the Vice Chancellor and Proctors to be one of the ten Delegates of the Oxford Press brought him into direct contact with the publishing world, with which he was quite familiar, and in particular with the work on the Oxford English Dictionary. This too, was work that he enjoyed. He wrote to his friend Weir Mitchell:[2]

"I have become deeply interested in the University Press of which I am one of the managers. The meetings form a sort of literary seminar, and we really have great sport, particularly with the expert opinions sent in upon the works which are offered. It is an immense business. We employ seven hundred people."

Sir William Osler in his college gown, Oxford, ca. 1907.

Nor did his enthusiasm for the work of the Press wane. He continued to attend its meetings until six months before he died,[3] and if over the years he missed many meetings (he actually attended just under one half of them) due, no doubt, to the enormous extent of his other commitments within and outside the University, his contribution to the work of the Delegates was evidently great; it was recognized by his fellow Delegates in a minute recorded shortly after Osler's death. The minute reads in part:

"The Delegates record upon their minutes their sense of the loss they have sustained in the death of Sir William Osler. When Dr. Osler became a Delegate in 1905 the medical books published by the Press were insignificant in number. Today in virtue of the *Quarterly Journal of Medicine* and of the *Oxford Medical Publications* ... the Press stands in the front rank of medical publishers both at home and in America. The Delegates owe their present position in great part to Sir William's initiative and supervision, and to his unique influence in the medical world.

In the general publications of the Press and especially in historical and antiquarian books Sir William took a lively interest, and his opinion was always valued.

The Delegates also recall with gratitude his help readily given on many occasions in the illness of their officers or of valued authors...."

But Osler's interests as a Delegate were not confined to the historical, antiquarian, and medical works that were dealt with by the Press. There is, for instance, evidence that he was concerned with the welfare of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the most important of the Press's enterprises.

The origins of the Dictionary can be traced to 1857 when Dean Trench in his lectures to the Philological Society pointed out the deficiencies in English dictionaries and suggested ways in which they might be corrected. A committee, which proved to be extraordinarily fruitful, was formed, and in due course the planning of an entirely new dictionary was completed and actual composition was begun.

At first progress was slow, but after James Murray (1837-1915) assumed the editorship the work began to take shape. The first fascicle (A to Ant) was published in 1884 and the rest followed at irregular intervals until 1928 when the completed O.E.D. was produced.

During the seventy years of its delivery the Dictionary weathered many storms brought on sometimes by differences of opinion on procedure of one kind or another, but more often by fear on the part of the Delegates that the size of the Dictionary, and hence its cost, was running out of control. In an effort to stem the unruly tide, the Dele-

The lead article for this issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter* was contributed by Dr. H. Rocke Robertson, a Curator and long-standing Friend of the Osler Library, and a former Principal of McGill University. Dr. Robertson's avocation is collecting, researching, and writing about English language dictionaries. The present essay was originally delivered as a paper to the American Osler Society at its April 1991 meeting in New Orleans.

The initial letter on this page is taken from an alphabet by the South German writing master Georg Heinrich Paritius, 1710; it is reproduced from Alexander Nesbitt (ed.) *Decorative alphabets and initials* (New York, Dover Publications, 1959) pl. 76.

gates required the editors to report each month on the number of pages that they had composed since the last report. The yardstick was Webster's dictionary – presumably the 1864 edition. It was decided early on, before any actual experience had been gained, that in order to produce the full-blown work that was planned, it would be reasonable for the O.E.D. to fill in six pages ground that Webster's dictionary had covered in one.

But as Murray and, later, his co-editors, learned, this restriction was unworkable. They never came close to the six-times-Webster limit; hence the heated arguments which several times caused the Delegates seriously to think of abandoning the project and often drove Murray to tender his resignation – so often, it is said, that the Delegates probably ceased to take the possibility seriously.[4]

The last of these desperate crises occured in 1896 long before Osler appeared on the scene, but there were still, during his whole time at Oxford, enormous practical problems to be faced. I have not found any detailed account of the part that Osler played as a Delegate in helping to deal with them, but I think it not unreasonable to presume that he would have been as deeply involved and as effective in this as he was in all his other ventures.

We do know, however, that he was on good terms with and was attentive to the needs of the staff of the O.E.D. Cushing[5] provides the following engaging note showing that Osler was on the best of terms with its members. He wrote:

"At the Press the great Dictionary was in progress ... and the workers, from James Murray down through the thirty sub-editors and their helpers, were kept cheered and amused in their stupendous task by the frequent visits of the Regius Professor of Medicine, whose pranks, as one of them recalls, made him the life of the place."

We know, too of actual instances of Osler's taking care of members of the staff of the O.E.D.: there is, for instance, in the Dictionary Department Archives a letter written by Osler dealing with his care of Henry Bradley, the second editor of the O.E.D. There is, also, an account of Osler's rather surprising treatment of James Murray (the first editor) given by the latter's granddaughter, Elisabeth Murray.[6] She wrote:

"He [Osler] was called in now as a consultant and pronounced that what James had feared might be appendicitis was trouble caused by the prostate gland. The operation which today is common and normally successful was then unknown. Osler advised treatment by X-rays, then also still very experimental, and he warned James that internal burning might result and that the effect of the X-rays would not be known for six weeks. At first he made little progress and remained very weak and subject to violent perspiration. For four months he was unfit for work, and it was seven before he felt he had recovered."

Elisabeth Murray provides another piece of evidence that links Osler and James Murray.[7]

Osler, she writes, was disturbed by the Delegates' reluctance to supply the dictionary project with all the reference works that it required, in particular all the dictionaries as they appeared. To help out, Osler gladly lent a medical one in his own possession.

Osler made two further contributions to the development of the Dictionary, one direct, the other indirect.

He contributed directly to the Dictionary by submitting material to the editors in the form of "slips".

Perhaps here a word of explanation is in order for the benefit of those who may not be familiar with the design and method of compilation of the O.E.D.

To gather material to produce a dictionary on historical principles, volunteers were engaged to read books, to mark all phrases that clearly explained the meaning of common, rare, obsolete, old fashioned, new, or peculiar words, and to fill in and submit to the editor a special form (a "slip") showing the word in its context and giving the necessary bibliographical details.

These forms, with their inscribed quotations, were sorted, arranged in alphabetical and, within that, chronological order, and eventually those best illustrating the meaning and the usage of the word were selected for inclusion in the dictionary. One can only guess at the number of slips that were submitted by the horde of volunteers over the years (perhaps 6,000,000) and the number of quotations that were actually printed (perhaps 2,000,000).

It is interesting to note here how many of these volunteers, in the early days at least, were American. James Murray, recognized by all as *the* editor of the O.E.D. noted somewhat plaintively in his Presidential Address in 1880:

"The number of professors in American universities and colleges included among our readers is very large; and in several instances a professor has put himself down for a dozen works, which he has undertaken to read personally and with the help of his students. We have no such help from any college or university in Great Britain; only one or two professors of English in this country have thought the matter of sufficient importance to talk to their students about it, and advise them to help us."

It is, practically speaking, impossible to discover the extent of Osler's direct contribution to the dictionary in the form of supplying slips.

It is certain that he supplied some: his name appears in a long list of names of contributors of illustrative quotations that was published in the preface of volume seven (O-P) of the ten-volume 1928 edition. But the contributor's name does not appear on the slip. In order to find those that Osler submitted one would have to wade through literally millions of slips looking for those completed in his handwriting.

If his direct contribution to the dictionary may never be known, Osler's indirect contribution in the form of quotations from his works submitted (almost certainly) by others and used to illustrate the history or meanings of words is, thanks to the computer, relatively simple to elicit.[8]

There are, in the Dictionary (O.E.D.2) five quotations taken from Osler's works as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 shows the sources of the 44 quotations taken from Osler's various text books.

Most of the quotations came from the earlier editions. Perhaps it is not fair to credit Osler with later quotations (1927, 1938, 1947) but I decided to show all instances in which his name appeared.

Table 2 shows the source of 11 quotations found in speeches, letters to the press, etc.

The next table shows the headwords under which the quotations from Osler's works appear. With one exception they are all medical or biological terms.

Incumbent, the single non-medical term, now a word in common use, particularly in election time in this country, meaning the holder of any office, was, in the 1933 edition of the O.E.D., described as "Now rare". In the Supplement published in 1976 the reader is instructed to "Delete 'now rare' and add later examples." Of the five added, the quotation from Osler's *Aequanimitas* (1904) was the first.

Onomatomania deserves special mention. Hardly a household word, it is given two meanings. The first is found in the 1933 edition: "A morbid dread of some word, intense mental anguish at the inability to recall some word or to name a thing." The second meaning appeared in the Supplement of 1982 (and, of course, is in the O.E.D.2). It is: "A morbid preoccupation with words; a mania for word-making." This is the meaning that Osler conveyed in his famous Presidential Address to the Classical Association in 1919 as he regretted the fragmentation of science into its specialties, and subspecialties, with the tendency of each breakway to invent its own vocabulary. The quotation from Osler is as follows: "Within the narrow compass of the primitive cell from which all beings originate, onomatomania runs riot." Those of us who have reached the status of "Senior Citizen" will probably prefer the earlier meaning for who amongst us will not have suffered "the intense mental anguish at the inability to recall some word or to name a thing"? This is to me a new word and I intend to use it whenever the opportunity arises – providing, of course, that I can remember it when the time comes.

The six entries that record the first use in a particular sense are singled out and appear in Table 4.

Blast, used for many years in biology with the sense of germ or embryo, appeared in 1947 in Christian's Osler as a primitive undifferentiated blood cell. Two later references are given (1952 and 1961).

Erythraemia was used in 1860 in the sense of "the full preparing of arterial blood in the lungs". Osler, in an article in the *Lancet* (1908), used the word in the modern sense, a high red blood cell mass.

Facio (1910) had been previously used in other combinations (e.g., facio-branchial,

facio-cervical) but Osler's is the first reference to the facio-scapulo-humeral type of progessive muscular dystrophy.

Melanoderm (1901) is the first recorded use in the O.E.D., although melanodermia and melanodermic had preceded it by several years.

Symphilic (1919) The citation of Osler is the only one. The word ordinarily refers to ants and other social insects. Osler applied it to humans in *Old Humanities and New Sciences* (1919). He wrote: "This attention is what our symphilic community – to use a biological term – bestows on you."

Wash Linen (1901) Referring to the spread of typhoid by the wash linen. This is the only entry in that sense.

One should not attach too much importance to the six "first recorded usages". The favourite sport of some philologists is to search for examples antedating those in the O.E.D. and they are often successful. Shakespeare, it is said, is listed as the first user of 1904 words in the O.E.D. but it has been shown by an ardent iconoclast that 50 of these supposed firsts can be antedated from works of Nashe alone.[9] Probably a wide search of the medical literature would uncover earlier usages of most if not all of Osler's "firsts" for these are just the earliest usages appearing in the works that the O.E.D. invited volunteers to read. Nor should one be disappointed to learn that the number of references to Osler's works in the Dictionary is relatively small. Some noted authors who might be compared with Osler in some respects were noticed much more frequently. Sir Thomas Browne's name appears 3,941 times; John Locke's and Robert Burton's 1,539 and 1,324 times respectively.

There is no need here to look into the reasons for this disparity. The fact is that Osler's 55 are far from negligible. They form a real addition to the slips that he submitted, to the help that he gave to the staff of the Dictionary and to his work as a Delegate, which together constitute a significant contribution to that magnificent work, the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

References

1. Sutcliffe, Peter H. *The Oxford University Press. An Informal History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978. p.145.
2. Cushing Harvey. *The Life of Sir William Osler*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925. Vol.2, p.116.
3. The author acknowledges with thanks the permission granted by the Oxford University Press to examine the "Orders of the Delegates" for the years 1905 to 1919 inclusive, and the assistance given by the staff of the Press and the Dictionary Department Archives.
4. Murray, Elisabeth K.M. *Caught in the Web of Words*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977. p.277.
5. Cushing, H. Vol. 2, pp. 198-199.
6. Murray, E.K.M. p.310.
7. Murray, E.K.M. p.163-164.
8. The author is indebted to the staff of the University of Waterloo Centre for the New Oxford English Dictionary and Text Research who provided a print-out of all references to Osler in the OED2 and the number of references to Sir Thomas Browne, John Locke, and Robert Burton.
9. Brewer, Charlotte. "Thoughts on the Second Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary." *London Review of Books*, 31 August 1989. p.16.

Table 1

Osler's Principles & Practice 1892 (10) 1901 (17) 1905 (2)
Osler McCrae 1907 (1) 1908 (5) 1909 (1) 1910 (2) 1912 (3)
Osler Jones 1927 (1)
Osler Christian 1938 (1) 1947 (1)

Table 2

1889 *The Cerebral Palsies of Children* (2)
1904 *Aequanimitas* (1)
1908, 1911 *Lancet* (2)
1909 Klebs. Tuberculosis (1)
1915, 1925 Cushing (2)
1919 *Proceedings of the Classical Society* (1)
1919 *Old Humanities and New Science* (2)

Table 3

Adenoid
Adrenaline
Broncho...
Cardio
Cauda
Cerebro-spinal
Decerebrate
Decompensation
Double
Embryo
Erythro...
Familial
Gastro...
Gavage
Gliosis
Haemolysis
Hallucinosis
Hoffmann
Incompetency
Incumbent
Lymphocyte
Lymphoma
Measle
Muscle
Onomatomania
Orthotonus
Palpate
Palsy
Pia
Pleuro...
Polynuclear
Pyo...
Running
Scaphoid
Schonlein
Splenization
Staphylococcus
Sudoral
Typing
Unit
White

Table 4

Blast
Erythraemia
Facio
Melanoderm
Sweat
Symphilic
Thrombus
Trophallaxis
Tympany
Typho...
Wash Linen

Osler Day 1991

Wednesday, November 6, is Osler Day 1991, and a full schedule of activities is planned. In the morning, the Board of Curators of the Library will hold its annual meeting, to be followed by a luncheon hosted by its Chairman, Dean Richard Cruess. At 6 p.m. that evening, the Osler Lecture for 1991 will be delivered by the Hon. Monique Bégin, Canada's federal minister of National Health and Welfare from 1977 to 1979, and 1980 to 1984. Mme. Bégin will be the guest of honour at the Osler Banquet, organized by the medical students' Osler Society. The Banquet will follow immediately upon the Lecture, and will be held at the University Club. Guests can be assured that the orthodox liturgy of Oslerian rites will be duly observed, including guzzling from the silver loving cup, savouring (chocolate) cigars, and intoning "Our Regius Prof." Mme. Bégin will also answer questions from the floor at this time. For further information, contact Jane Scribner at (514) 398-6033.

A Catalogue of Osler Portraiture

In issue no. 61 of the *Osler Library Newsletter* (June 1989), we reported the visit to the Osler Library of Dr. Alex Sakula, then President of the Section of History of Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine, London. Dr. Sakula had just published his catalogue of *The Portraits, Paintings and Sculptures in the Royal Society of Medicine*, and was determined to rectify a notorious gap in the Society's collections by commissioning a copy of Seymour Thomas' portrait of Sir William Osler. In January 1990, Dr. Sakula formally presented this copy, the work of London artist Philippa Abrahams, to the Royal Society of Medicine. He also chose it as an illustration for the dust jacket of his latest book, *The Portraiture of Sir William Osler* (London: Royal Society of Medicine, 1991).

Dr. Sakula's catalogue is the first comprehensive inventory of Oslerian portraiture in all media. To the paintings surveyed by Cyril Courville ("Osler and his portraits", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1949; *23*: 353-377) and busts listed by Earl Nation ("The busts of Sir William Osler"; *Osler Library Newsletter* no. 61, June 1989, 1-3), he has added plaques, medallions, medals and postage stamps. The catalogue is organized into sections based on the medium of the portrait. Each section is prefaced by a useful summary table, arranged in chronological order, listing the date, artist and present location of the portraits. Dr. Sakula relates the circumstances surrounding the creation of each portrait, provides a brief biography of the artist, and comments on the form and quality of the likeness. The dimensions and present location of the portrait, together with bibliographical references, complete the description.

The most important feature of such a catalogue is, of course, the reproductions of the portraits themselves. Dr. Sakula has furnished black-and-white illustrations of all the major monuments, but these are occasionally marred by poor reproduction technique: the painting by W.M. Chase is particularly blurred and unfocussed. Moreover, Dr. Sakula elected to illustrate his chapter on the Seymour Thomas portrait with a reproduction, not of the original portrait, but of the Philippa Abrahams copy. Similarly he used the engraved version of the Max Brödel cartoon of "The Saint Johns Hopkins" rather than the original drawing. In neither case is this substitution explained or noted. It should be noted as well that the version of the Brödel cartoon in the Rosenkrantz Collection at the University of California is not a copy, as Dr. Sakula states (p.12), but rather a preliminary study. Dr. Sakula points out that the 1926 Saloman portrait, now in the Wellcome Institute, was copied from a 1913 photograph; this is also the case with the 1984 painting by K.F. Hack, which is modelled on a snapshot of Osler taken in the Hopkins garden (see Cushing's *Life*, vol.2, p.352).

However, these are minor blemishes upon a well-researched and elegantly produced volume. Unlike most portrait catalogues, Dr. Sakula's is written in a lively style, and conveys anecdotal colour as well as factual information. The comments of all "Four Doctors" on the qualities of John Singer Sargent's famous group portrait were surprisingly acerbic (Welch said that Osler looked like "a blasé English aristocrat"); Dean Cornwall's description of how

he constructed "Osler at Old Blockley" is full of intriguing detail; and the number of occasions on which Osler's mustache was compared to Bismarck's forms a subtlely amusing *Leitmotif* throughout the catalogue. But what struck this reviewer most forceably was the general dissatisfaction on the part of almost everyone closely connected with Osler with virtually every portrait ever made of him. However often he was sculpted or painted, he seems in the end to have eluded the artist who tried to capture him on canvas or in bronze. Though renowned for his sense of humour, he was, as Dr. Sakula perceptively observes, almost always portrayed with a solemn, even stodgey expression on his face. One can only speculate that in their drive to convey the image of a "great man", the artists often missed Osler's unique humanity.

Readers who wish to order copies of Dr. Sakula's *Portraiture of Sir William Osler* may do so directly from the Publications Department, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE. The cost is £15, or $30 U.S.

F.W.

Friends of the Osler Library: A Report and an Appeal

Over the past year, the Friends of the Osler Library have made possible many important acquisitions for, and changes in, the Osler Library. The main recipient of Friends' funding has, as usual, been the Library's collections. A new series of reprints on Civil War surgery produced by Norman Publishing in San Francisco was purchased by the Friends, as were some unusual antiquarian items, for example: *Love and parentage, applied to the improvement of offspring* ... (New York, 1847) by the flamboyant phrenologist and entrepreneur O.S. Fowler; a work with a distinctively Oslerian hue, Alfred T. Schofield's *Unconscious therapeutics or the personality of the physician* (London, 1904); and H. Renlow's *The human eye and its auxiliary organs* (London, 1896), an outstanding addition to the ophthalmological collection inaugurated here by Dr. Casey Wood. However, our prize catch for 1990-1991 was Thomas Jordan's *Pestis phaenomena seu de iis circa febrem pestilentem apparent, exercitatio.* (Frankfurt, 1576). This is the first edition of Jordan's two works on plagues, which won him renown as an epidemiographist. Among the descriptions of infectious diseases in this extensive work is his famous account of the *lues pannonica*, a form of typhus which affected the troops fighting in the Turkish War of 1566. Supplementing the main work by Jordan are Jordan's responses to Laurent Joubert's book on plagues, a short treatise on bezoar stones and their efficacy against the plague by Claudius Richard, and another by Guillaume Rondelet on a regimen for avoiding the pestilence.

The net that fished up Jordan's book from a dealer in London was a fax machine, the one owned and operated by the Health Sciences Library administration, to be precise. Our success in using their fax for rare-book orders has prompted us to invest Friends' donations in a fax machine for the Osler Library's own use; it is on order now, and we will be able to announce our new fax number in the February edition of the *Newsletter*. Since the *Newsletter* itself owes its ongoing existence to Friends' donations, and since the Jordan book will be catalogued by our consultant rare books cataloguer, Tamara Seni, whose fees are also covered by the Friends, this virtually closes the circle of causality! But causality is really what your donations to the Friends of the Osler Library are all about: causing new acquisitions of permanent historical interest, causing new technologies which enable us to fulfill our mission more swiftly and effectively, causing this *Newsletter*, through which we communicate with over 1600 individuals and institutions the world over.

With this issue, we are launching our 1991-1992 campaign for the Friends of the Osler Library. A donation form and reply envelope are enclosed. We thank you sincerely for all that you have made possible in the past year, and appeal for your continued help in causing good things to happen for the Osler Library.

F.W.

Dr. Edward Bensley Steps Down as Editor of the *Newsletter*

Dr. Edward H. Bensley, Honorary Osler Librarian and medical historian, has retired from the position of Editor in Chief of the *Osler Library Newsletter*, a post he has held since October, 1971. In fact, Dr. Bensley was present at the birth of the *Newsletter* in 1969 in the role of "Consultant", and he has consented to remain on the *Newsletter* staff as a "Consulting Editor". Over the past twenty years, he has shaped a very distinctive publication, producing full length articles from his own pen, soliciting them from others, reporting events in the Library and in wider Oslerian circles, and combing every issue for factual, grammatical, and typographical errors. Readers of this *Newsletter* will surely concur in our vote of gratitude to Dr. Bensley for his long and productive service. He should be warned, however, that retirement may not bring much peace and quiet, as we intend to exploit our "Consultant" without compunction!

F.W.

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Retirement of Mrs. Zlata Blazina

Were the Osler Library a more flamboyant place, and if Zlata Blazina were less modest by nature, we would put up a bronze plaque directly by our main doors to commemorate her service to the Library.

But such a monument is, in fact, unnecessary. All that any visitor to the Library has to do in order to see Mrs. Blazina's monument is walk through those doors and look at our book-laden shelves. For the fact that they are so well stocked with up-to-date and recherché scholarship is in very large measure her achievement.

Zlata Blazina came to work in the Osler Library as Selection/ Acquisitions assistant in December 1970. Since that time, she has assumed increasing responsibility for an ever more complex and busy collections programme. The creation of new permanent funds like the Friends of the Osler Library or the Class of Medicine 1936 endowment have widened the horizons of acquisitions. Mrs. Blazina not only rose to these challenges, but actively participated in applying for and administering grants for collections development from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Through all these changing conditions, she has demonstrated unfailing scholarly acumen, expertise in languages, professional thoroughness, and a canny – or perhaps one ought to say uncanny – instinct for the value of the dollar. Above all, she was passionately devoted to the Osler Library and to the quality of its collections, and this passion has been instrumental in transforming the Library into a first-class scholarly resource in the history of medicine.

On September 27, friends and colleagues of Zlata Blazina gathered in the Osler Library to toast her retirement, and to wish her godspeed as she embarks on her full-time second career. For Mrs. Blazina is also a historian of medicine. Her doctoral dissertation on public health policy in Renaissance Dubrovnic is nearly complete; her research in the area of medicine and politics in 15th- and 16th-century Croatia have won her a grant-in-aid from the Hannah Institute, as well as the respect and interest of scholars who have heard her presentations at the meetings of the American and Canadian Associations for the History of Medicine. She intends to employ her new freedom first to complete some articles she is preparing for publication, and then to advance her research.

By way of contributing to this venture, Mrs. Blazina's colleagues presented her with a leather briefcase – elegant, but capable of carrying plenty of books! She in turn presented the Osler Library with a new book, Jean Théodoridès' *Des miasmes aux virus: histoire des maladies infectieuses* (Paris: Louis Pariente, 1991). Altogether, it seems fitting that Mrs. Blazina's last deed as a staff member of the Osler Library should be to get one more useful volume for our shelves!

F.W.