



OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

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"I am Osler's Nephew and Librarian": W.W. Francis at the Helm of the Osler Library



he relationship of Sir William Osler to his "nephew" (really second cousin) and godson William Willoughby Francis has been chronicled in a number of publications; Francis' outstanding achievement as editor of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* has also been well and thoroughly studied. What has attracted rather less attention, is Francis' career as "Osler's Librarian". To be sure, numerous students and visitors to the Library have recorded reminiscences of their public contacts with Francis; but there is also an "inner history" to his administration, hidden in the Library's archives. The theme of this inner history is Francis' determination to maintain the Library as Osler knew it, as a monument to the man himself. This determination met with the equally energetic pressures of the Board of Curators and the University, who had a more expansive and less personal vision of the Library's mission. The tension between these forces is the background to a fascinating story, tinted by the deep emotions and passionate loyalties of an enigmatic man.

The story opens in November of 1928, when Osler's books and Dr. Francis arrived in Montreal. Unpacking began on March 1, 1929, and the sorting and shelving was completed a bare nine days before the official opening on 29 May. Francis was installed as Osler Librarian (or as he occasionally preferred it, Osler's Librarian), but the governance of the Library was not his alone. By the provisions of Osler's deed of gift, the Library was to be directed by a Board of Curators, modelled after the Curators of the Bodleian Library, of which Osler himself had been a member. The Curators in the first years of the Library included Dean C.F. Martin as ex-officio chair, Mr. Henry Osler as representative of the Osler Family, and Dr. Archibald Malloch (co-editor with Francis of the *Bibliotheca*, and Librarian of the New York Academy of Medicine) as elected Curator. The minutes of their meetings, kept by Francis himself as ex-officio secretary, reveal that from the outset, Francis' views on

the nature and destiny of the Osler Library, and those of the Curators, did not exactly coincide.

If there is a single constant theme that resurfaces meeting after meeting, year after year, it was that Francis was not doing enough to build the Library's collections. At the meeting of June 25, 1930:

Dr. Malloch thought the Library should take all medical and scientific historical periodicals and procure the back numbers. The Librarian objected that there is no room to display current numbers, that the complete sets would take up too much of the small space available for expansion, and that the three or four important journals taken by Osler himself would probably suffice for the present. ⁽¹⁾

As a sop to Malloch, Francis took out subscriptions to *Sudhoffs Archiv* and *Janus* - two journals to which Osler had subscribed. Malloch, however, was not to be appeased, and in 1931 produced a "list of thirty-two periodicals in the history of science and medicine, which are being received by the New York Academy of Medicine". It was decided [the passive voice in the Minutes is always a code for Francis' disapproval] that some journals might be purchased for the Osler Library, and that these should be made available on the tables for visitors. ⁽²⁾

In 1933, the topic came up again:

Dr. Francis reported that of the 35 periodicals dealing with the history of science or medicine on Dr. Malloch's list of December 1931, nearly one-half were available in our McGill libraries. This, with the addition of the Leipsic "Mitteilungen" (formerly received) was thought sufficient for the present. ⁽³⁾

What is remarkable about this little exchange is Francis' resistance to expanding the Library beyond the parameters set by Osler, and the singularly obtuse positions he was ready to take in order to avoid doing so. Money was certainly no object; indeed throughout his tenure, Francis consistently turned back surpluses, year after year, to be re-capitalized in the endowment. Sometimes these surpluses were

very substantial - over \$5000 in the middle of the Depression. Certainly no true-born librarian has ever let lack of space stand in the way of the relentless drive to build a collection, and Francis' assertion that about half of Malloch's titles are already at McGill begs the question of why he was not subscribing to the other half. Evidently Malloch felt that Francis was passively, but inflexibly, refusing to expand the collection, and let the matter of periodicals drop. In 1935, however, he tried another tack:

...it was felt that the accumulated surplus was too large, and it was suggested by Dr. Malloch that more money should be spent on books. It was recommended that the Librarian should consult with Dr. Malloch about the purchase of expensive books, some of which he had under consideration. ⁽⁴⁾

Again Francis successfully evaded the issue. When it came up again in 1938, he claimed that the shelf space was inadequate, and that "he was not tempted to add more books than seemed necessary. He systematically bought all new historical and biographical books listed by the New York Academy and the College of Physicians of Philadelphia." ⁽⁵⁾ This of course was pure obfuscation; what Malloch was

At the Annual meeting of the Board of Curators of the Osler Library this fall, Dr. Faith Wallis formally resigned her now purely honorific title of Osler Librarian. It is thus fitting that at this particular juncture she should pay homage to her greatest predecessor in that office, W.W. Francis. The lead article in this number of the Newsletter is a modified and condensed version of a more extensive study of Francis, which will appear next year in a volume of essays on Canadian library history to be published by the Canadian Library Association; and edited by Professor Peter F. McNally of McGill's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.

referring to was not current works on medical history, but rare books. Why was Francis not continuing to build Osler's collection of old primary works? Malloch brought the matter up again in 1941⁽⁶⁾, specifying that rare books would be a suitable way of investing the annual surplus. In 1942 the subject came up again, and Francis as usual dodged it with a specious rationalization:

It was pointed out that this surplus gave opportunity of spending more on old books. The Librarian explained that orders for several old books had arrived after they were sold, and that he had not yet got the habit of cabling for ordinary desiderata.⁽⁷⁾

This must have left the Curators scratching their heads long enough for Francis to change the subject. Of course, one does not cable ordinary desiderata; one cables orders from catalogues. But was Francis even doing this? His financial report contains a rubric for postage and telegrams, but his acquisition statistics show him buying only between nine and fifteen or so old books each year. Indeed, in dollar figures his book purchases actually declined over the period of his tenure. He persisted in turning back large surpluses. When the ailing Malloch was replaced on the Board by John Fulton, Fulton inherited Malloch's duty of pressuring the reluctant Librarian to buy more books, and with about as much success.

Francis was similarly resistant to the idea of building up the endowment of the Osler Library. At the very first meeting of the Board of Curators in 1929 Dean Martin suggested that a campaign be mounted to build an endowment of about \$50,000. Francis, in a move which no modern librarian can look upon with anything other than appalled disbelief, replied that the current annual income of \$1,900 was more than sufficient for the Library's needs, and that he deprecated any appeal to the Osler family or to Osler's old associates.⁽⁸⁾ Subsequent efforts to galvanize Francis into fundraising met with silent resistance, despite the evident interest of the Osler family in donating to the Library. It was not until the arrival of Lloyd Stevenson and the election of Wilder Penfield to the Curators in the early 1950's that foundation money was actively sought, and a Friends organization planned.⁽⁹⁾ Francis recorded these events without comment in the minutes, save to protest, a few years later, that all this additional income was a terrible burden to him because he could not keep up with the ordering.⁽¹⁰⁾

What are we to make of this curious unwillingness to build the collection? To be sure, Francis had not himself the instincts of a collector, as he freely admitted on numerous occasions. With that, many librarians can sympathize, who are not personally interested in collecting themselves. What they will find harder to comprehend is that Francis could not even conceive of building the Library up for the sake of stimulating study and research in the subjects Osler hoped to promote. This was certainly Malloch's and Martin's vision of what the Library could be, and Malloch tried to bring Francis around to both the endowment campaign and an expanded acquisitions programme by using precisely this logic:

I think [Malloch wrote to Francis] a short statement should be prepared setting fort[h] the present endowment and income, how the money is spent, and what the new \$45,000 or \$50,000 new endowment is for. The Bibl. Osler. should be the centre for the study of the hist[ory] of med[icine] (& science) in Canada. That is why nearly all the mag[azine]s devoted to that subject should be taken... Also the Lib[rary] should not stand still. Important new books are coming out all the time.⁽¹¹⁾

But Francis does not seem to have seen the Osler Library as Canada's centre for medical historical research at all. For him, it was always, as he half-facetiously called it, "the shrine", a particular monument to Sir William Osler, and he obstructed every change which might deflect attention from the founder to the foundation. For instance, he and Malloch skirmished on and off throughout the 1930's over the card catalogue of the Library. Francis used a card catalogue strictly for new accessions. Malloch at one Curators' meeting suggested integrating the Bibliotheca Osleriana entries into this card catalogue. Francis snapped back: "The Librarian, having an un-American faith in the superiority of a printed catalogue (especially ours) over any card catalogue, objected to any plan that would divert readers from consulting the Bibliotheca Osleriana."⁽¹²⁾ Malloch wrote to Francis after the meeting and tried to explain himself: he did not wish to set the printed catalogue aside, but merely to have all the titles in the Library available in one handy alphabetical reference so that Francis could verify whether or not he had a certain book when he was placing orders.⁽¹³⁾ Francis defended his obduracy in terms which reveal, once again, his determination to maintain the spotlight on Osler.

Frankly, without blowing my own horn, I think I have had enough experience with catal[ogue]s and cataloguing to be allowed a librarian's right to manage this one myself - which is not, however, to say that I am not open to advice and suggestions from the curators and others.

I cannot consent to have the "B.O." superseded by a card-cat[alogue]. The pr[inted] book embodied W.O.'s collection, his notes and, I believe, his spirit, and is much handier, quicker and more instructive than any card-cat[alogue] could be.⁽¹⁴⁾

Whether Francis really believed the latter - and Lloyd Stevenson has gone on record saying that in his later years at least he was quite frank about how awkward the Bibliotheca Osleriana was to consult⁽¹⁵⁾ - he certainly believed the former. Osler was the primary focus of the Library, and the history of medicine was of interest only because it was of interest to Osler. It is noteworthy that Francis in his annual reports justified the acquisition of every rare book on the grounds that it "filled a gap" in Osler's collection, or was a volume that Osler had expressed a wish to acquire. And when he came to teach a course in the history of medicine, Francis lectured first on the life of Osler, then on the Osler Library, and only thereafter began a chronological survey of medical history.⁽¹⁶⁾

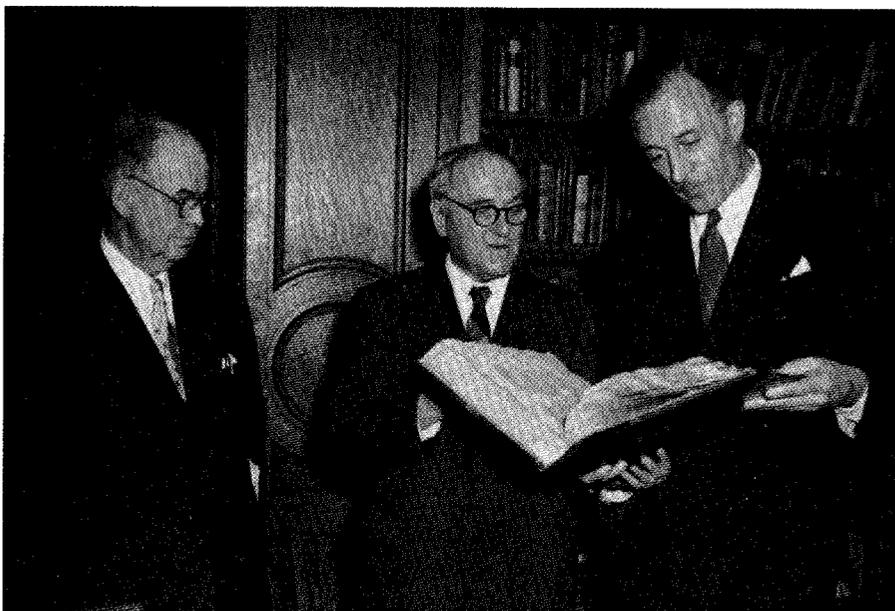
The Bibliotheca Osleriana was, of course, Francis' special achievement, and perhaps he suspected that he had shot the bolt of his creative energies on it. Although he professed to be planning other publications, such as an edition of the correspondence of the 17th century Italian physician Giorgio Baglivi, from a unique Osler Library manuscript, he actually published little more than a few pieces about the Library, a handful of short notes, and some reviews and obituaries.⁽¹⁷⁾ He had but small motivation towards original research, and even projects which one would think would inspire him, such as a new edition of Osler's essays, never saw the light of day. His scholarship during the Osler Library years was what one might call reactive. Lloyd Stevenson describes it thus:

Year after year he sat at his desk, tracing references, deciphering manuscripts, pouncing on errors in proofs, and working out the answers to historical questions with endless patience - all for the benefit of the writings of others, of the physicians and historians of two continents. His

name appears in a thousand prefaces and notes of acknowledgement. Of these he was justifiably proud. (18)

His major activity, and to all appearance major source of pleasure, was working out historical and linguistic problems posed by other researchers, or in flat parlance of librarians, answering reference inquiries. In Francis' day, the Osler Library was a clearing house and consulting service for every conceivable kind of medical historical and bibliographical information. Many of these inquiries came from afar

and by mail, and Francis' answers were often so detailed, thorough and well-written that they were incorporated into the printed works of the inquirer as appendices or extended notes. (19) Translation was another common task: one of his first projects as Osler Librarian was translating Vesalius' letter to his printer Oporinus, as part of the preparatory work for Malloch's splendid album of Vesalius' illustrations, *Icones anatomicae* (20); one of his last was translating the Edinburgh thesis of one of the founders of the Faculty of Medicine, John Stephenson (21). Closely related to translation was the furnishing of apt quotations and phrases for inscriptions, be they for the new annex to the New York Academy of Medicine, or the Montreal Neurological Hospital. As the world's leading medical philologist, he was also consulted by Penfield and others to assist them in coining legitimate new medical terminology from Greek and Roman roots (centrecephalic, epileptogenic, discoidectomy...) (22). Another avocation was editing the works of others, his major achievement in this line being Harvey Cushing's biobibliography of Vesalius, left unfinished at his death in 1939. (23) He also served as *éminence grise* in a number of important bibliographical projects, such as Fulton's bibliography of Fracastoro (24), and Keynes' of Harvey (25). And if he had no proofs of his own to correct, he scratched his itch for perfection in print by ferreting out typographical errors in other people's books. This particular trait might at first glance seem almost a little offensive; when someone sends your library a copy gratis of their book, to reply with a 2-page list of errata



W.W. Francis (centre) at his last Curators' meeting, April 15, 1959. On the right is the Principal of McGill, F. Cyril James, holding the *Aggregator of Giacomo Dondi*, printed ca. 1470. On the left is the book's donor, W. Fitzhugh.

borders on bad taste. But if one steps back a pace, one can perhaps understand this apparently inconsiderate pedantry. All these qualities – the attention to detail, the editorial instincts, the passion for perfection at any price, the generous expenditure of time and thought on work which would always remain unnoticed or even anonymous – were exactly the qualities which, when for a season they found their privileged focus and motivation, had produced *Bibliotheca Osleriana*.

As the years wore on, Francis' friends and admirers became anxious that his vast reserves of erudition, particularly concerning the Osler collection, were very likely to perish unrecorded. Charlie Martin in particular began to badger Francis at Curators' meetings to put his "showman's patter" down on paper. Year after year, Francis swore that progress was being made on this project, but at the end of a decade he had only 17 typed pages to show for it. Martin forced the issue by purchasing out of his own pocket a dictaphone machine so that Francis could tape his spiel; Martin also paid Francis' secretary, Cécile Desbarats, overtime to transcribe the tapes. Francis loathed the machine, and, according to Miss Desbarats, attempted sabotage by more or less deliberately pushing the wrong buttons and erasing instead of recording. (26) Nonetheless, at the end of another decade, *Showman's Patter* was complete – or as complete as it ever would be. It is a curious companion piece to the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, chatty, full of jokes, and peppered with one or two tall tales. Francis, the preternatural proof-reader and

passionate perfectionist, thought it best not to consider publishing the patter because so many of his assertions would need to be verified, and "it would be a shame to spoil a good story for the sake of a few facts". (27)

If Francis left little in the way of a written memorial, he nonetheless made a deep mark on several generations of McGill medical students. Where Francis really did his teaching was through the Osler Society. This club was founded in 1921 by medical students who desired to perpetuate Osler's memory and ideals. They met, often at the homes of professors

in the early days, to read papers on medical historical topics. With the arrival of Francis and the Library in 1929, meetings were held in the Library itself. Dr. Francis presided as perpetual honorary president, and never missed a meeting save during his hospitalizations for heart attack in the 40's and 50's. His role went far beyond that of academic advisor and ceremonial patron. Francis actively directed the students towards subjects for their Osler Society papers and closely supervised their research and writing. In fact, he behaved more like a professor with the Osler Society than he did with his formal course. Dr. Eleanor McGarry recalls that when the time came for her to give a talk, Dr. Francis told her that she was going to work on Maude Abbott, placed in front of her Maudie's original diaries and letters, and instructed her in how to undertake historical research. (28) The experience was deeply formative, and many of the Osler Society presentations from the Francis years won the Osler Medal of the American Association for the History of Medicine, awarded to outstanding student essays, or found their way into print. Francis was intensely proud of the Society, whose voluntary and non-competitive atmosphere brought out his natural talents as a teacher the way the classroom never could.

Francis also demonstrated extraordinary and unobtrusive kindness towards those students who exhibited an interest in medical history. His correspondence in the 1930's makes frequent reference to Mordecai Etziony, an impecunious and scholarly Jewish immigrant whose early career as a

medical student was dogged by his poor English, but whose talent for historical research Dr. Francis zealously endeavoured to advance. Under Francis' guidance, Etziony wrote an essay on the Hebrew allusions in Vesalius which Francis, with an energy he hardly ever applied to his own efforts, endeavoured for years to get Malloch to accept for inclusion in *Icones Anatomicae*. Etziony eventually did publish on historical and bibliographical subjects, and remained an habitué of the Library. ⁽²⁹⁾

The arrival of Lloyd Stevenson and the election of Wilder Penfield to the Curators in 1956 marked the beginning of a new and more active era for the Library. Stevenson, brought in by the Faculty as Assistant Osler Librarian and evident heir-apparent, took over the teaching of medical history (though he tactfully left the biographical lecture on Osler to Francis). Elected Dean, and hence Chair of the Curators a few years later, Stevenson spearheaded with Penfield a whole series of new initiatives, including the negotiation of the Wellcome Trust endowment (which to this day pays for most acquisitions of current works) and the inauguration of the Osler Lectureship. If Francis was saddened by the decline of his own powers, he was also reassured by the University's decision in 1943, when he turned 65, that he should remain in office as long as he was competent. He was treated with tender reverence by the new generation of Curators, and Cécile Desbarats took care of business, so that he had the satisfaction of dying in harness on August 10, 1959.

A few years later, Miss Desbarats, who somewhat after the manner of Lady Osler, kept open house long after the master had gone, wrote to a former McGill student, Dr. Edmund Simpson (MDCM 1936):

Yes, you are perfectly right, somebody should write a biography of Dr. Francis, well-peppered with his own epistles. I don't think he ever realized what a great influence he exerted over so many - students and doctors alike. He was often reproached for not having written mighty tomes of erudition himself, but nobody will ever know how much of his time was spent helping others, who picked his brain, and claimed his brain-children as their own! Nevertheless, I think he did more in his own quiet way for the history of medicine - and mankind in general - than the many prolific writers whose articles appear in our slightly stuffy journals. He was perfectly contented just to be at his desk, at the beck and call of whoever

dropped into the library, perpetuating the Osler tradition which was so close to his heart.

Who could handle this job is another matter. Perhaps in a few years' time, one of the students who came under his spell, may attempt such a thing. Like Osler, his warm and magical personality would be hard to put down in black and white, and perhaps he might prefer to live on in the thousands of notes tucked away in this library which we bless every day or by the letters which are treasured all over the world. ⁽³⁰⁾

All that William Willoughby Francis did and wrote and said defies summary treatment, and it is extraordinarily difficult to know where and how to end this portrait of the scholar and showman of the Osler Library. There is so much more that deserves discussion: his correspondence with the great medical historians and bibliographers of his day - Cushing and Fulton, Malloch, Keynes and Klebs - would make a meaty essay in itself, and the history of the Osler Society merits a whole book. His delightful patter could be excerpted for hours, and his ordinary correspondence is a bottomless store of minutiae on medical history and bibliography, laced with shameless gossip. But were Francis here today, he would doubtless prefer to ring down the curtain with a laugh, and one at his own expense. My epilogue, then, is Dr. E.H. Bensley's reminiscence of how Francis' humour could parody even his own preoccupation with Osler, and his renowned tendency to bring Osler into every conversation:

Never happier than when he was making fun of himself, [Francis] knew what his friends expected and he did not disappoint them... On February 6, 1956, the Osler Society was holding one of its regular meetings. Dr. Harry Ballou was the Honorary President and that evening he was the speaker. His subject was "Sir James Hector, the Hannibal of the Rockies". At the conclusion of his presentation, all heads turned towards Dr. Francis. As usual, he was sitting in the big leather armchair reserved for him and, as usual, he was asked to open the discussion. I can remember wondering idly how he would go about establishing a connection between Sir James Hector and Osler. I soon found out. Dr. Francis gave his characteristic chuckle and then he spoke. "Osler", he said, "Osler had a dog called Hector." ⁽³¹⁾

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 3. *idem*, Jan. 23, 1933.
 4. *idem*, Jan. 28, 1935.
 5. *idem*, May 16, 1938.
 6. *idem*, Oct. 20, 1941.
 7. *idem*, Nov. 23, 1942.
 8. *idem*, June 25, 1930.
 9. Cf. *idem*, Feb. 27, 1956.
 10. *idem*, Oct. 7, 1958.
 11. Francis Correspondence, Osler Library Archives and MSS Accession 381.
 12. Osler Library Board of Curators. Minutes, Jan. 22, 1934.
 13. Francis Correspondence. Osler Library Archives and MSS Accession 381.
 14. Francis Correspondence. Osler Library Archives and MSS Accession 381.
 15. Lloyd G. Stevenson, "W.W. Francis", *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 34 (1960): 376. Its very awkwardness, however, served one of Francis' purposes, as the necessity of consulting a multitude of catalogues was one of his most frequently invoked reasons for not buying more books.
 16. Dr. Eleanor McGarry, personal communication to the author.
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- "The Osler Library." In *The First Memorial Osler Celebration of the Canadian Medical Association* ([Toronto: Canadian Medical Association], 1929): 13-15. Reprinted from *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 21 (1929): 137-139.
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"Harvey Cushing." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 41 (1939): 496.

"Maude Abbott." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 10 (1941): 305-308.

"Rabelaeus Mariopolitanus." [Memorial issue to Léo Pariseau] *Journal de l'Hotel-Dieu de Montréal* 2 (1944 for 1943): 359-361.

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18. Stevenson, 378.

19. Cf. note 17 above, "Notes on Plate V".

20. Andreas Vesalius, *Icones anatomicae*. New York Academy of Medicine Library History of Medicine Series 3. ([New York]: Academia Medicinae Nova-Eboracensis et Bibliotheca Universitatis Monacensis, 1934).

21. See note 17 above, "Repair of Cleft Palate."

22. Wilder Penfield, "A Cock to Asclepius", in W.W. Francis: *Tributes from his Friends* (Montreal: Published by the [Osler] Society [of McGill University], 1956): 52-55.

23. Harvey Cushing, *A Bio-Bibliography of Andreas Vesalius* (New York: Schuman, 1943).

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25. *A Bibliography of the Writings of Dr. William Harvey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928). Cf. 2nd ed, 1953, Preface p. vi.

26. Personal communication from Cécile Desbarats to the author.

27. Osler Library. Board of Curators. Minutes, March 5, 1951.

28. Personal communication of Dr. Eleanor McGarry to the author.

29. Cf. Mordecai Etziony, "My Introduction to the Osler Library," in W.W. Francis: *Tributes from his Friends*, 65-68.

30. Cécile Desbarats to E.E. Simpson, 29 Nov., 1962. Francis Correspondence, Osler Library MSS and Archives Acc. 381.

**A TRIBUTE To DR. EDWARD HORTON BENSLEY
1906-1995**

**Osler Day, November 1, 1995
Osler Library
3:00 p.m.**

A word of welcome

Dr. Abraham Fuks, Dean, Faculty of Medicine

Five personal perspectives on Edward Bensley

Dr. Roy Forsey

Dr. Bensley always regarded himself; first and foremost, as an M.G.H. man. Dr. Forsey, a close colleague of Dr. Bensley's at the Montreal General, evokes his presence in this, his favourite milieu.

Dr. Stanley B. Frost, Director, History of McGill Project.

Dr Frost and Dr Bensley shared a deep interest in the history of McGill and its environment. They collaborated closely in the launching of the James McGill Society.

Dr. Don G. Bates, Dept. of Social Studies of Medicine.

Following his official "retirement", Dr Bensley launched a second career in the Department of Social Studies of Medicine. His years there are recalled by a fellow-historian, Don Bates.

Miss Marilyn Fransiszyn, Instructional Services Librarian, Humanities and Social Sciences Library.

Marilyn Fransiszyn was for many years Assistant History of Medicine Librarian at the Osler Library. Her work brought her into daily contact with Dr Bensley, whose devotion to this Library and its interests took many forms.

Dr. Bernard Brais, Montreal General Hospital.

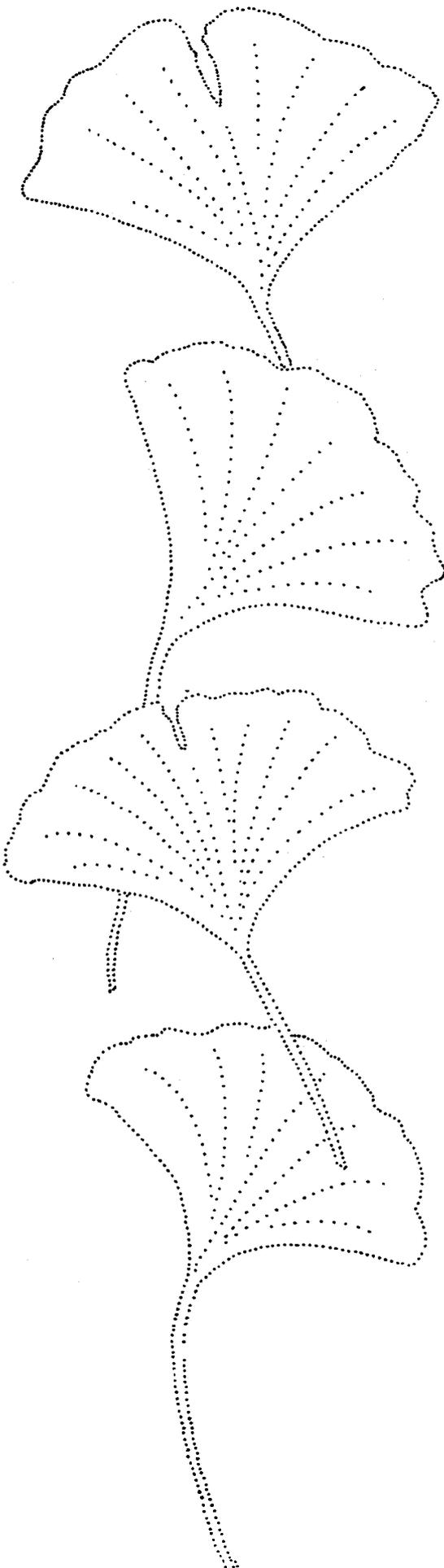
As a medical student, Bernard Brais was President of the Osler Society, and enrolled in an elective in medical history under Dr Bensley's direction. The fledgling doctor and his distinguished mentor struck up a warm friendship.

Edward Bensley, in his own words

This videotape was made in the early 1980s, as part of an oral history project on medical life in Montreal in the first half of this century. Dr Bensley's account of those days is seasoned with his inimitable gift of anecdote.

A time for reflection

You are invited to stand for a moment of silent recollection, at the close of which Dr. Faith Wallis will read a poem by one of Dr Bensley's favourite writers, F.R. Scott.



Dr. E.H. Bensley, 1906-1995

Funds donated by the Friends of the Osler Library enabled us to render a fitting tribute to a dear friend who is greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him. On Osler Day, November 1st, 1995, Mrs. Bensley, the Curators of the Library, the Dean of Medicine, and numerous colleagues and friends, gathered to hear reminiscences about and even by Dr. Bensley (a portion of a taped interview with him was shown on a TV screen in the Library). In the background, the Osler Room exhibition case contained photographs of Dr. Bensley, some of his publications, and a scattering of the ginkgo leaves he liked so much (the ginkgo trees on the campus were just then turning from green to gold). It was an occasion of tears and smiles, the latter especially in evidence as Dr. Bensley told one of his stories on the tape. A reception was held after the Tribute.

Amongst the many memories of Dr. Bensley treasured in the Osler Library is the filing cabinet which contains his meticulously arranged papers; a mine of information.

Gifts

Amongst the numerous gifts received in the Library there is one which arrived late in 1994. This is the collection of Ayurvedic texts and research materials presented by Dr. Charles Leslie - a most welcome addition to the collection.

In the course of the year Mr. Jeremy Norman informed us that he had a poster advertising the Silliman Lectures given by Osler at Yale in 1913. This was purchased, for eventual donation to the Library, by Dr. Abraham Fuks (who became Dean of Medicine in June 1995) in whose office it will hang after restoration and framing.

Just published, and now received from ECW Press as a gift to the Library, is Philip W. Leon's book *Walt Whitman and Sir William Osler*, ECW Press, 1995, the centrepiece of which, with permission of the Board of Curators, is the manuscript of Osler's 1919 address (never delivered) "Walt Whitman: an anniversary address with personal reminiscences".

Osler Library Fellows for 1995

The 1995 Research Fellow was Dr. Jennifer Connor, (Toronto), who is studying the development of medical libraries and the professionalization of medical librarianship. Her work here was concerned with

the role of McGill physicians and librarians in the development of the Medical Library Association. The Student Fellowship was awarded to Peter Kang, (Philadelphia) who is interested in the social context of medical case presentation in Canada and the U.S.

Newsletter Index, 1969-1995

A new Index to the Newsletter, covering nos. 1-78, June 1969-February 1995, has been compiled by Anneli Lukka, a colleague from the adjoining Health Sciences Library. Anneli, a Health Sciences staff member for the last 20 years, has recently begun to work occasionally on Osler Library projects, of which the new Index is the first tangible result. We are very grateful for Anneli's meticulous work.

The Index is sent free of charge to Friends of the Osler Library. Anyone else who would like to have a copy is invited to request it; the request should be accompanied by \$5.00 to cover handling costs.

Friends of the Osler Library: a Report and an Appeal, October 1995

The Library's collections continue to benefit immeasurably from Friends' donations. Several large microform sets have been acquired. The *Annals of the Royal College of Physicians, 1518-1915*, a set of 417 microfiches, is a complete run of the previously unpublished manuscript *Annals*, a major source for social historians and so much in demand that after its arrival it was several weeks before we could take it for cataloguing, as it was always in use. *Black Death: sources concerning the European Plague, c1470-1822*, from the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, consists of 34 reels of microfilm (comprising about 230 volumes), and is an excellent supplement to our existing holdings. Another important addition to the library's microform holdings is the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, v. 1-91, 1911-1964, a purchase which was necessitated by the spring 1995 removal into remote storage of journals up to the end of 1964 from the Health Sciences Library.

One very unusual addition to the collection is a CD-ROM called *The Dean's Book*, an electronic tribute offered to the former Dean of Medicine, Dr. Richard Cruess, on his retirement as Dean in May 1995. Dr. Cruess was closely associated with the Osler Library, notably as Chairman of the Board of Curators, as host at various decadal receptions, and as a pioneer of the Adopt-a-Book scheme, and the Librarian's

contributions to the electronic book reflected some of these happy associations. Unfortunately, the CD-ROM is incompatible with the equipment we have both here and in the Health Sciences Library, so that at the moment, we cannot view the book.

Meanwhile, the purchase of printed library materials has continued and a number of eighteenth and nineteenth century titles on infectious diseases have been acquired, in continuation of the developments made possible by a succession of SSHRC grants.

Thanks to Mr. Theodore Hofmann of Bernard Quaritch Ltd., in London, the Osler Library has been able to replace an item from the original *Bibliotheca Osleriana* which has been missing from the collection for some considerable time, (at least since the early 1970's). This is B.O. no. 4579, for which the *Bibliotheca* entry runs as follows:

BOTRIE (J.).

4579. *Religio Jurisconsulti*. sm. 8°. Lond., H. Hood, 1649.

Subscribed at end: Sic cogitavit J. Botrie. Keynes 388 (but there is no hyphen in the title).

This copy was formerly bound up with first eds. of *Religio Medici*, Digby's *Observations*, and Butler's *Hudibras*. In that enviable company it was found in 1912 in a Geneva bookshop by Dr. H.B. Jacobs and Dr. A.C. Klebs simultaneously. A friendly dispute - each protesting that the other saw it first - was settled by sending the vol. to Sir Wm. Osler for dissection. He kept this morceau and sent back the others rebound, adjudicating the Digby to J. and Browne and Butler to K.

At some unknown moment this little volume vanished from the Osler Library. During the summer of 1995 Mr. Hofmann informed us that he had a copy for sale (not, let it be said at once, our original copy!) The Quaritch copy is in its original binding; and, thanks to the detailed entry in the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, we know that Osler himself took the original volume apart and had it rebound.

Mr. Hofmann sent us the text of the item description which was to appear in Bernard Quaritch Catalogue 1217, *English Literature of the Seventeenth Century*. It runs as follows:

First edition of the second earliest of the imitations called forth by *Religio Medici*, and one of the rarest. If J. Botrie, who announces himself at the

end ('Sic cogitavit J. Botrie'), was a lawyer, it is not evident from his text, which is a theological argument from first causes to the conclusion that scripture is 'the True and Perfect Rule for the Performance of Jehovah's Honour and Worship, and . . . Mans full Restauration'. For such a work the style is oddly facetious ('Well? Then it must to the Presse'). The author apparently has not been identified: one candidate might be John Botry of Marston, Northamptonshire, whose son, John, was at Lincoln College in the 1660s and afterwards was a student at Gray's Inn (Alumni Oxonienses).

Keynes, Browne, appendix, p. 234. Wing (1945 and 1994 editions) B 3811 (altered in the 1972 edition to B 3810) lists four copies only, British Library, Bodley, McGill (Osler 4579), and Huntington. NUC adds no others.

Geoffrey Keynes, in his Bibliography of Sir Thomas Browne, 2nd. ed., Oxford 1968, lists the work as follows, in Appendix I. Religio Medici: Imitators:

RELIGIO JURISCONSULTI: J Botrie

Religio Jurisconsulti. London, Printed for Henry Hood, and are to be sold at his shop in St. Dunstons Church-yard. 1649. A-D⁸ E⁴.

Note: Subscribed at the end: Sic cogitavit J. Botrie.

Copies: BM; CH, MMO.

It is obvious that this book is of considerable rarity, and we are grateful to Mr. Hofmann, who ensured that the Osler Library was given the chance to acquire the Quaritch copy. We are grateful to the Friends of the Osler Library whose financial support made it possible to seize this opportunity to fill a rather deplorable gap in the original part of the Library's collection; and also to the Friends of the Library (McGill), who made a significant contribution to this purchase when it was known that it was being considered.

Meanwhile, the purchase of new titles has continued, as can be seen from the wide range on the library's current acquisitions shelves. Tony Gould's A summer plague: polio and its survivors, Yale 1995, rubs shoulders with Jo Ann Carrigan's The saffron scourge: a history of yellow fever in Louisiana, 1796-1905, University of S.W. Louisiana, 1994, and a Bibliography of Korean Medicine, Osaka, 1973, with the splendidly illustrated The anatomy lesson: art and medicine, an exhibition of Art and

RELIGIO

JURISCONSULTI.



LONDON,

Printed for *Henry Hood*, and are to be sold at his shop in *St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1649.*

Anatomy to celebrate the Tercentenary of the Royal Charter of 1692 of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Dublin, 1992.

Over the past year the Friends of the Osler Library have, albeit unknowingly, helped to give the Library staff a collective push out on to the Information Highway; or, to put it more prosaically, some of your donations have enabled us to equip each staff member with a fine new computer with a wide range of capabilities. Thus, as we approach the next millennium, the Osler Library will have its place in the vanguard of technological awareness. With the new machines, much more powerful than the ones we had before, we are learning how to use Windows and the Internet. The Wellcome Institute Library Database and Catalogue (WILDCAT) is accessible via Telnet on the Internet. The latest Bibliography of the History of Medicine, 1990-93 is the last that will be issued in print, and History of Medicine articles will now have to be searched on HISTLINE. The NLM iconographic collections are searchable by computer; and it is now possible (even essential) to browse the inventories of some rare books dealers on the World Wide Web. At the moment, the Osler Library staff could be described as poised on an access ramp, preparing for the dash out into the heavy traffic of the Information Highway, but thanks to the Friends, we are ready to go and very excited at the openings afforded us. Another splendid acquisition we owe to Friends is our Laserjet printer; we are still at the stage of marvelling at the speed and perfection of the copies this produces.

The Report to the Friends of the Osler Library is traditionally followed by our appeal for funds for the coming year. Fees to Friends have remained at the same level since 1972, \$10.00 for a Contributing Friend, \$25.00 for a Supporting Friend, and \$50.00 or more for a Patron. The University's costs have risen to such an extent that it is no longer feasible to deal with cheques when the cost of processing is higher than the value of the cheque. The Board of Curators has therefore agreed to raise the fees as follows:

- Contributing Friend \$25.00
- Supporting Friend \$50.00
- Patron \$100.00 or more

As before, membership includes a subscription to the Osler Library Newsletter and special rates for some of the other publications of the Library (e.g. Bibliotheca Osleriana, McGill Medical Luminaries, Oslerian Verse). Tax receipts will be issued. We are immensely grateful for the support you have all given us over the years and hope you will wish to continue. Our new form with the revised rates is enclosed. Additions to the rare books section, purchases of current material, technological equipment which enables us to work more efficiently through information access and resource sharing, the Tribute to Dr. Bensley, and many more acquisitions and activities in this busy Library, all these we owe to the generosity of the Osler Library's Friends. In these days of university deficits and budget cuts, we could not continue to offer the services we do without your active support.

Editorial Committee for the Newsletter: Faith Wallis, Editor; June Schachter, History of Medicine Librarian and Assistant Editor; Wayne LeBel, Assistant History of Medicine Librarian and Assistant Editor; Lily Szczygiel, Editorial Assistant.

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The Editorial Committee apologizes for the lateness of this issue, "due to circumstances beyond its control".