

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

MCGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

No. 25 – JUNE 1977

THE FRANCIS WING

A Progress Report



nder the title "The Francis Wing", the October issue of the *Newsletter* gave notice of the impending construction within the McIntyre Medical Sciences Building of a new wing, to be named after the first Osler Librarian, Dr. W.W. Francis. It was there stated that this Francis Wing will provide enlarged and enhanced

shelving for rare and circulating books of the Osler Library, a staff lounge, and additional office, seminar, and study space for the Department of the History of Medicine. The construction and furnishing of this wing have been made possible by the generosity of a Friend of the Osler Library with additional funds from McGill University.

Construction started in early February of the current year. It was decided that initially work should be largely confined to two areas – the Francis Seminar Room of the Department of the History of Medicine and the staff lounge for the Osler Library. The hope was that these would be completed and ready for use by Osler Day, April 20th.* This hope was fulfilled but with only a few hours to spare!

The seminar room and staff lounge are separated by a folding partition which ordinarily will remain closed. On the morning of April 20th, as can be done on other special occasions, the partition was folded back so that the staff lounge became temporarily a virtual extension of the seminar room. There the Osler Library Curators assembled for their annual meeting. They were joined by the staffs of the Osler Library and the Department of the History of Medicine and a specially invited guest – Dr. Marian Francis Kelen, daughter of the late Dr. W.W. Francis.

At 11 a.m., immediately prior to the convening of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Curators, a brief but highly significant ceremony was conducted by Dr. Donald G. Bates, Chairman of the Department of the History of Medicine. This was the unveiling of a Francis Memorial Plaque in the seminar room by Dr. R.F.P. Cronin, Dean of the McGill Medical Faculty. In introducing the ceremony, Dr. Bates drew attention to the appropriateness of choosing Dr. Cronin to perform the unveiling, apart from his occupancy of the posts of Dean and Chairman of the Board of Curators. Dr. Cronin has been an enthusiastic and extremely effective supporter of the entire Francis Wing project. In addition, he has been responsible for making available the funds required to add what might be called "touches of elegance" to the seminar room. The Francis Memorial Plaque, unveiled by Dr. Cronin, is one of the features made possible by his provision of these funds.

After the unveiling, the inscription was read and a few remarks were made about the inscription and the design and construction of the plaque. Since this information will undoubtedly be of interest to readers of the *Newsletter*, it is presented here in some detail. The inscription is as follows:

The Francis Wing with this Seminar Room is named in memory of WILLIAM WILLOUGHBY FRANCIS Osler Librarian from the inception of the Library in 1929 until his death in 1959

That man is great, and he alone,
Who serves a greatness not his own,
For neither praise nor pelf;
Content to know, and be unknown:
Whole in himself.

Owen Meredith

The plaque also bears a reproduction of the Arms granted to Sir William Osler when he was created a Baronet.

The first part of the inscription is self-explanatory but the verse below deserves some comment. This is the first verse of a long poem – twenty verses in all – entitled "A Great Man" written by Owen Meredith, a pseudonym adopted by the first Earl of Lytton (1831-1891). In 1956 the Osler Society of McGill University published a volume of tributes to Dr. Francis. One of the contributors was Dr. Thomas J. Sullivan, then an Assistant Resident at The Montreal General Hospital. Dr. Sullivan recognized the appropriate nature of this quotation in relation to the life of Dr. Francis, with special reference to his dedication to the memory of Sir William Osler and, to the great delight of the editors of the volume of tributes, he incorporated it in his tribute, "Such worth as Meredith extols."*** In an appreciation of Dr. Francis written after his death, Dr. Lloyd Stevenson called it "the perfect quotation." The authors of the inscription on this plaque agreed and so it appears here. The connection between this quotation and the reproduction of Osler's Arms should be obvious.

The preliminary design of the plaque was prepared by Mrs. Faith Wallis of the McGill University Archives. Using her sketch as a start, Mr. Robert R. Reid made the final design. The Francis Plaque was manufactured by the Montreal Stencil Works Limited, using anodized aluminum with an etched inscription. It is believed that this plaque will prove to be an attractive feature of the seminar room and it is hoped that it will be regarded as a suitable memorial of Dr. Francis.

*Details of the establishment of an annual Osler Day commencing in April 1977 are set forth in the June 1976 and February 1977 issues of the *Newsletter*.

**Stevenson, L.G., MacDermot, H.E., and Bensley, E.H., (edd.) *W.W. Francis: Tributes from his friends*, Osler Society of McGill University, 1956, pp. 47 - 49.

Immediately following the unveiling ceremony, Dr. Cronin convened the 40th Annual Meeting of the Board of Curators of the Osler Library. In the course of the meeting, Dr. Philip Teigen outlined future plans for the completion of the Francis Wing. Next on the program will be the construction and furnishing of offices. Work on the new area to house both rare and circulating books will follow and finally there will be the massive redistribution of the Osler Library holdings consequent upon the provision of this new wing. It is expected that this program will be completed in time for an official opening of the entire Francis Wing on Osler Day in April 1978.

E.H. Bensley

WILLIAM McPHERSON FITZHUGH

At its Annual Meeting held April 20th, 1977, the Board of Curators of the Osler Library received with regret news of the death of Dr. Fitzhugh in September of last year. Elected a Curator of the Osler Library in 1954, Dr. Fitzhugh, although a resident in California, faithfully attended most of the meetings of the Board until incapacitated by his final illness. He showed interest in the Library not only by participation in these meetings, but also by many gifts of books, including a fine copy of a rare incunable. Dr. Fitzhugh received his medical degree from McGill University in 1933 and, throughout his life, he greatly valued his ties with his Alma Mater. Members of the McGill Medical Faculty who visited California will remember how much he did to make their visits pleasant and profitable. He was a true friend of McGill University.

AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF OSLERIANA

Earl F. Nation, Charles G. Roland, and John P. McGovern have compiled a listing, with notes, on the literature on Sir William Osler, including books, journals, newspapers, special memorial issues, and a variety of ephemera. This very useful work is entitled *An Annotated Checklist of Osleriana*. Readers who wish further information should communicate with the publisher, The Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio 44240, U.S.A.

OSLER LIBRARY EXHIBIT OF RECENT ACQUISITIONS

During February and March of the current year, the Osler Library exhibit was devoted to a number of recently acquired rare books, manuscripts, and pictures. These acquisitions were selected for exhibit partly for their individual interest and partly because they illustrate one of the areas in which the Library is developing its collections, namely the history of Quebec medicine. The following is a partial list of the items shown.

1. Photograph taken at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal, in the early 1930's, showing Dr. E.W. Archibald and Dr. Norman Bethune performing a surgical operation. This was the gift of Mrs. Kenneth E. Christmas, Dr. Archibald's daughter.
2. A long-lost page from Osler's "Post-mortem book of the Montreal General Hospital." Reference to this book was made in the October 1975 issue of the *Newsletter*. The page on exhibit, bearing in Osler's handwriting an account of autopsy No. 302 dated 1879, had somehow become detached from the others. After being lost for nearly one hundred years, it was discovered by Dr. Harold Segall when it fell out of a book he had bought second-hand.
3. Physiology Laboratory Notebook kept by Harold Segall in 1916 when he was a McGill medical student. This and the preceding item were given to the Library by Dr. Harold Segall, a member of our Board of Curators.
4. Société de Tempérance de l'Eglise St. Pierre de Montréal, 1877-78: Lecture sur l'Alcoolisme par J.A. Laramée, M.D., Montreal, 1879.
5. Account Book (1848-1854) of Josiah S. Brigham, M.D., McGill 1848. Philipsburg, Quebec.
6. Books, journals, and manuscripts given to the Library by Dr. Harold Griffith relating to two subjects; homeopathy and curare. These were described in some detail in the October 1976 issue of the *Newsletter*.
7. Minute Book of the University Lying-In Hospital, Montreal, 1844-1852 and Graph showing mortality and morbidity figures, Montreal Maternity Hospital, 1906-1930. Presented to the Library by the Women's Pavilion Library, Royal Victoria Hospital, Montreal.
8. *L'Abeille Médicale: Journal de l'Ecole de Médecine et de Chirurgie de Montréal, de l'Hôpital Hôtel-Dieu, de la Maternité Ste. Pélagie et des Dispensaires*, Vol. 1, 1879.
9. Annual Announcement of the Medical Faculty of McGill College for the session 1852-3.

The type of material represented by these items is of great value in reconstructing the story of medicine in the Province of Quebec and every attempt is being made to enlarge our collections in this important field.

OSLER SOCIETY OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Report for the academic year 1976-77

The Osler Society periscope the environs — bearing no resemblance, however, to the ostrich — on three occasions this year. Two meetings, the 265th and 266th, took place in the Osler Library. The Fifty-sixth Annual Osler Banquet, now incorporated into Osler Day with the Annual Osler Lecture, hosted Dr. Jean Mayer, President of Tufts University and formerly Professor of Nutrition and Lecturer in the History of Public Health at Harvard. Dr. Mayer took part in a discussion of the subject of his Osler Lecture, "Nutritional Problems of the Rich and the Poor", delivered previously that afternoon.

On January 25th, Robert McLellan, third year M.D.—M.P.H. student from Yale University, addressed the Society on the subject of "Traditional Healing and Western Medicine in Ghana." His presentation expanded our often narrow view of healing to an appreciation of the psychic, social, and biological factors in health and disease. He illustrated his concepts with slides of herbalists and places of healing visited during his recent trip to Ghana. He also showed a rare, 8mm glimpse of a fetish priestess' healing ceremony.

Joel Palefsky, first year medical student at McGill, spoke at the meeting of March 23rd. His presentation of the "History of Homeopathy in Montreal" proceeded from the origins of modern homeopathy with Hahnemann's laws to its appearance in North America and to clandestine beginnings in Quebec and Montreal under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Fisher. With the arrival in Montreal of Drs. A.R. Griffith and H.M. Patton, homeopathy became established in this city, and although the newly built Royal Victoria Hospital refused to set aside a special wing for homeopathic treatment (treatment was obtained at the French hospitals, while support came from the English population), the Montreal Homeopathic Hospital was opened in 1894, with effective treatment for 'diarrhea, pleurisy, pneumonia and heart affections.' The move of this hospital to greatly expanded quarters in a new building on Marlowe Avenue in 1927 belied the decline of homeopathy due to the availability of vaccines, new surgical techniques, and discontinuance of unfavourable allopathic practices.

The Osler Lectureship was inaugurated on April 20, 1977, Osler Day. A capacity audience in the Charles F. Martin Amphitheater heard Dr. Mayer contrast the nutritional problems of the rich with those of the poor. He also discussed the impact of food production methods on the environment. He emphasized that technical assistance is often out of step with the prevalent social structure, and that the Green Revolution poses expensive fertilizer, pesticide, and storage difficulties.

The Lecture was followed by the Osler Banquet at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Asked about the appropriateness of roast veal au jus (which was on the menu), Dr. Mayer replied with the words of Santayana: "There are times when it is wisdom not to be wise," in reference to his earlier spoof that "underdone meat is the motorcycle of middle age." Further discussion ensued on topics such as hydro-farming, the United States food stamp program, and monitoring the needs of pregnant women. All agreed that the newly inaugurated Osler Day had been a success.

Claus Hamann MDCM III
John Gawoski MDCM III
Co-Chairmen, Osler Society, 1976-77

OSLER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND INNER HISTORY OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL

Sir William Osler's autobiographical notes have been published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1976, 50: 596-618. The original notes were written in Osler's hand and bound along with the manuscript of his "inner history" of the early days of The Johns Hopkins Hospital. This latter manuscript was published several years ago (*The Johns Hopkins Medical Journal*, 1969, 125: 184-194). Those wishing reprints of either or both these publications should send their requests to Dr. E.H. Bensley, Department of the History of Medicine, McGill University, 3655 Drummond Street, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1Y6.

FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The appeal to the Friends for the 1976-77 academic year concluded at the end of May and the Library is very gratified to receive the \$3190.00 contributed by 209 Friends. The appeal for the 1977-78 academic year will be made in the October *Newsletter*; there will also be a note describing how the Friends' contributions have been used by the Library in addition to making possible the continuation of the *Newsletter*. The Library acknowledges with thanks the support of all its Friends. The following have been added to the list since the publication of the February *Newsletter*.

E.T. Carlson, NY
*J.A. Clifton, IA
*C.M. Feindel, PQ
C.T. Floyd, SC
W.B. Fye, MD
O.C. Gruner (in memoriam)
*H.L. Holley, AL
*R.P. Howard, OK
C.H. Johnston, CA
H. Korda, ME

B. Little, OH
*L.D. Longo, CA
†E.L. Margetts, BC
C.W. Nichols, Jr., CA
M.A. Revere, MA
J.A. Robertson, AB
M. Trossman, ON
R.C. U'Ren, OR
*B.R. Wilcox, NC
B.I. Wulff, NY

† Patron

* Supporting Friend