



OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

No.89 - October 1998

Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* and the Publishing House of Ticknor & Fields



ir William Osler will always be closely associated with the writings of Sir Thomas Browne. Osler encountered Browne early in life, and remained a devoted champion

until his death. He was particularly affected by the *Religio Medici*, of which he wrote, "No book has had so enduring an influence on my life."

The most important book Osler ever owned was the second book he purchased. This was the 1862 *Religio* (second edition), published by Messrs. Ticknor and Fields of Boston.

He [Osler] always kept this copy of *Religio* near him and would put it in his bag if he was to be away from home for the night. During Osler's last illness, at the end of 1919, this volume was at his side. [...] When Osler's funeral service was held at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, the book lay on the purple pall covering his coffin.?"

Osler bought the book in 1867, and later called it, "the father of my Browne collection."³ But we may well ask why a Boston publisher would print this 17th century English essay, at a time when America was embroiled in its great Civil War.

Boston, in 1862, was a city of vibrant intellectual activity at the height of an oratorical age. Sermons, lectures and public debate fueled the minds of individuals who subscribed to theological and intellectual opinion based largely on the oratorical abilities of local luminaries, preachers and pundits. Many of the great New England literary minds had discovered value in Browne's writing, and subsequently wrote about, spoke of, or recommended him to others. Emerson was a Browne disciple, and Thoreau was reading the *Religio* in 1847 "for the light it shed on his own essential problems."⁴ Lowell was also smitten with Browne, and

even went so far as to call him, "our most imaginative mind since Shakespeare"⁵ Browne wasn't the only common interest among these men: they were all eventually published by Ticknor & Fields.

By the time the Boston *Religio* appeared, Ticknor & Fields was, possibly, the most important publishing house in America; it was certainly the most important publisher of Americans. The reputation of the business was built on its catalogue of celebrated New England writers. Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Emerson were only some of the stars in the Ticknor & Fields constellation.

In 1832, two young men, John Allen and William D. Ticknor (a younger cousin of the Harvard Professor, George Ticknor), forged a partnership to sell books. Allen left two years into the venture, leaving Ticknor to continue alone. Ticknor was a sagacious, but cautious, businessman. He was not particularly literary, and he certainly was not socially inclined. He did, however, have a sound understanding of the book trade, and the ability to recognize talent. In 1843 he changed the fortune and future of his firm by raising a gregarious young clerk named Fields to the position of Junior Partner.

It was James T. Fields' love of fine literature that guided the direction of the firm's publishing activity. Ticknor was a generalist with a keen eye for a business advantage; Fields, on the other hand, was driven solely by his passion for good books. Even as a young man, Fields defined himself as a poet first, and only later as a poet-publisher. His poetic endeavours, pleasant at best (though generally mediocre), placed him in a unique position where he could stay sensitive to issues on both sides of the usually adversarial author/publisher relationship.

Fields was blessed with an extremely likable personality which helped him to cultivate strong personal relationships with his authors. After

his death, in a letter to Dr. John Brown, Oliver Wendell Holmes summed up Fields' character.

A good friend of a great many writers he certainly was, a very agreeable companion, a most hospitable entertainer, a pleasant writer of reminiscences, and [with] a degree of cleverness which commended him to men of genius like Dickens,

The author of the lead article in this issue of the Newsletter is David Carlin of Vancouver, British Columbia. David began his university career intending to study medicine, but soon succumbed to the attractions of music. Though music is how he earns his daily bread (he now works for Virgin Entertainment), his interest in medicine has never abated. Moreover, David is an avid book collector, who has actually used the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* as his guide in building his own library of medical classics. His initial "Oslerian" purchase was, in fact, the 1862 Ticknor and Fields *Religio Medici* - Osler's first and favourite Browne book, and the subject of this essay. David writes: "Many physicians and surgeons have found refuge in the study of music. I enjoy doing the same thing-just backwards."

Thackeray, Hawthorne, and others of the upper order in the literary hierarchy.⁶

We know that John Brown also admired Fields. After their first meeting Brown wrote to his sister, "My Dear Jane- We had a delightful couple from America with us for two hours on Sunday night, Mr. and Mrs. Fields of Boston. [...] I have not for years seen two more likable people."⁷

Fields was a devout Anglophile with a strong attraction to English writers. He admired Coleridge (a great Browne lover) and Lamb (the man who claimed to have introduced Browne to Coleridge). After Lamb's death, Fields bought parts of his library and fondly displayed them to his friends for the rest of his life. He wrote, "I am a wonderful admirer of England and everything English. At times I can scarcely help wishing myself on board an outbound Liverpool steamer and running across the Atlantic again."⁸

Fields courted English authors, both personally and professionally. His solicitude paid off for the firm: Ticknor & Fields eventually published works by Tennyson, Browning, Reade, Thackeray and Dickens. Even the aged de Quincey, who was tremendously influenced by Browne, was wooed by "young Mr. Fields of Boston." Ticknor & Fields, as a result, published the first complete edition of de Quincey's works.

There is no doubt that Fields' yearning "for everything English", and direct exposure to Browne through many of his authors, both English and American, played a role in his decision to publish the *Religio*.

Ticknor, even in his earliest retail days, stocked his shelves with medical publications, "not apparently because he had any particular flair for the subject but because the field was pre-empted by no other house."⁹ He even tried to attract clientele from the medical community by selling stethoscopes from his bookshop.

He stocked the shelves of his store with the largest selection of books on medicine to be found in New England. He devised an appropriate colophon and published a variety of medical works proportionately greater than that of any other classification on his lists. He did not long remain a "medical publisher and bookseller," as he frequently called himself, yet he

never entirely lost interest in this kind of book even after *belles lettres* had become the firm's stock-in-trade.¹⁰

The firm's records indicate that medical publications were dependable sellers, but not hugely profitable.

Though the turnover in medical works was slow they "eventually will sell," Fields reported, and so a whole section of the store was given over to these volumes and special medical catalogues were issued,"

Ticknor's medical catalogues were issued between 1832 and 1847. The last few of these were printed and distributed in quantities of three thousand at a time.* After 1847 the firm's focus was, for the most part, poetry and fine literature, even though medical works still appeared infrequently. Some of the firm's medical publications had tremendous longevity. Combe's *The Constitution Of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects* first printed in 1833 stayed in print for over thirty years. Constant demand for this title helped to get the house through significant periods of economic depression and political upheaval.

The American Civil War had a disastrous effect on the American book trade. Warren S. Tryon, author of a substantial biography of Fields, followed the firm's fortunes during the war: 225 titles were issued in 1860; but, by 1861, the number of titles was reduced to 121.¹³ In August of 1862 an exasperated Fields wrote to a friend, "The Trade is in a state of apathy I never saw approached."¹⁴ Fields was not a politically active man, and did not have to work hard at dissociating himself from wartime politics. He did, however, have to guide his business cautiously through this potentially fatal period.

It was into this political and economic uncertainty that the firm released its edition of the *Religio*. Fields himself, with admirable self-assurance, undertook to edit the work. Unfortunately, his editorial work is lamentable. Fields' "edition" contains virtually no original work; for example, he concocted a twelve page "Biographical Sketch of the Author" by quoting (directly and indirectly) from the earlier biographies of Whitefoot, Johnson and Wilkin.¹⁵

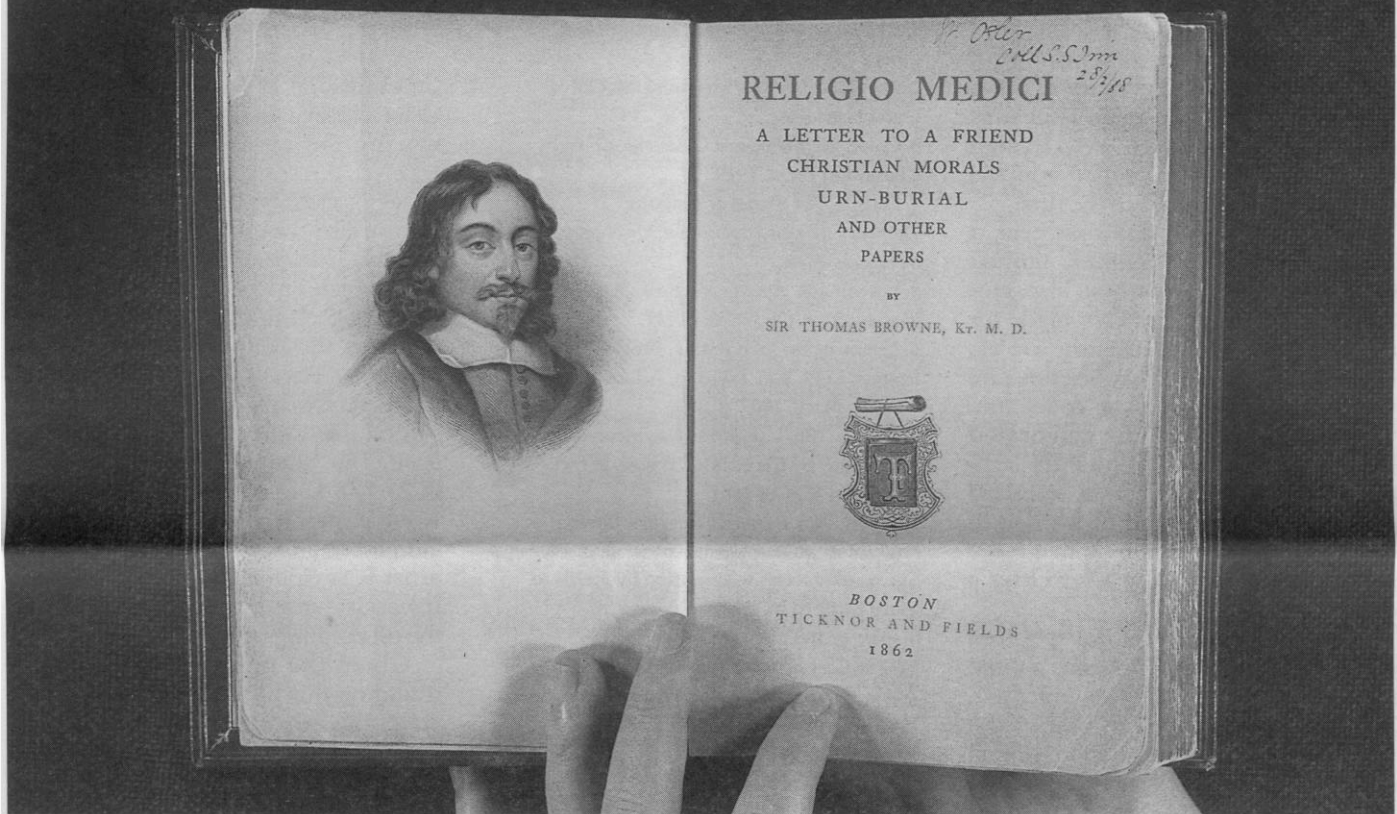
Fields was taken to task for his misguided editorial efforts by an anonymous writer in *The Philobiblon* who published an extremely critical review of the book. The article vilifies Fields and calls his edition "a signal specimen of literary quackery" because it contained no original scholarship. The writer compares sentences from Fields' "Biographical Sketch" with Johnson's "Life" to illustrate Fields' plagiarism and the inaccuracy of his statements. He also points out that 156 of Fields' 266 notes are "taken bodily" from Gardiner's edition and the other 110 are from Wilkin's edition. Finally, he resoundingly condemns Fields as a "literary parasite."¹⁶

Ironically, Fields was one of the first publishers in America to argue for the fair treatment of authors. Unlike most other publishers, he advocated remuneration for domestic reprints, and payment to foreign authors still living. Fields earned the admiration of many authors by paying them when there was no binding reason for him to do so.

American domestic copyright, in 1862, was a delicate balance of trade courtesies (with virtually no enforcement or accountability), and international copyright was non-existent. Fields' editorial behaviour, while unacceptable today, did not scandalize Boston society. There is no indication that his plagiarized edition of the *Religio* adversely affected the reputation of the house; quite the opposite, the book was popular enough to warrant regular printing.

Fields inscribed his edition of the *Religio* to the two great (living) literary physicians in his life: John Brown and Oliver Wendell Holmes. At the time of publication Fields did not have a close relationship with Dr. John Brown, although the two men had met during Fields' European visit in 1861. Fields may well have dedicated his Browne to Brown as a means of rallying the author's support for an American edition of his own collected works. In fact, one year later, in 1863, Ticknor & Fields released Brown's *Spare Hours*, a collection of his shorter works. This book included the popular *Rab and His Friends* which the firm first printed, without the author's knowledge, in 1859.¹⁷

Holmes, on the other hand, was a central figure in the life of James T. Fields. The two were friends and neighbours in Boston's fashionable Charles Street. Whenever the two were



Title page of Osler's first copy of *Religio Medici*, with portrait of Sir Thomas Browne.

separated they corresponded frequently, and lamented the absence of the other. Holmes had a long association with Ticknor & Fields. His *Homeopathy and its Kindred Delusions* was printed by Ticknor back when he considered himself a "medical publisher and bookseller." Later, the house was responsible for printing Holmes' remarkable *Puerperal Fever as a Private Pestilence*.

Holmes was the only medical author who survived the firm's transition to publishing fine literature. His reputation and relationship with Ticknor & Fields was so secure that his *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* was one of the few works that the house ventured to release during the turbulent years of the Civil War.

The design of books and bindings was extremely important to the success of Ticknor & Fields. The firm was one of the first publishing houses in America to develop a house style of presentation, immediately recognizable with just a casual glance. Holmes' poetry for example was so highly regarded by Ticknor & Fields that it was eventually issued in the exclusive "blue and gold" format. Books in this series were pocket sized, blind

stamped, blue cloth edition with gilt edges. The visual appeal of this format became, in the eyes of the Victorian consumer, synonymous with quality and good taste. Holmes was so pleased to be published in blue and gold that he wrote a special introductory poem for the first release.

Go, little book whose pages hold
Those garnered years in loving trust;
How long before your blue and gold
Shall fade and whiten in the dust?¹⁸

The original binding of the 1862 *Religio* bears little resemblance to the gilt leather that presently enshrouds Osler's copy. The firm chose one of their popular bindings: simple, solid colour pebbled cloth, with both covers blind stamped, and with an elegant embossed title on the spine.

The firm of Welch Bigelow & Co. was responsible for printing the first and all subsequent editions of the *Religio*. The text is set elegantly, with wide margins, and in two colours: black with red initials. Scattered throughout are fine printer's ornaments which divide sections and chapters in a pleasing and balanced way. Varying type sizes are carefully consid-

ered, and are placed in relation to each other in such a way that even the smallest type size can be read comfortably. Superb typography is the most distinguished feature of the book.

All of the firm's editions of the *Religio* were printed from the same electrotyped plates. The electrotpe printing process, very common in late nineteenth century America, was more labour intensive than standard letterpress printing; but once plates were produced, it was a relatively simple matter to reprint new "editions" that would, inevitably, be identical to the first. The plates would survive many printings, as long as they were carefully stored and protected.⁹

The book's red text was made even more visually striking by staining all of the paper edges a deep red colour. The effect impressed some of the firm's authors. In June of 1862 (six months after the *Religio* was released) Whittier wrote to Fields about an upcoming publication, "I hope the book will be neatly printed with the edges tinted like Sir Thomas Browne's vol. The sale of such a book will very much depend upon its outside appearance at first."²⁰

The printing of the first edition of the *Religio* was completed in December

1861, and sold for \$1.50. Only 992 copies were produced. These sold well enough to warrant a second printing of 1000 copies in early February of 1862. The back of the title page is clearly marked "second edition", even though the work, having been printed from the same plates, is identical to the first.

Sometime within this first year, a special "large paper" edition, limited to 25 numbered copies, was also produced. These were probably made for Fields to use as presentation copies. Osler, sadly, did not live to see this rare impression in his Browne collection. Charles Goodspeed, the celebrated Boston book dealer, frequently supplied Osler with copies of the standard editions. He located and forwarded to Lady Osler a copy of the limited large paper edition just days after Osler's death.²¹

A third printing was not required until August of 1863. This time, a more modest quantity of 519 was prepared. The firm saw no need to reprint the work until the fourth edition in August of 1868 (only 164 copies); and then again in a final (fifth) edition in June of 1872 (170 copies).²² Ticknor & Fields never reprinted the *Religio* again after that, and the plates were sold at a New York trade sale on the 28 March, 1876. The book surfaced again in 1878, but this time from the house of Robert Brothers of Boston. This printing, which was made from the same plates, but on slightly smaller paper, and without the red initials, thus became the sixth printing of Fields' edition.²³

It may not be an exaggeration to claim that the Osler Library owes its existence to James T. Fields and his obsession with England. If Fields had not published the *Religio* would Osler have come to Browne some other way? I wonder what Osler was thinking when, during his last illness, he scribbled in the margins of his precious volume, "I doubt if any man can more truly say of this book comes *viae vitaeque*."

The Ticknor & Fields edition of the *Religio Medici* was not an important contribution to nineteenth century scholarship. It was, however, a natural product of its time, and represents the interests, passions, and abilities of the people who produced and consumed it. It should also be, for us, a lesson in the nature of the fabric of history and the evolution of nineteenth century medicine.

REFERENCES

1. Osler, W. *Aequanimitas*. London, H.K. Lewis, 1941.
2. The Osler Library. Montreal, McGill University, 1979.
3. Osler, W. *Bibliotheca Osleriana*. Oxford, Clarendon press, 1929.
4. Paul, S. *The Shores of America; Thoreau's Inward Exploration*. University of Illinois Press.
5. Lowe, J.R. *Among My Books*. London, Macmillan & Co., 1870. p. 147.
6. *Letters of Dr. John Brown*. Brown, J. and Forrest, D.W. Eds. London, Adam and Charles Black, 1907. p. 359.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 196. This letter was incorrectly dated 1869 by the editors. It was, in fact, written in May of 1861.
8. Tryon, W.S. *Parnassus Corner*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963. p. 140. The quoted letter was written by Fields to Mary Mitford in 1849.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
10. *The Cost Books of Ticknor and Fields*. Tryon, W.S. and Charvat, W. Eds. New York, The Bibliographical Society of America, 1949. p. xvi.
11. Tryon, W.S. *Parnassus Corner*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963. p. 165.
12. *The Cost Books of Ticknor and Fields*. Tryon, W.S. and Charvat, W. Eds. New York, The Bibliographical Society of America, 1940. p. 104.
13. Tryon, W.S. *Parnassus Corner*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963. p. 402.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
15. *Donovan, Herman, Imbrie*. Sir Thomas Browne and Robert Burton/A *Reference Guide*. Boston, G.K. Hall & Co. Introduction.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
17. Winship, M. *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 1995. p. 206.
18. *Holmes, O.W. Poems*. Boston, Ticknor & Fields, 1863.
19. For a more detailed look at the electrotype process see, Winship, M. "printing with Plates in the Nineteenth Century United States", *Printing History*, 5.2 (1983), p. 15-26.
20. *The Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*. Picard, J.B. Ed. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1975. III, p. 31.
21. Goodspeed, C.E. *Yankee Bookseller*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937. p. 146.
22. Information on printing dates and quantities from pmf. Michael Winship. Taken from the unpublished *Sheet Stock Books and Cost Books of Ticknor & Fields in the Houghton Library* of Harvard College.
23. Keynes, G.A *Bibliography Of Sir Thomas Browne Kt. M.D.* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968. p. 30.

The Preservation of the Portrait Drawing of Sir William Osler

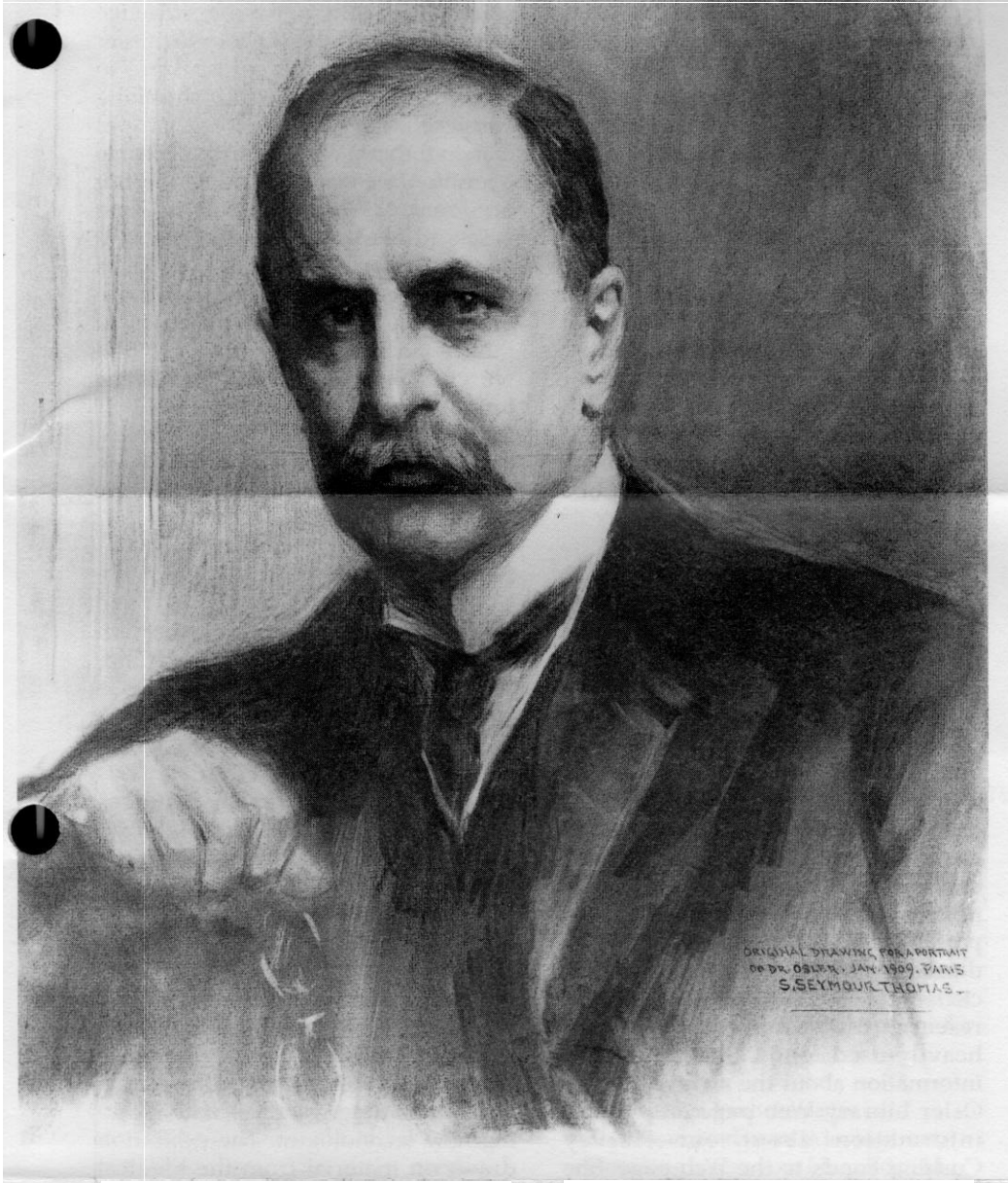
Celebrations at McGill University's Osler Library are steeped in tradition. During the month of November, a framed portrait of Doctor William Osler is carried to a Banquet in his honour by the University's Osler Society. This festivity is part of Osler Day, which has been an annual event since 1977. It is fitting that Dr. Osler overlook the banquet in this manner, for he has always overseen the library of his name: his ashes, after all, rest behind the 'Osler niche' in the Library itself. The "Banquet Portrait" of Osler is 23 7/8 x 18 3/8 inch charcoal on wove paper; it was drawn in Paris in December 1908, and is attributed to the artist S. Seymour Thomas (1868-1956). It was drawn as a preliminary sketch to the oil painting now in Oxford.

Given the unique tradition surrounding this portrait, and its delicate state, the art conservation facility of McWilliams Conservation Inc. was contacted to assess the condition of the library's artifact. An initial visual examination noted that it was in good condition overall, especially considering its extraordinary use.

The role of the art conservator is first to identify the materials used, and then, not only repair any damage, but also, propose steps that would prevent further damage or deterioration. The conservator, and the staff of the Library shared the responsibility of determining what action was the most appropriate. The treatment of the drawing began with a detailed condition report and photographic documentation. Of main concern in this instance was that the drawing had previously been mounted onto an acidic cardboard backing with animal glue, which had transferred their acidic byproducts to the drawing.

The process of manually removing the glued artwork from the acidic compressed cardboard backing was a delicate one. Most of the cardboard was mechanically removed with an extremely fine scalpel until only the very thin layer of card, glue and paper remained. The card and glue residue on the verso of the drawing was then treated in two inch square segments with a methyl cellulose poultice. The poultice served to soften the animal glue which allowed the remaining card and glue to be carefully removed mechanically with a small bladed

Seymour Thomas' charcoal sketch of Sir William Osler, Paris, 1908.



glazing material and the sensitive surface of the charcoal drawing. The frame and glass glazing was replaced.

A black wooden frame with a fine gold liner and ultraviolet filtering plexiglass was selected which is more resistant to breakage. The newly framed charcoal portrait will also be housed and transported in a museum quality rigid carrying case. This will ensure that the drawing will safely make the annual pilgrimage from the library to the Banquet festivities. The conservation treatment of this portrait drawing has ensured the preservation and enjoyment of this unique artifact for many more years to come.

Wanda McWilliams and Jonathan Browns of McWilliams Conservation Inc. specialize in the preservation and restoration of historic and contemporary works on paper. McWilliams Conservation Inc., based in Navan, Ontario, has for the last fifteen years worked on fine art and archival material for both public and private sector collections. These clients include the National Archives of Canada, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Canadian Conservation Institute, the Billings Estate Museum, the Canada Council Art Bank, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Both individuals are members of The Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property (CAC) and the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC).

For additional information on conservation you can contact the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property (CAC). With membership open to all, this organization is non-profit and provides information on the conservation of cultural property.

CAC
c/o Canadian Museums Association
280 Metcalfe Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1R7
Tel: (613) 567-0099
Fax: (613) 233-5438

Jonathan Browns

teflon spatula. The back side of the drawing was then cleaned with warm, slightly dampened cotton swabs to ensure the removal of any residual animal glue.

Once free of the original but inferior backing material, the drawing was wet cleaned overall by placing it on absorbent blotters; then, with the aid of a vacuum table, a fine mist of water and alcohol was drawn through the paper. This process reduced the overall discoloration and removed the soluble acidic byproducts without disturbing the fragile charcoal layer.

The thin wove paper on which the drawing had been executed had become extremely brittle, mostly from being in direct contact with the acidic cardboard backing. To provide the

necessary support and strength, the drawing was mounted onto a new backing of Japanese paper with wheat starch paste. Japanese paper was selected for its stability and strength, and wheat starch for its excellent aging qualities. This technique and the materials were carefully selected for their known record of permanence, aging and reversibility. As a matter of historical interest, a watermark previously obscured by the cardboard backing became evident in the bottom right quadrant.

In addition to the conservation treatment of the drawing, the portrait was also placed in a new frame. The drawing was matted with a 100% ragboard. The matting was designed to allow for ample space between the

News From the Osler Library Archives

The Archives of the Osler Library continue to be heavily used, and have been active in the areas of acquisition, cataloguing, reference, and conservation.

Recent acquisitions include:

Marjorie Howard Futcher Fonds, 50 cm. In August 1998 Palmer Howard Futcher, son of Thomas B. Futcher and Marjorie Howard, gave the Osler Library a substantial gift comprising some 80 letters and photo albums. The letters were in the main from Grace Osler to Marjorie H. Futcher. The donor had already alluded to this trove in an article that appeared in 1990 in the *Transactions and studies Of the College Of Physicians Of Philadelphia* (Series 5, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 413443).

Marjorie Howard Futcher, daughter of Robert Palmer Howard was, with her brother and sister, orphaned at a relatively young age. Sir William and Lady Osler kept an eye on Marjorie throughout her life. A frequent visitor to Baltimore and Oxford, she eventually married Osler's student and colleague Thomas Barnes Futcher. The letters and photographs are very personal, and according to Michael Bliss, the most important collection to have been made available for Oslerian research for many years. The Osler Library is very grateful to Dr. Futcher for this gift, which clearly is as important to the history of his own family as it is to Osler's.

In view of the importance of this fonds, especially in the short term for Michael Bliss whose biography is nearing completion, the Assistant History of Medicine Librarian drove to Maryland to collect it and bring it safely to McGill.

Alton Goldbloom Fonds, 25cm.

This material consists of published and unpublished manuscripts written by Dr. Goldbloom and presented by his son Victor. The fonds, which includes correspondence and reprints, is important for the history of paediatrics in Montreal.

Montreal Physiological Society Fonds, 1.5m

Minutes, membership lists and correspondence, c. 1932-1985, obtained through the good offices of Dr. T.L. Sourkes. When it has been processed this substantial fonds will add pertinent material to our holdings on physiology.

Agret Albert Mackay Fonds

During Reunion Weekend in September Dr. John A. Mackay donated 2 correspondence books and case reports belonging to his father Capt. A.A. Mackay, Medicine 1913, serving with No. 2 C.C.S. The books contain mainly reports of gas injuries during WW I.

Photocopies, Francis J. Shepherd Fonds, 36 cm.

Photocopies of manuscripts held by the Greenwood Foundation of Hudson, Quebec. This material contains the personal correspondence of Francis J. Shepherd and his family from about 1840.1930, and is part of an ongoing project to obtain copies of material relating to the noted Professor of Anatomy and very close friend of William Osler, Francis J. Shepherd.

Finding Aids

Caroline Cholette, thanks to the first Young Canada Works International Internship awarded by Heritage Canada, was able to visit outstanding repositories in London, England and Baltimore, Maryland. She was very well received and as a result of her work has provided us with much needed information on the approaches of repositories of medical archives to electronic access. She produced an invaluable finding aid to the 1905-1919 part of the Harvey Cushing Fonds on a database which has increased our efficiency and cut down our handling and research time dramatically in that heavily-used fonds. She has placed information about the archives on the Osler Library Web page and added information about our Harvey Cushing Fonds to the Web page. She also prepared a list of the Hugh MacDermot material.

Steve Watt, our second Young Canada Works intern, is preparing to add our finding aids on Boris Babkin to our Web page as part of his International Internship project.

Our two volunteers Dr. **Shena** Sourkes and Mrs. Rosina Fontein have worked on the fonds of the Osler Society, Doreen Fraser, Alton Goldbloom, F.W. Wigglesworth and Edward A. Archibald.

Osler Society

The students' Osler Society, under the leadership of the current President Steve Prescott, is preparing a project entitled "Osleriana On Line". The aim is to begin to put parts of the *Bibliotheca*

Osleriana on the internet to make it more widely available and to have a searchable database on the students' own Web page with links to the Osler Library's page.

Conservation

Due to the availability of a worker on relocation, we were able to put most of our Frank C. MacIntosh material into new, acid-free boxes.

John McCrae

Material was prepared for a National Film Board film about John McCrae which was aired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on the 11th of November, the 80th anniversary of the Armistice.

Pamela Miller

Exhibitions

The popular Casey Wood exhibition "Eyes, Birds and Books, Casey Wood, 1856.1942" described in the June 1998 issue of the Newsletter, was dismantled in early 1998 to make way for an exhibit honouring the 175th anniversary of McGill's Health Sciences Library (formerly its Medical Library) which has the distinction of being the oldest medical library in Canada. It began its life in 1823 in a house near Place d'Armes rented by the staff of the McGill Medical Faculty, and has throughout its history played a leading role in gathering and disseminating medical knowledge. Its librarians have led the field in promoting library associations, sharing resources and adopting new technologies. The exhibition draws on material from the Medical Library Archives (kept in the Osler Library), and includes books, artifacts and photographs from the Osler Library collection. It displays the earliest catalogue, in manuscript, dated 1845, early texts donated to the Library by medical staff, and a sampling of some unusual acquisitions. The exhibition is advertised on our Web site at <http://www.health.library.mcgill.ca/osler/exhibits/current.htm>

This exhibition, which occupies the area just outside the Osler Library, will last until early 1999 when it will be replaced by a celebration of Sir William Osler, to mark the 150th anniversary of his birth.

In March 1998 the exhibition case in the Osler Room bore witness to the generosity of the late Dr. H. Rocke

Robertson, whose obituary appeared in the June issue of the Newsletter. Several volumes of the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert were displayed along with other precious items he gave to the Library, and some photographs of this great benefactor.

This display was replaced during the summer by a section of an ambitious exhibition mounted by the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of McGill University Libraries, "Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt: a Bicentenary Exhibition", a remarkable team effort involving five libraries and departments. The Osler Library section focussed, of course, on medical aspects of the expedition. A fine catalogue of the entire exhibition is available from the Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries, 3459 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1Y1.

The current exhibit in the Osler Room case marks the 80th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the Great War in 1918. It commemorates the 3059 McGill professors, students and graduates who served (of whom 363 died), by saluting Lt. Col. John McCrae, doctor, pathologist, soldier, poet, author of the poem *In Flanders Fields*. The display includes an autopsy book of 1902-1904, a manuscript of the poem in McCrae's hand, various other memorabilia and a spray of poppies.

To celebrate the Osler Sesqui-centennial in 1999 an exhibition on the architecture of the Royal Victoria Hospital is being planned for the McLennan Library. The Osler Library is preparing an exhibition at the Redpath Museum on medical education at McGill during Osler's Montreal period. Steve Watt is conducting the research and has uncovered a wealth of fascinating information and artifacts.

Tours of the Library

Every year we give guided tours of the Osler Library to groups or individuals, some of them from as far afield as Saudi Arabia, China and Japan. We cannot list all of them, but two October 1998 tours are perhaps of particular interest.

On Friday, 2nd October, the Library was paid a surprise flying visit by an illustrious McGill medical graduate, Canadian astronaut Dr. Dafydd Williams (BSc'76, MSc'83, MDCM '83). He was accompanied by Andrew

Pentland, Development Officer with the Faculty of Medicine, and two colleagues from the Canadian Space Agency. Dr. Williams was visiting Montreal to give a talk at the Montreal Neurological Institute on his neuroscience research aboard the space shuttle Columbia and to present the McGill Society of Montreal with a McGill item he took into space. Dr. Williams was recently named head of the Space and Life Sciences Directorate at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. His interest in the Osler Library stemmed from his years as a student in medicine, when he spent many of his study hours in the Osler Library. The Assistant Librarian presented him with a copy of *The Osler Library*, in exchange for which he was shown Dr. Williams' Wood Gold Medal, a space-traveled artifact which Williams was awarded for outstanding clinical skills when a student.

A few days later, Dr. Jacalyn Duffin, Hannah Professor of the History of Medicine at Queen's University in Kingston Ontario, visited the Osler Library with 45 of her students, as part of a one-day tour of various sites of historico-medical interest in Montreal. With the help of our student casual Lexi Lewis, Wayne LeBel had the pleasure of showing off a number of the Library's treasures to a well-behaved and appreciative audience. These included a first edition of R.T.H. Laënnec's *De l'auscultation médiate* and an early wooden stethoscope modeled

on Laënnec's original design, from Dr. Harold Segall's collections of stethoscopes. These were included especially for the benefit of Prof. Duffin, who has just published a book on Laënnec. The photograph demonstrates the group's enjoyment of their tour. In the background are the Osler Niche, and the Assistant Librarian.

Wayne LeBel

Research Fellow 1998

The Library's 1998 Research Fellow was Professor *Andrée Courtemanche* of the Département d'histoire-géographie at the University of Moncton, New Brunswick. Professor Courtemanche came here in July to continue her research on medieval medicine in Provence, specifically on a fourteenth century doctor at Manosque who gave medical evidence in a case of suspected poisoning. Because he supported his conclusions with current medical knowledge, his evidence permits at least a partial reconstruction of the medical education available to a practitioner in a Proven@ town. Professor Courtemanche plans to publish an annotated edition of the trial record.

Dr. Jacalyn Duffin's students, with the Osler Plaque and the Assistant Librarian.



The Library has been presented with a gratifyingly large number of gifts. Our donors have included several academic institutions, notably the Library of Laval University, Quebec which presented several early works (mostly from the nineteenth century), including several on infectious diseases.

The National Gallery of Canada presented *Beauty of another order: photography in science*, by Ann Thomas and others, published in 1997 by the Gallery in association with Yale University Press.

The Collège des Médecins du Québec presented a copy of Denis Goulet's *Histoire du Collège des médecins du Québec, 1847-1997*. Montreal, 1997.

Several very welcome gifts were received from the Wellcome Institute's Cambridge Unit; the Medizinhistorisches Institut der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz; the Canadian Public Health Association; the De Heymans Stichting, Brussels, and the Institut für Geschichte der Medizin, Köln.

Many individuals presented useful items to the Library. Mrs. F. Groen, Dr. T.L. Sourkes, Dr. Wallis have been as always most generous. The October 1997/February 1998 issue of the Newsletter described four Thomas Willis books presented to the Library by Dr. William Feindel, the Honorary Osler Librarian. On July 13th, 1998, some of Dr. Feindel's friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate his birthday and Osler's (their birthdays are, of course, on July 12th but as this fell on a Sunday in 1998 we held the party the next day). Once again Dr. Feindel used the occasion to present a Willis treasure to the Library:

Pharmaceutice rationalis, sive Diatriba de medicamentorum operationibus in humano corpore. 3rd ed., Oxford, Ric. Davis, 1679.

Mrs. David Norton presented the following 3 books to the Library:

Blackmore, Sir Richard. *Essays upon several subjects*. London, E. Curil and J. Pemberton, 1716.

Cogan, T. *An ethical treatise on the passions*. Bath, John Binns, 1810.

Francis, John Wakefield. *A n address delivered on the anniversary of the Philolexian Society of Columbia College*, May 15, 1831. New York, G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1831.

Wayne LeBel presented a video-recording, *New Tecumseth* (produced by Bond Head, the New Tecumseth West & Gwillimbury Historical Society) as a contribution to our Sesquicentennial celebrations. Osler was born in Bond Head.

Dr. and Mrs. Donald Graves have given the Library a copy of Mrs. Graves' biography *A crown of life: the world of John McCrae*. St. Catherines, Ontario, Vanwell Publications, 1997.

Dr. Fathi Habashi has presented the Library with two copies of the reprint he commissioned of C.E. Gellert's *Metallurgic chymistry*, London, 1776. The Library also possesses a copy of the original 1776 printing.

A copy of *Science in Medieval Islam: an illustrated introduction*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1997 (which included an illustration from one of the Library's manuscripts) was presented by its author Howard R. Turner.

Mr. Conrad Tessier gave us a copy of the programme for the First Annual Congress of the Canadian Public Health Association, Montreal, 1911.

We thank all our donors who have enriched the Osler Library's collections.

In issues 86/87, Oct. '97/Feb. '98, it was noted on p. 9 that Dr. Richard Golden had presented a copy of his recently completed *Addenda* to the bibliography he co-edited with Dr. Charles Roland, *Sir William Osler: an annotated bibliography with illustrations*, San Francisco, Norman Publishing, 1988. Dr. Golden tells us that he is

willing to make a copy of the *Addenda* (67 p.) available to anyone who owns the "parent" work. If you wish to take advantage of this offer, please send a 9" x 12" self addressed envelope to the Osler Library

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

Address:

Osler Library of the History of Medicine,
McGill University,
McIntyre Medical Sciences Building,
3655 Drummond Street,
Montréal, Québec, Canada,
H3G 1Y6.

Telephone:

(514) 3984475 ext. 094163

Fax:

(514) 398-5747

E-mail:

oslerlib@lib1.lan.mcgill.ca

URL:

<http://www.health.library.mcgill.ca/osler/welcome.htm>

Legal Deposit 3 /1998

ISSN 0085-4557

CORRECTION

In issue no. 88, June, 1998, on p. 3, it was stated that Dr. Henry P. Wright died in 1899. We are indebted to Mr. William Fitz of Dedham, Mass., for bringing this mistake to our attention. Dr. Wright died in 1898.