

News, Notes and Queries

in Mrs. Bennet's illness, since it properly lay in the sphere of the surgeon, not the physician. However, the case does provide an example of his professional work in a period of his life when virtually nothing is known of his activities and movements.²³

²³Except for the knowledge that he was in London on 8 May 1641, nothing else is known of his activities from the beginning of that year until he went to Nottingham with King Charles I in August 1642: Louis Chauvois, *William Harvey: his life and times: his discoveries: his methods*, London, Hutchinson, 1957, pp. 141-142.

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FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF OSLER'S LIBRARY AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY

On Tuesday, 29 May 1979, Oslerians and Oslerators travelled to Montreal to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival at McGill of Osler's famous library. The day was dedicated to the book, not author nor owner, but the book as a physical object, to be described, analysed, and enumerated by the bibliographer and to be cherished and brought into the service of the student by the librarian.

Charles G. Roland, Professor of the History of Medicine at McMaster University, in his talk on "Osler and British Bibliography", after a good try, decided that bibliography is too difficult to define. Osler, a self-styled "dabbler" despite a seven-year presidency of the Bibliographical Society, was much too interested in the book's content and its author, who readily joined the company of Osler's friends, living and dead. After doffing his cap to James Atkinson of York, whose "Medical Bibliography. A. and B." (1833) remains the only comic bibliography, Roland traced the inspiration for bibliography from Osler to Geoffrey Keynes, Harvey Cushing, and John Fulton. Osler did seek Carnegie support for a College of the Book to be founded at Johns Hopkins, where everything to do with the book could be taught and studied: the paper, the watermarks, the printing, and the publishing, and the techniques of book production analysed, an idea recently revived by Thomas Keyes. His idiosyncratic classification, embodied in the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, completed by W. W. Francis, R. H. Hill, and Archibald Malloch and published in 1928, gave a logical structure to his library. The library was on view, not as Osler planned it and Bill Francis arranged it, although the original shelves remain. The books are now incorporated into the main medical library, a change which at its happening caused some adverse comment but which is now applauded as giving the books life and the library the chance to develop. So what might have been a frozen section has become a tissue culture.

Richard Durling, from the Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel, brought Teutonic scholarship to bear on medieval manuscripts in the search for the ancestors, presumed lost, of all the old MS. Medical MS and archives can teach much about the status of the authors and their attitudes, for example their helplessness when faced with epidemics.

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Estelle Brodman, the lively Librarian and Professor of Medical History at Washington University, looking forward into historical medical bibliography, traced the communication and availability pathways from printed lists, card indexes, punch cards, to digital computers. Today, microfiche can travel where books and MS are too valuable to go. The librarian's task is to present material to the enquirer in his own institute with speedy access to the newly published literature. For the future she foresaw enumerative and critical bibliography developing in line with recording facilities. Long line telephone reproduction and television links surely doom printed indexes to wither away; the student of bibliography will be provided with a totality of material – "not a feather lost". And, continuing the analogy, a raw chicken needs the chef to make it palatable, just as the artistry of bibliographers like Osler is needed to evaluate and illuminate the texts so that they can be digested and enjoyed.

G. Thomas Tanselle, one-time Professor of English at Wisconsin University, in his talk on twentieth-century physical bibliography, referred also to Osler's proposed College of the Book. He saw in bibliography the raw material of histories. Twin techniques, applied to all printed matter, were analytical and descriptive, the former with its bearing on content and the latter on form to provide a standard for comparison. They were as much intertwined as were their two main purposes, to be guide books for collectors (and dealers) and raw material for scholars and annotators. A knowledge of printing house practices was needed since both uncorrected and corrected proofs had been published. Tanselle paid tribute to the great work done by the fathers of bibliography, McKerrow, Pollard, and Greg, and Sadleir on more recent books. He hailed as a landmark Pollard's Shakespeare text. To him the intellectual contents and the physical means by which they are interpreted are inextricably interrelated.

Eric Freeman, Librarian of the Wellcome Institute, brilliantly brought together what had already been said and placed it in a social context round his title "Medical historians, librarians, and bibliographers: will they ever meet?" What was the role of the book in medicine and how far was the book a force for change? The medieval doctors had invented the textbook and the textbook still dominates the subject as the source of information. The book as a social artefact, its production, and especially its distribution, command attention. Demand reflected its contemporary esteem but its supply depended on the book trade. A study of the London arrangements for distribution and how the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries received new book knowledge provide major themes in social history. He contrasted the slowness of the spread of Harvey's *De motu* with the liveliness induced by the eighteenth-century medical societies. International trade reflected centres of medical education. He feared that the cultural fashion among medical historians favoured the social aspects so much that textual study is being neglected. Reprints of first printings tended also to inhibit editorial activity and did not necessarily furnish the authoritative text. If anything was amiss, what share of blame did librarians carry? Their problems remained space, funds, and facilities. Modern technology produces its own problems, and in the discussions the longevity and the servicing of tapes and microfiche are clearly cause for concern. Freeman's fear is that librarians can easily become administrative clerks. With the classics gone and no content of history in education, librarianship will not

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long remain a learned profession.

Reflexion on this day of celebration, so gracefully chaired by Dr. Lloyd Stevenson, poses the question whether, without history and the classics, the same is true for doctors. Can medicine remain a learned profession – or indeed should it? Has the scholar physician of the kind that Osler represented any place now in our ranks? Certainly no publisher of medical textbooks would accept the sort of literary composition of which Osler was guilty. And anyway what value has a textbook, so transient in authority, compared with on-line computer data continuously up-dated and instantly available? Anyone attending a medical meeting where lectures and demonstrations are presented in closed-circuit television must find the interposition of a mere human speaking without a microphone but a feeble mouse-like substitution.

ALFRED WHITE FRANKLIN

YALE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Yale Corporation established a Section of the History of Medicine in the School of Medicine, and appointed Frederic L. Holmes chairman and professor of the history of medicine, effective 1 July 1979. Professor Holmes is internationally recognized as a leading scholar in the history of medicine and science, particularly in the fields of physiology and chemistry.

Establishment of this new Section in the School of Medicine represents the faculty's strong commitment to continuation of educational programmes in medical history. It will provide courses for instruction in this field, especially for students in medicine and public health, as well as introductory courses for Yale College students. It will also provide resources for scholarly research by postdoctoral students and faculty.

In addition to the appointment of Professor Holmes, the Corporation also appointed Arthur J. Viseltar to the Section as associate professor of the history of medicine and public health. It is anticipated that a number of faculty in the School of Medicine will participate with Professors Holmes and Viseltar in presenting courses and seminars.