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CUST 17/29.10
1910-1913

65 Henrietta St.,
Asheville, N.C.
April 5, 1920.

Dr. Harvey Cushing,
Peter Bent Brigham Hospital,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Dr. Cushing,

I note the request in the Journal A.M.A. of March 27th in regard to Sir William Osler's Biography, and send the following reminiscences. (I was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, 1910--'13, and took part of my medical course there and finished at Johns Hopkins in 1915.)

I was a member of Christ Church College at Oxford, with which Dr. Osler was affiliated. A few days after my first term began he came around to my rooms in the Meadow Buildings, said that he was Dr. Osler and had just dropped in to see if I was getting started all right, that he had an office in the Old Library Building and would be glad to give me any help that he might render, and that if I had no engagements for next Sunday afternoon to drop in at his house for tea.

Think of the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, and a man as busy as Dr. Osler was, finding time to call on an average 'fresher' and welcome him in such a kindly, human way! And those Sunday afternoon teas at his house, with what pleasure I recall them! Often Dr. Osler would come out to the door himself, greet you with a slap on the back, put his arm around your shoulders and lead you into the reception room and introduce you to students, professors, and distinguished men and women from the ends of the earth.

Dr. Osler offered a course of lectures on the History Of Medicine. There were only nine of us, I believe, signed up for the course. He gave only two or three lectures during the year, but what a 'feast' they were! We would receive a notice giving the subject of the lecture and the time appointed, and each notice would be accompanied by an invitation to dinner. The lecture would be preceded by a nine course dinner, the dishes cleared away, cigars and cigarettes passed around, and while we all remained seated around the table Dr. Osler would proceed to give the lecture in an informal manner and conversational tone. Rare old books and pictures would be passed around during the lecture to add interest to the subjects under discussion. Who but Dr. Osler would treat his students and The History Of Medicine in such a unique, interesting and 'inviting' way? No wonder he was first in the hearts of his students and colleagues!

Very truly,

W.D. McLean.