

Association of Public School Science Masters Intensive Work in Science at the Public Schools etc }	1
'W.O. on rampage' Injury to hip at Paragton Visits to hospitals 4, 5, 15, 24	1-4
House-to-house visits to nurseries <i>Miss Astor's "Doces-O" paper</i>	5, 37
Science History room at Bodley (cf. also XXXIX, 89)	6
Working at Bibliotheca Oesteriana "Early printed medical Books" 11, 16, 24	6, 11, 14 17, 39, 65, 67, 69
War news	7, 9, 10, 18 24, 28, 59
Sending of U.S. medical observers to France Scheme for U.S. medical officers for British Hosps. 36, 66	7, 21, 34
Book purchases of the year Reading done during year. 11, 17, 24, 44	11, 34, 68 69
"Voices from Hell" letter	11
'A new Commentary on Harvey' Reading John Curtis' book on Harvey, 11, 17.	12
Talk before American Club, Oxford } "Born seventh with Thomas ahead, etc")	12
Mistake about Thomas relative	15
Symposia at Royal Society of Medicine The Soldier's Heart; Trench Nephritis 16; others 47	15
Bronchial attacks	15, 64 67, 73
Shakespeare exhibition at Bodleian } "Creators, Transmitters & Transmitters"	17, 31-3
Revere's Transfer from Canadian to British army Training in R.F.A. 37, 39, 42-3, 55-6, 57 At the front 59, 60, 62, 66, 68	19
Torpedoing of "Sussex" with friends on board	23, 30
Joan Mackenzie, as secretary	23
Revision of Text-book (VIII th)	24, 24
Gift of Greek MS to Harvard Library	25
Heart Hospital at Hampstead established	26
Appointed to Welsh Commission	26-28 41, 43
Hospitality at 13 Northam Gardens	30, 52 40, 44

'Richardson Correspondence'	39
W.O.'s relation to Canadian Medical Corps	46
Informing Dr Blackader of 201's progress 47-8 C.A.M.C. Troubles 49, 54, 58, 72	47-8
Tribute to Sir Victor Horsley	47-8
Activity in medical meetings & Bibliog. Soc.	47
Gift of cigar case to Mrs Gill Luit	55
Elizabethan touchpiece impressions to Garrison	57
Rational (Willis) Festival, Fenny Stratford	60
Death of Miss Louisa Parsons	61
Letters from Revere	62, 63 75
Received Sir Thomas Browne's "Miscellanies"	67-9, 74
Send of sketch of book worm	70
"The Silent Luit" to Lloyd's Weekly News	70
Letter to Revere on 21 st birthday	75

*Miss S. + Miss
In copying other letters
please be sure punctuation is
followed as given.*

The Writ Commission in 1880

1
Jan.
1916
Act. 66.

~~The Public Health Commission~~
~~The Writ Commission and other things~~
The Canadian Army Medical Corps
Chapter XXXVI
1916

"W.O. is on the rampage again," writes his wife early in January.
"Liverpool, Torquay, Paignton." But before ^{making} this round of visits he had
attended the Conference of Educational Associations, a very important
gathering, for the war had intensified the sense of responsibility in
their work among teachers of all grades. That Sir Oliver Lodge should
preside over the Conference as a whole served to give a flavour of sci-
ence to the deliberations, even affecting the component societies of
which there were thirty, and over one of which - the Association of
Public School Science Masters - Osler presided. Like as not, it was
his vigorous address at the Bradfield School three years before that led
to his having been chosen for this post, but that he was a known champion
of preliminary science courses properly given even at the expense of
Greek, was of itself enough. Osler began his presidential address* given

*This as published in The School World (Feb. 1916) has for its title "Intensive Work in Science at the Public Schools in Relation to the Medical Curriculum." Apparently it was delivered under another title, to judge from the following illuminating comment upon it in Nature (Jan. 1916, p. 548):

"The pervading sense of national responsibility was perhaps most intense at the meeting of the Public Schools Science

Jan.
1916

Masters, who met, as did also the Mathematical Association, at the London Day Training College. The president, Sir William Osler, gave "The Fateful Years, Fifteen to Seventeen," as the title of his address, the main feature of which was a plea that the schools should give intending medical students such a training in physics, chemistry and biology that they may enter at once upon their purely medical studies as soon as they enter the university. The address, which had much literary charm as well as common-sense merit, was well received, the general feeling of the members being clearly in accord with their President. It was pointed out, however, that the real obstacle to the plan suggested was the faulty regulations of the university in which Sir William Osler is Regius Professor. The schools tend to send their best boys to Cambridge and London, because Oxford will not allow the medical course to begin at once. From the discussion it appears that the would-be medical student enters in October, is compelled to wait until December before he is allowed to pass 'Divinners,' and has then to wait until the next medical course opens in the following October. The irony of the situation is heightened by the fact that the university has just sent an appeal to the head-masters on the lines of Sir W. Osler's request to the science masters. The situation would be humorous at another time; but at the present moment it is of the most obvious importance that every encouragement should be given to aspirants to a medical degree, and that every hindrance to rapid and thorough qualification should be removed. The discussion will, it may be expected, cause the rescission of the offending regulation."

"Divers"

January 4th, with a description ^{cf. Cf. Chap. II p. 44. Made II by 21} (already quoted) of the school at Weston of 'Father Johnson' and his influence on the development of his boys; and at the end, in facing the inevitable objections that would be raised against specializing too early in the schools, he said:

Nature is never special, and a knowledge of her laws may form a sound Grecian foundation upon which to build the superstructure of a life as useful to the State, and as satisfying to the inner needs of a man as if the ground-work were classics and literature. The two, indeed, cannot be separated. What naturalist is uninfluenced by Aristotle, what physi-

Jan.
1916

cian worthy of the name, whether he knows it or not, is without the spirit of Hippocrates. It has been well said that instruction is the least part of education. Upon the life, not the lips, of the master is the character of the boy moulded; and doubtless the great master of masters had this in mind when he said: "It may be, in short, that the possession of all the sciences, if unaccompanied by knowledge of the best, will more often than not injure the possessor." (Plato, Alcibiades, ii).

It has been already said that men of Osler's type ^{rarely} could ~~never~~ become great leaders of a 'cause'. ^{Such men} ~~Such men~~ can see both sides too clearly, ^{and their} ~~and~~

~~Theirs~~ is a different rôle. So now, even though a better and more general preliminary education in science will undoubtedly be of benefit to the nation, for reasons other than the more effective conduct of future wars, Osler must leave after his address to go on his 'rampage.'*

*There was an interesting aftermath of this meeting, for a small committee of the Public School Science Masters' Association was promptly chosen ^{and} as 'the unsatisfactory points of science in the schools and the ancient universities' was memorialized in The Times over the signature of 'thirty-six distinguished men of Science' - Osler one of them. Subsequently a reorganization committee was formed and met on May 3rd at Burlington House, Lord Rayleigh presiding - a meeting ~~was held~~ at which other than scientists were present. This was followed by an admirable letter to The Times of May 4th, signed by representatives chiefly of the humanities, Bryce, Cromer, Curzon, H. A. L. Fisher, Trevelyan, F. G. Kenyon, Gilbert Murray and others were among the twenty-three signers. (Cf. "Science and the Humanities in School and University," The School World, June 1916, p. 215-19). It is quite probable that the seed of Osler's presidential address before the Classical Association in 1919 was planted, at this time.

in his mind

- Osler one of them.

Jan.
1916

To J. William White.

4th. On train.

Dear J William Worried not to have had a line saying how you are. Ask Mrs White to write. I do hope the sciatica is better & that you are convalescing. What an aggravation to be knocked out just at this time when you had so much to do. Was it not splendid that they gave Henry James the O. M. - really the greatest literary distinction in England. Everybody is delighted. Mrs Asquith was asking for you the other day. Your Martian mind made a great impression on these politicians. I wish you and Roosevelt were in the Cabinet. I have been laid up with a heavy cold. Revere was home for a few days looking so fit. The house is still a junk shop - 190 barrels of apples & \$2000 came to Grace from Canada & the U. S. at Xmas! We had the house full of men from the front, chiefly relatives. 18 members of my family are over. I have been gassing today to the Public School masters on rearranging the science work, & am now on way to Liverpool. . .

And from Paignton a day or two later he sends a card to reassure Mrs.

Whitelaw Reid: "All goes well here. Staff working smoothly and the hospital in very good order." Almost too smoothly, for he slipped on the tile floor of the operating room, fell, and hurt his hip so that he came limping home at the end of this particular 'rampage.' One of the various Canadian officers at the 'Open Arms' for the following weekend, notes in his journal under Sunday the 9th: "Dr. Penhallow here from Paignton. Sir William

Jan.
1916

wrote 40 letters and cards this morning. He limped and hopped about when Charlie and Johnnie Max-Müller came in for lunch, pretending this was the result of his fall. 'Isn't William funny?' says Johnnie. To the Wrights! for tea. 'Don't bully me, Doccie-O,' says baby Muriel," etc.

To be sure, some of the forty cards and letters were merely such as this: "A.l. This looks hopeful. The old Scoundrel! But he evidently repented. Strange not to have heard from Norman Moore. W.O." Perhaps, too, not enough has been said, with all this narrative of more serious things, in regard to Osler's always finding children to play with. The habit grew stronger as years went on, and he made a house-to-house round among them after his tea and at about their bed-time, when he was invariably the youngest and most hilarious person in a succession of neighbouring nurseries.

"You're a child, Doccie-O," the babies said,
 "For we hold you and lead you in thrall;
 "And we laugh at the knowledge that's stored in your head,
 "Because you must come when we call."

"In my childhood," said Doccie-O, "I was like you,
 "Just as naughty, if not even worse;
 "For children must frolic, and old folks must stew,
 "But the man who won't laugh, is a curse."

Then Shorncliffe(?) for the next two days where he finds much of interest in the paratyphoids, dysenteries and hearts,'; but he is doubtless

omit?
 seems
 an un-
 necessary
 addition
 calculation

Jan.
1916

glad to get back to his books, and on the 12th writes Dr. E. C. Streeter
of Boston:

Where is your Aristotle paper? A friend of mine has just edited for Loeb's classics Galen's de Nat. Facultatibus, and he wishes in a brief bibliography to put ^{together} recent articles dealing with Greek Science and Medicine. Your A. paper might come in here - as A. really had the key. Please get a year off and come to our Science-History room at Bodley. The war has upset us badly as 3 of the 5 workers have gone. I am struggling with my incunabula paper but get very little time for work at it. I conduct a correspondence bureau for Doctors and Nurses wishing jobs as they seem to have a notion that I am in charge of all the Hospitals here and in France! I am working at my library at spare moments - but my man has gone & progress is slow.

Almost any one of Osler's scraps of letters opens up some interesting line of pursuit. On January 26th he writes Mrs. Whitelaw Reid:

Dear Mrs. Reid I enclose letter from Keogh. You see the Authorities at Washington must ask. Shall I write to Gorgas or Wood?

I enclose also a list of Med School Libr. to which it would be nice to send copies of the autobiography [Trudeau's]. If you like I will write a little slip which Lea Bros could have printed & enclosed in each vol. Shall you be at home tomorrow for lunch - if so I could come & have a talk. Send me a line to the Athenaeum Club. Sincerely yours, W^m OSLER.

Jan.
1916

To do justice even to this scrap one must turn to the attitude of mind of the 'authorities at Washington.' Nowhere has this been better explained than by Mr. John Buchan in his chapter on "The Straining of American Patience" brought about by Mr. Bryan's 'vapourings' and the incredible 'blundering of German diplomacy.' Mr. Wilson considered it his business merely to interpret the opinion of America at large; he had not the personality to mould that opinion and had decided that the temper and interests of the country were on the side of neutrality. But phrases like 'too proud to fight' and the German reaction to this attitude by a continuance of her submarine activity, were unquestionably changing the temper of the country. Still, it does not appear that this as yet had affected either the President or Mr. Bryan's successor as Secretary of State, who appeared to be equally exasperated with the Allies and the Central Powers.

Osler's conference with Mrs. Reid was doubtless what led to his writing on the 30th two letters to be forwarded by Mr. Page, one to General Gorgas in the course of which he says:

Jan.
1916

. . Keogh is favourable but says it must be asked for by the U. S. Govt. She & He (K) are most anxious that you should come. K. says that every facility will be given to see everything. Do you think, 1) that it would be useful, & 2) that the plan is feasible? If official the Govt. would have to pay expenses but Mrs W. R. is anxious to do this. Privately I should say that the opportunity should not be missed. I am writing to the President & have asked him to confer with you & Wood.

To Woodrow Wilson from Wm Osler

Jan. 30/16

Dear Mr. President The Medical Services of the U. S. Army and Navy should not miss the opportunity the war offers of studying certain problems of organization. An American lady has offered to pay the expenses of two or three men from each service, and Sir Alfred Keogh, the Director General, assures me that every facility would be given. Permission would have to be asked, of course, by the government. Personally I feel the matter to be of sufficient importance to bring to your notice. If you agree, please talk the matter over with Wood and Gorgas. With greetings & regards, Sincerely yours, W^m OSLER.

Efforts had been made before this to get the President's authorization for the sending abroad of military observers, but on the grounds that it would be an unneutral act he had refused to give his sanction even for volunteers from the Medical Corps to go in an unofficial capacity.

Writing as an old ^{acquaintance} friend and colleague it was perhaps purposeful rather

Jan.
1918

than naïve of Osler to suggest that the matter be talked over with Leonard Wood, whose 'preparedness' campaign with its officers' training camps ~~had met~~^{was meeting} with no official favour. However this may be, it was a timely ~~letter~~^{suggestion} even though action was not taken for some weeks, for in the interval, on February 10th, Germany had announced that from the 1st of March all armed merchantmen would be treated as belligerents and attacked at sight. The Government at Washington had ^{what appeared to be} reached the cross-roads of ~~her~~^{its} neutrality path and must take one or the other turning. While awaiting a reply to these letters Osler was busy with other things. On February 2nd he writes again to J.

William White:

I was very glad to have your long account this week. What a remarkable condition! Just like a Doctor to have something out of the way & puzzling. . . If you could get over here in the spring it would be an easy matter to get a house in the neighbourhood with a nice garden & we could look after you. It would be such a pleasure. I shall be here, except for a couple of weeks which I hope to spend in the Hospitals on the other side. I asked the other day about Henry James but he was not well enough to see anybody. I am so glad that Henry Jr. is coming over. I will see him & send you his report. It is too bad. They say

Feb.
1916

he has worried terribly about the war. We are doing about the same things - Grace with a big workshop which does all the dressings &c for the group of Hospitals in this district. I am on the road a great deal. . . Things are going well in the country - nearly 4 millions of men! The Zeppelin raids are a great stimulus & so far the damage is far below the Lusitania level - 133 men, 133 women & children and not a single important building touched. Do let us hear how you are - as we are always looking for news. Just a postcard at times.

It was on the night of January 31st that a fleet of Zeppelins had crossed over the English midlands and penetrated as far as Birmingham - by no means the first of these raids, but from the enemy's standpoint perhaps the most successful, of all. Terrifying as an air-raid may be, their effect was to rouse English people to anger rather than to frighten them. Naturally there was a demand from many quarters for reprisals, and a column in The Times was given over each day to letters on the subject, one of which Osler contributed - a heated note written from the Athenaeum on February 11th, possibly after he had overheard some wild talk of vengeance:

Sir: - The cry for reprisals illustrates the exquisitely hellish state of mind into which war plunges sensible men. Not a pacifist but a 'last ditcher', yet I refuse to believe that as a nation, how bitter so-
ever the provocation, we shall ^[should?] stain our hands in the blood of

Feb.
1916

the innocents. In this matter let us be free from blood-guiltiness, and let not the undying reproach of humanity rest on us as on the Germans.

Yours, &c., W^m OSLER.

More like him is the following letter to L. L. Mackall on the 7th:

. . . The Library grows in spite of the hard and harrassing times. Paré's Anatomie Universelle 1561 came in this week - not in England or S. G. L. Why so rare I cannot imagine. Malgaigne could only find two copies in France (1840). I suppose as one of the first anatomies to be printed in French the students used up the copies.* Keep an eye open for my Biblio-

*This was a book to delight the heart of a collector, and Osler wrote an account of it for the Annals of Medical History (1917, vol. i, p. 424), a quarterly publication which was started in the spring of that year by Dr. Francis R. Packard of Philadelphia. This account ends with the following statement: "The fitness of things demands that this copy should return ultimately to France, to the great collection of the Ecole de Médecine." When two years later, during his last illness, Osler made some notes concerning the disposition of a few of the volumes in his library which were not to go to McGill, this volume was among them and was left as he intimated in this note that it should be. One may recall his favourite saying that 'every book has its natural habitat.'

To the reports in 1919?

theca literaria - books outside of Med. written by Doctors. I am getting a good many & the list is most interesting. I suppose when the war is over about 1920 it might be possible to get the journals in which the few medical articles occur written by Schiller. My secretary has gone and the precious William the butler, & the chauffeur. Revere is with the McGill Unit but he will exchange to the artillery & take his chances with his chums. He has become devoted to books & put up a great bibliographical joke on some of us. I am very busy seeing all sorts of interesting cases - My early printed books paper hangs fire - I get very little time for work. If you wish to see a fine bit of American scholarship take a glance at Curtis' "Harvey's Views on the Circulation of the

Feb.
1916

Blood." A.1.* Willie F. was here at Xmas - 'fat and well liking' as

*He had sent to the Lancet a long (unsigned) review ("A New Commentary on Harvey." The Lancet, Feb. 19, 1916, i, 416-17) of the masterpiece of Professor John G. Curtis of Columbia, published posthumously by his successor, Frederick L. Lee. It was a glowing appreciation of one scholar for the work of another and Osler knew full well from the experience with his Harveian Oration how nearly impossible it was 'to present anything new about William Harvey or ever to colour anything old with new tints.'

the Scripture says. Oxford is deserted - only Rhodes scholars & invalids.

'Only Rhodes scholars and invalids.' Just why Oxford seemed to him deserted does not appear, in view of the fact that the headquarters of the 30th Fusiliers was at the end of Norham Gardens, with the streets full of soldiers; and that some 5,000 Derby recruits were gathering in the park. But his eye was evidently for the invalid Tommies in their blue coats and red ties - and for the few Rhodes scholars, some three or four of them being Americans who were taking the medical course. One of these, Dr. W. C. Davison, was Secretary of the American Club, an organization which brings together every Saturday night the Americans studying in Oxford. This club in no sense rivalled the 'Open Arms', which was used pretty much as one by All Americans and Canadians, students and otherwise;

at the 'Open Arms' was for there a tennis-court and attractive young people were certain to be encountered;

13
Feb.
1916

~~besides~~ and it had the additional advantage of having no dues.

It was not desired or called for
In return for this
are among
attracted Rhod scholars and other 15-13
Mabon garden. The chief attraction

hospitality Osler was invited to attend and address one of these Saturday

was ~~to be given~~ who, to return after this depression to the American Club, accepted at this time an invitation
The Regius Professor of Medicine
evening meetings; and, according to the Secretary's report 'the guest spoke in-
to attend ~~the~~ one of the meetings on the Saturday of February 12th; when

formally and humorously; drawing lessons from his experiences in life which

might be useful in their careers. "Born seventh in a missionary's family

in the backwoods of Ontario with twins ahead I did not have an auspicious

financial outlook," etc, etc. ^{To} In which connection it may be well to quote from a letter Lady Osler
Lady Osler meanwhile in this connection writes

~~scrib~~ at this time. It says.

to her sister; "Margarine at 10^d tastes as good as butter at 1/8, and gran.

sugar is as good as cut - one does not need dessert or cakes and it's really

a pleasure to surprise the servants. One must try to save in view of the future."

So the Regius Professor So O'Brien

Osler could skylark with children and be amusing to young people

To such an occasion as this ^{Osler could rise effectively, rise, fully concealing from the young people before him that his}
^{might be heavier} ~~Osler could rise effectively, rise, fully concealing from the young people before him that his~~
^{was heavy. A day or two before he had written} ~~even when his sympathetic heart was heavy. On the 8th he writes to~~
children

F. J. Shepherd:

So glad to hear from you & to know that you are not worse optically.

Very sad about Y--- who never should have come over. Camiers was no
place for him - cold as Greenland, mud to the knees & wind & rain every
other day. I knew it would prove a hole of the worst description. They
have all been very plucky about it. I have been so sorry about Birkett.

Feb.
1916

The new place is turning out much better than they expected. Revere is leaving them to take a commission in the British Army. He does not feel it right not to be in the fighting line. They have been so kind to him. He has turned out a most satisfactory boy, devoted to literature and books. He and I have great fights in fun as to which books of my library are to go to McGill. I am getting my catalogue in good order and many good things come in. Archie Malloch is doing well at the General Office London. He comes here every week end. I see a number of our old graduates at Cliveden (Taplow) every Monday. That movie which you saw was taken here. I hope Elliot Galt keeps well. I am trying to get into touch with him this week as I see Maggs Bros have 40 letters & an MS. of his grandfather for sale. Love to Dorothy and Cecil. I hope you will come over in the Summer. I have not heard of or from Sherry for a long time - I suppose his boys are out. My doctor friends here have been hard hit. Rolleston, Norman Moore, Garrod (2), Herringham, Power, Handford (2) have lost boys. 'Tis a horrid business & the end is not in sight.

With eighteen relatives in service the Osler family in Canada and England must have been kept pretty much on edge. One incident Lady Osler mentions in her home letter of February 13th:

A most extraordinary thing happened last week. Wednesday eve a cable came from Toronto from Willie's cousin Ernest Osler saying that his nephew Stewart Thorne was very ill in Hospital at Shorncliffe, and to please see

Feb.
1916

him and report. He decided to go - wired the hospital, and word came back that Thorne was dead, 'but please come and make arrangements.' So off he went. I telegraphed Campbell Gwyn to meet him - which he did and they ~~together~~ made all the arrangements. W.O. was spending the night at the Beechborough Hospital. Late in the evening the undertaker called up about the name and it was discovered that the man was another Thorne altogether - a man from Nova Scotia. Willie had arranged the funeral, guns fired, etc. It was an escape. The other man, our Thorne, was on leave in London and perfectly well. We really couldn't help laughing.

Osler's suggestion to J. Y. W. MacAlister for a series of symposia at the Royal Society of Medicine had been carried out: at one of the January meetings the Soldier's Heart had been under discussion and on February 15th Trench Nephritis had its turn, with W. Langdon Brown as the principal speaker on the subject of this previously unrecognized disorder. But these occasional meetings were only incidental to many other engagements which kept him 'on the road' and made him liable to exposure. At about this time Lady Osler writes: "We are having some coldish weather which is sad for daffodils and lilac buds, but they should have known better." 'Coldish weather' was equally bad for the Regius and perhaps he too should have known better. His account-book opposite Feb. 24th states:

Got stuck in snowstorm returning from Cheltenham. Could not get up the hill and had to stay the night. Could not motor back the next day -

Feb.
1916

too much snow. Very cold and got chilled. Had bad cold Friday. Began in larynx then went to head, felt badly, much stuffed up, little or no fever.

His ~~periodical cold~~, by now ^{this has} a familiar ^{sound, but} episode, he had difficulty in shaking off ^{this particular attack} and it kept him a week in bed which let him put his mind on other things. On the 26th he writes a characteristic letter to F. H. Garrison whose History of Medicine he has evidently been reading from cover to cover:

I am in such a muddle over my letters that I forget whether I wrote about your bibliography address - copy please - two, in fact! 'Tis A.I. I have written McCulloch, rather in favour of bibliographies and special monographs. Klebs writes about his incunabula work - I hope he will include a list, at any rate, of those in Phila, N.Y. and Boston. I wish I could get my list to 1480 finished. I get no time for work - incessant calls of one sort or another. . . I enclose you a list of Corrigenda - not very long. The book seems to have taken over here. I see it very often and recommend it everywhere. ¶ Eighteen months over - now for another period, of the same length or longer! The Zeppelin raids have done great good - only the pity of 153 women & children butchered! No single important structure damaged! I wonder does Klebs really know what damned barbarians they are! I am answering his letter and then no more! Greetings to all old friends. Yours, W^m OSLER.

P.S.1. It is wonderful that the errors should be so few when one sees

Feb.
1916

the extraordinary number of dates and names.

P.S.2. You will see by the list that I have read the book. It has been most helpful, too, in my ambitious schemes of cataloguing my library on a plan of my own, at which you will be very much amused.

P.S.3. We are having a great Shakespeare exhibit at Bodleian. Wonderful treasures, I did not know we had so many.

P.S.4. Excuse these scraps but I am writing in bed with a cold. I was stalled the other night in a snowstorm in the Cotswolds.

P.S.5. What a great contribution is that of Curtis. I wrote an editorial in the Lancet.

And there follows a long list of Corrigenda such as: "p. 204. Petty - for

"who took the first census of Ireland" read "who made the first great survey

of Ireland." See his relations with Graunt. There is a recent paper, I

forget when, dealing with point. He was the friend of Polcuning in England."

To Dr. J. Collins Warren from W. O.

13, Norham Gardens,
[March] 3rd.

Dear C. W. Macartney's things went to Cambridge. Here is MacAlister's letter - write him - which gives the information you wish. 'Tis an interesting story. No doubt the life M. speaks of is in the Library. By the way, MacAlister has written a fine life of Macartney, who must have been a rare old bird. Have you read John Curtis' book on Harvey? best bit of historical work on Medicine done in America for years and good reading. 'Tis a direct outcome of John C. Dutton's influence on Curtis. D. was a trump - just as good as his M.G.H. brother. I suppose ^{thats} ~~the~~ Curtis came of

Mar.
1916

the old N. E. stock. Tell George and Fred Shattuck to read it. I believe John and Edward C. were Harvard men - and if so about your time.

All goes well here and in the long run we shall come out on top. Revere is leaving the McGill Unit. They have had a devil of a winter at Camiers, mud to their knees, and their tents were levelled several times. He will join the Imperial service, probably the Royal Field Artillery. . . . Excuse this writing but I am abed with the grippe. Love to little Johnnie, in which Grace joins. Yours ever, W^m OSLER. Send the Memoir - am shocked not to have it. I 'lay out' every Boston man with that Vol. in which are bound the papers of 5 generations of the Warrens. 'Tis really a unique item in my library.

On this same day Lady Osler writes: "We have had a terrific (for here) snowstorm. Willie got caught on a hill outside Cheltenham in a hired car - had to go back and sleep in a damp hotel where he got a miserable cold and has been seedy ever since. As usual he is in bed and working all the time. . . . The fighting in France now is horrible and the hospitals are filling up. I suppose our turn will come."

Yes, while these comparatively trifling things were going on in Oxford 'the fighting in France was horrible,' ~~for~~ the appalling and titanic struggle for Verdun was under way - the longest continued battle in history - and the

March
1916

accompany^{ing} diversions along the British front which in other times might have seemed major operations were obscured thereby. The centre of the scene had shifted from Ypres to Verdun - always the two nodal points of the western front. "On ne passe pas." ^{And as} ~~as~~ Jack McCrae had written of Ypres:

Some yielded, no not we! Not we, we swear
By these our wounds; this trench upon the hill
Where all the shell-strewn earth is seamed and bare
Was ours to keep: and lo! we have it still.

The papers for Revere's transfer from the Canadian to the British army finally went through after the interminable delays which departmental red-tape rendered inevitable. He had behaved exceedingly well in his quartermaster's job and the Canadians were lo^ath to have him go, but there was no longer any doubt in the minds of his parents. "A wonderful letter he wrote Bob [his book-loving friend] about patriotism just settled me when I read it," writes his mother. "He has just come from town [March 7th] where he went to the War Office and put in his artillery application; then he and Bob had a day in old book-shops. All this interest in literature

20

March
1916

must now be set aside and perhaps never taken up, but I'm proud of what he's doing."

So just now for a few days, while his application with other untold thousands was filtering through the meshes of the War Office, Revere has a few days at home and his parents' letters naturally make much of it. "He has got his line in life - perfectly devoted to literature and to books ~~we have a great time together~~ - a great comfort to me, as considering his parents, it might have been to dice or horse-racing! We have a great time together," writes W.O. to his old friend Dr. Gardner of Montreal. But it is over all too soon, and on March 13th from his mother: "Revere left on Saturday to report at Folkestone and await his orders. He and his Dad were glued to old books all the time he was here, and reading to each other every evening. Bob joining in - sitting on the arm of Revere's chair with his arm around him. But Revere now seems years the older." Father and son did 'have great times together' - Osler always spirited and

March
1916

full of fun when young people were about; fond of relating amusing reminiscences of his boyhood, as when Canon Osler and a ^{denial} visitor were each ^{Mischiefously} told how deaf the other was and how they roared at each other all the evening.

Six weeks had elapsed since his letters to President Wilson and General Gorgas, but on March 15th he is able to write Mrs. Whitelaw Reid:

I had a letter from President Wilson to the effect that the matter was under consideration & this morning Page writes that the appointments are to be made. Have you had any word from Gorgas? He has not replied to my letter in which I made mention of your generous offer. I suppose if they come over officially the Govt. will pay all expenses. I daresay by this time you have heard from Gorgas.

And soon General Gorgas wrote, saying that ever since ^{Osler's} ~~his~~ letter of January

30th ^{had come} ~~was received~~ he had been working hard over the proposal and ^{glad as he} ~~though~~

~~he~~ would have been glad to go himself ^{this} ~~it~~ was frowned upon; but the names

of three candidates from the Medical Corps had been sent to the State De-

partment for action. "It will be a great gain to us," he added "to get

these three men detailed and to give our officers an opportunity to see some-

March
1916

thing of actual conditions in Europe. The matter could not have been arranged except for your personal appeal to the President."* And Osler

*The medical officers of this detail were Col. A. E. Bradley
Major G. S. Ford and Major W. J. Lyster of the army; ~~and~~ Captain
F. L. Pleadwell, of the navy.

was also sent over as a representative

promptly writes to Mrs. Reid: "It looks as if your kind suggestion would bear good fruit. I will take the men myself to the War Office and see that they are put in the right hands in France." Gorgas himself could not be spared, for America was still 'waging peace' as Mr. Roosevelt expressed it, in Mexico; and two months more elapsed before the officers of the detail finally reached England.

To the Osler household there had been added a grand-niece, Miss Joan MacKenzie, who not only made herself a great favourite but became a voluntary secretary, bossing W. O. about his untidy desk and helping him with 'the correspondence bureau.' This, however, continued to be largely in long-hand. "We keep busy," he writes. "I am on the road a great deal -

March
1916

in London 2-3 days a week. Grace has a big ^{is}shop and a sort of universal provider. The Zeppelins do much good in stirring up the people & bringing home the realities of war. 'Tis sad to have the poor women and children butchered. A bad business and old humanity should be ashamed of itself. I 'spect Crile is right."

They had been much upset by the torpedoing of the "Sussex" on which were several of their friends, one of the Rhodes scholars, ^{as well as} Professor Baldwin and his family who had been visiting them only the day before.

Our next excitement [Lady Osler writes her sister] has been the Zep. Friday night I had just gone to bed - Revere was at home & talking with his father on his bed when the signal went - a hooter at the station. Of course I meant to go out - and much to Revere's disgust Joan said so too. We walked as far as Balliol when we were challenged and told to go home and to the cellar. The streets were absolutely silent except for soldiers at the corners & about the big buildings. Fire engine at the Bodlian, etc. Not a vestige of light anywhere - except sometimes a wee glimmer at the edge of a cellar window or dining-room. We finally returned to bed and at 3 o'clock the electric light was turned on. I be-

March
1916

lieve the warning is given when the Zep is within 50 miles. Last night the same thing happened but I stayed calmly in bed and mean to do so in the future. It is wearisome to be up every night. W.O. of course remains peacefully in bed and reads.

He had been working off and on during all these months on the eighth edition of his Text-book, which indeed had been due in 1915, and with the help of Thomas McCrae in Philadelphia enough of a revision to satisfy the publisher was finally made.

Um.
Incidentally [he writes J. J. Walsh] I am trying to pick up a little education. I am working at the earliest printed medical books, and am reading some of your old friends. I have just finished Vincent of Beauvais' sections on Med. The R. Printer's Edition in the early 70ties is the biggest incunabula known. Things are going well here - 'tis a hard business to stir a democracy. The Irish problem is difficult. The settlement is really in N. Y., until Hibernia magna recognizes the folly of Irish independence there must be trouble.

indeed
Ireland ^{indeed} was playing traitor and the Sinn-Fein movement gaining momentum, though it was not until a month later that Sir Roger Casement was captured when ^{his transport, a} the disguised German auxilliary cruiser, was sunk ^{in the act of} while landing arms -

25

March
1916

the signal for the outbreak of the Irish rebellion of Easter week,
which resulted in the summary execution of its leaders. It is a long *Jan*
cry from Roger Casement to St. John the 'golden-mouthed', but Osler's
brief letters touch on many and diverse things. On March 31st he writes
President Lowell of Harvard:

Pass this on to your Librarian a Greek MS ^{circa} ~~ca~~ 1200 of St. Chry-
sostom has been sent from Naples to the Bodleian. We have several
tho not identical. It has been looked over by Brightman, the leading
expert in liturgical MSS, whose report I enclose. The rascal asked at
first £500; but I have got him down to £100. It would have to be bound,
which could be done better here than in America. Greek MSS. of this date
are rare. Some friend of the Library or of the Theological School might
like to purchase it. A suitable binding would cost about \$25. Do not
bother about it yourself but pass this letter on to the Library. I hear
from Sir John Rose Bradford that the Harvard Unit is doing A.I. work.

Two new interests came at this time to engage his attention. In a let-
ter to W. S. Thayer of April 1st he says:

The French are doing splendidly & this country is in fine form - if we
could only choke some of the politicians & editors. We have started a

April
1916

[Hampstead].

big Army Heart-Hospital, Allbutt, McKenzie and I have had the selection of the staff and have been put in control as active consultants. We visit once a week each, & determine the policy etc. There are to be 4 services. Lewis has one, Parkinson & Meakins (of Montreal) the others, & we hope to be able to get Fraser for the 4th. Such interesting cases - chiefly neurotic, but many mitral & a few aortic. Typhoid has slumped - very few dysenteries. Nephritis persists & is most interesting. . .

On the same day that this was written came a letter from 10

Downing Street, stating:

I have pleasure in proposing, with the King's approval, that you should be a member of the Royal Commission which he has been pleased to appoint to inquire into University Education in Wales. The terms of reference are as follows: -

To inquire into the organization and work of the University of Wales and its three constituent Colleges, and into the relations of the University to these Colleges and to other institutions in Wales providing education of a post-secondary nature, and to consider in what respects the present organization of University Education in Wales can be improved and what changes, if any, are desirable in the constitution, functions, and powers of the University and its three Colleges.

Among those who were invited to serve were Lord Haldane, Sir Henry Jones,

The Hon W. N. Bruce, Miss Emily Penrose and a few others representing vari-

ous fields of education. Into this new job Osler threw himself with

27

April
1916

The Surgeon

eagerness, and a shower of letters mostly undated soon poured in upon

ML

Dr. [now Sir] John Lynn Thomas of Cardiff:

Monday

Dear Thomas Get your mind on the question of a national post-graduate scheme in connection with the school. The Commission will visit Wales in June (end of) and I should like to hold meetings of the profession at Bangor, Aberystwith & Cardiff. Please help in this when the time comes We could bring in the Tuberculosis men &c Yours sincerely.

Sunday

You are moving along! The report of the Hospital meeting shows a good spirit - I was glad to see the suggestion of an Election Committee. How can we get into touch with the Profession whose confidence should be sought? ^{is} there ~~is~~ not a Principality Branch of the B.M.A.? It will be a great matter to have everything cut & dried for the Commission. The Hospital must be made to feel that it is the Medical School for the last three years. Yours sincerely.

So from now on every two months or so a few days must be passed ^{with this Commission which} ~~in Wales~~ *must be*

~~not however an uncongenial task,* as would appear from the following letter~~

Income later where?
*A large sum of money had been left for the establishment of a library school in Cardiff for the training of librarians, a matter in which he had long been interested and which he had tried to get started in Oxford.

Drumby 27

Testifies,
as Sir Henry Jones has written:

Osler was very faithful in his attendance at the meetings of the
~~Welsh Commission,~~ which ^{not only} gladly leaned on his experience and strong common-
sense in all matters that concerned ~~particularly~~ medical education, ^{but} and
was largely influenced by his liberal views on education in general.
Moreover, the gentle playfulness at the back of his mind made him as ideal
a committee-man as a companion, and because of his sympathetic understand-
ing of the Welsh people their debt to him is deep."

That it was far from

an unmercenary task would appear from the following letter

April
1916

of April 12th to his nephew W. W. Francis who is still with the McGill

Unit which Dr. Malloch has also joined.

Dearest Billie How goes the work? I hear you are the staff of
the unit. Meakins was talking of you yesterday. He is very happy at
Mt. Vernon, ^[the Heart Hospital] and getting into very good work. He and Cotton will get a
great deal out of their experience as there is much to be done and we
have such a nice set of fellows. . . . All well here. Revere is
expecting notice any day to go to Newcastle for training. I wish he was
going to Exeter. It has been a slow job. Joan and her Douglas [who
had been convalescing at 13 Norham Gardens] are beaming. He is all
right again. I am on the Welsh University Royal Commission - for my
sins - and will have a job in settling the new medical school at Cardiff.
It is interesting work, and with such nice men. When are you coming?
'Tis time surely for leave. Yours affec. W.O. Look after Archie
Malloch - good lad and keen on literature.

Though wages had risen and taxes were heavy, the early months of 1916
was a period of renewed confidence throughout England. The resolution
to pursue the war to the end had been stiffened by the Zeppelin raids and
by the stories which had filtered through of the treatment of prisoners

April
1916

at Wittenberg and other internment camps in Germany. Moreover,
Washington after the sinking of the "Sussex" had at last shown impatience
and actively threatened a severance of relations. Meanwhile, to help
the French in their desperate defence of Verdun the British had taken
over the western front from Ypres to the Somme with ^{their largely} ~~her~~ improvised army
now of five million men, most of them ~~however~~ as yet untrained in ac-
tual warfare. Of the actual military operations on the varied fronts Osler
throughout apparently read little and said less, though at this moment
a number of his relatives were actively engaged. "We are kept anxious
now most of the time," his wife writes on April 12th, "with all the
Oslers and Gwyns at the front - seven in the midst of it, and the Can^s
are holding a bad salient." They indeed were: for all through February,
March, April and June in the desperate and largely unrecorded fighting
for a better foothold in the line drawn about Ypres the Canadians had ^{been}
^{heavily} largely engaged. And on Sunday the 16th she writes: "Willie is holding

April
1916

out so well ^{though} ~~while~~ the house goes on in the same mad way. When I open the front door there is always someone waiting for a job or for a letter of introduction to the War Office." The following gives a glimpse at the household on this particular Sunday:

We now have Mr. Penfield the Rhodes Scholar who was on the Sussex, with a fractured leg in plaster established in the blue room and he will stay as long as he wants. Bob is here too in a tremendous state of excitement as he has a job to drive an ambulance at the front. Also Archie Malloch. Just as we finished luncheon a motor arrived with Ralph Osler (Frank's son) and another officer - then Dinah Meredith and her friend Wanda Guroyski - drenched through. An early hot tea was scrambled for them, when in the midst arrived some people from Florence (Italy) whom W.O. had asked and forgotten - and a gentleman from Cardiff and several hospital nurses. They all seemed quite happy, but life is queer. . . . All officers on leave now have suddenly been called back and one trembles to think there may be a horrible repetition of last year's fighting."

Among ^{those 'suddenly called back'} them was Ralph Osler, who was never to see England again.

With all this going on, Dr. Malloch's journal relates that "W.O. gave his usual morning clinic at the Infirmary and in the evening read aloud parts of Fuller's sermons." It was the same sort of steady spirit

April
1916

which led to the holding at this time on April 24th, the Monday after
Easter, the very day the Germans attempted to unload arms in Ireland,
of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Exhibition at Bodley's in which Osler's
hand can be seen. The Turbott folio of course; the "Venus and Adonis" of
1593; the poet's own copies of "Ovid"; and ~~there of course on view~~ ^{were} ~~many~~ other
similar treasures, of which the Press had issued an elaborate illustrated
catalogue, ^{were naturally all placed on view. And it} ~~It~~ is interesting to contrast a cabinet 'crisis' in London
holding sessions behind closed doors, with a meeting at Oxford the same
afternoon in the Divinity School ^{where} and the speeches ^{were on a subject far removed from politics,} ~~there on quite a differ-~~
^{ent} ~~subject.~~ (For the occasion Osler had prepared an address) - "Creators,
Transmuters and Transmitters, as illustrated by Shakespeare, Bacon and
Burton." It was in his very happiest vein and, ~~were~~ other more important
things not happening, ^{might} well ~~deserve~~ reprinting here in full. A paragraph
for the Baconians must suffice.*

e/ e/ [*It is proper to add that Osler said man owed his world-dominion
to the transmuters; and the following shows what they meant to his
library - "Only the labours of transmuters has progress been made
possible and their works will fill the shelves of the concentrated
Bibliotheca Prima of the future."

April
1916

History repeats itself. Greek philosophy, lost in the wandering mazes of restless speculation, was saved by a steady methodical research into nature by Hippocrates and by Aristotle. While Bacon was philosophizing like a Lord Chancellor, two English physicians had gone back to the Greeks. 'Searching out nature by way of experiment' ('tis Harvey's phrase), William Gilbert laid the foundation of modern physical science, and William Harvey made the greatest advance in physiology since Aristotle. Reckless not his own rede Bacon failed to see that these works of his contemporaries were destined to fulfil the very object of his philosophy - the one to give man dominion over the macrocosm, the world at large; the other to give him control of his microcosm, his own body. A more striking instance of mind blindness is not to be found in the history of science. Darkly wise and rudely great, Bacon is a difficult being to understand. Except the Essays, his books make hard reading. In the Historia Naturalis, a work of the compiler class, one would think that a consideration of Life and Death would so far fire the imagination as to save an author from the sin of dulness. Try to read it. A more nicely tasteless, more correctly dull treatise was never written on so fruitful a theme. There is good sense about medicine and nature, but with the exception of the contrast between youth and old age, which has a fine epigrammatic quality, the work is as dry as shoe-leather, and the dryness is all his own, as other authors are rarely quoted. Only a mollusc without a trace of red marrow or red blood could have penned a book without a page to stir the feelings and not a sentence with a burr to stick in the memory. Bacon students should study the lengthy consideration given in it to the spirits, and then turn to Schmidt's

April
1916

Lexicon to see how very different in this respect are the motions of Shakespeare's spirit. The truth is Bacon had in a singular degree what an old Carthusian (Peter Barnefelt) called 'the gift of infrigitation.'

More might well be given, but the following note from the journal of a week-end sojourner perhaps tells enough - even to 'Up Jenkins' with the young folks - a game of concealment Bacon is supposed to have played.

the
We saw/Shakespeare exhibition at Bodley. Sir Sidney Lee, Sir Walter and Lady Raleigh, Professor and Mrs. Firth, Mrs. Max-Müller, Mr (R) FitzRoy Fawcett (present owner of the famous Phillips Library near Cheltenham) came to lunch. Addresses at the Divinity School by Mr. Madan, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Sidney Lee and Sir William. Splendid. We sat on the platform. Dinner at the Wrights', and Sir Wm. played 'Up Jenkins' with us.

Besides the creators, transmuters and transmitters there is another class he does not mention - the inspirers or animators - a group to fill almost as few benches as the creators and to which Osler himself belonged. It is more difficult to trace those who stimulate others to create, transmit and transmute, though they are always much more loved by their contemporaries than those of the other groups. "The Bodleian is a huge mausoleum," Osler said. He was speaking of books, not one in ten thousand

April
1916

of which survives its author? It is also a mausoleum of personalities, but many a day will pass before the inspiration of his daily visits will be forgotten by Bodley's staff of workers.

There follows much correspondence on familiar topics - the disposal of a first edition of Reynauld's "Birth of Mankind" of which he already had a copy so this must find its proper place; letters to persons regarding the future programme of the Welsh University Commission, the gist of it being "We must get the profession of the principality at the back of the movement," and this he sets out to do. As for the war, he says as usual: "All goes well - if we could only have the country run by the soldiers and not by the politicians. We are really waiting for either a Lincoln or a Cromwell."

To Surgeon General William C. Gorgas from W. O. 4th [May, 1916]

Dear Gorgas Page sent on Lansings cable. I am so glad you have arranged it. I remember Bradley well. I have asked to be notified at once of their arrival, & I will take them to Keogh, who will make all arrangements They should arrive just in time, as things should begin to get lively by the early summer Very little disease among the men in France Typhoid has practically disappeared. Much shell-shock & odd nervous conditions. Yours sincerely W^m OSLER.

35
May
1916

It was the first trickle, the coming of these four medical officers, though the significance of the detail could not have been realized at the time. Osler left no stone unturned to give them a welcome and show them attention. They were met on their arrival with a card saying: "So glad to know you are over. Could you come next Thursday for the weekend. ^{4⁵⁵} train from Paddington?" And other numberless and undated notes follow, such as these to Surgeon Pleadwell *the first to reach England:*

Thursday
I enclose cards for the R. S. M. Lib, 1 Wimpole St & the R. C. Surgeons
Lincolns Inn Fields - both good. Get interested in the Museum at the
R. C. Surg. wonderful You can give yourself a clinic of the first class
with the specimens & the cards. Ask to see Prof Keith who is a genial
Scot.

26th
Any spare mornings, Lewis and his colleagues at the Mount Vernon Military Hospital, Hampstead, would be delighted to show you any of the heart work which is in progress. I am writing to Major Meakins of Montreal who is in charge of one of the departments. Ask for him.

5th
Keith will give a demonstration to the Harvard Unit at R. C. S. at 11 tomorrow - I hope you will be able to go.

19th
So glad - see Birkett at the McGill Hospital & Dr. John Rose Bradford Etaples to whom I have written. Let me know if I can be of help.

May
1916

[no date]

How I should like to! but - I am tied and bound with the Welsh Royal Commission & ^{have} several other chains about me, head & heart & legs! W.O.

In the midst of all this, shortly after their arrival, he and Sir Alfred Keogh gave 'the Mission' a dinner at the Athenaeum attended by the American Ambassador and many officers high in the councils of the R.A.M.C. - an event which fell on Empire Day and escaped notice in the press. Though why should the advent of four American medical officers in ^{muft} ~~civilian clothes~~ make any difference to the war? America was good at an exchange of 'Notes', ^{just} as though the war was a debating society; she could supply munitions; but not much else.*

*The R.A.M.C. as well as the navy at this time was greatly in need of medical officers. There is a long letter on the subject in the Lancet for May 6th signed by Allbutt and Osler. Osler meanwhile had been in ~~long~~ correspondence with some of his American medical friends regarding the sending over of a large number of unattached young men, recent hospital graduates, who could get unusual opportunities for work in the understaffed London hospitals. ~~Nothing much came of it.~~ *They began to appear in December.*

On May 12th he writes to H. M. Hurd: "It's a horrid business but no one here wants peace unless at our terms. We must go through with it now if it takes another five years. We cannot do it over again. Things look more hopeful but a democracy is a blundering cyclops at war." And he adds: "The strain is terrible on the young fellows. One of my nephews

May
1916

phews was here today - he and another were the only officers of his regiment unwounded at St. Eloi a few weeks ago. Revere has joined the Royal Field Artillery and is getting his training."

He was 'desolated' to use his usual expression, on losing at this time two of his little playmates - the 'Doccie-O' children, one of whom, little Muriel, he particularly adored and whose ^{miniature} picture he always ^{carried} ~~kept nearby~~ with those of his special pets. They had been spending

the winter with their grandmother and must now return to their parents in the States. ^{It is a relief therefore to have this account of a restful ^{given} afternoon day in} Lady Osler's home letter of May 26th: gives

~~this account of him.~~

Stow-on-the Wold on the Broadway Road.

Dear Sister W.O. had a consultation about eight miles beyond here and insisted on my coming as he hired a motor. He dropped me off here and I took a walk and have been sound asleep in a field under a white may bush - with daisies, buttercups, clover, forgetmenots and many others under my feet. Such a fine view across the Cotswolds with Kingham and Chipping Morton in the distance. I have loved it - and we are now to have tea in a nice old inn. I only wish you were here. The day is too superb. I believe my condition of mind is peculiar. I almost resent

May
1916

the glory of the country and the blue sky when I think of the horrors across the Channel and the misery in the hearts everywhere. I believe it is easier to bear when the clouds are grey and the rain coming down, although that is selfish for it is dull for the wounded to be shut up in the hospitals. Campbell Gwyn came on Sunday. He looks years older and seems so weary. The Canadians are in that perilous Ypres salient - and all the officers say it would have been better to have given it up last autumn and have straightened the line. Since last April (1915) when the Canadians saved Calais they have been kept there and the last few months the Guards have been there too. With his good-bye he said: "Aunt Grace, for Heaven's sake keep Revere back if you can, as long as possible."

. . . All the men who come back are perfectly optimistic and say of course it is all right - go on sending "men and guns - men and guns." Campbell says huge guns are coming all the time - and not yet used, preparing for the future. Isn't it ghastly to speak of the 'future'? W.O. is simply wonderful - he reads more in the papers I think than he used, at least he pretends to, but rarely talks of the war. He has so many interests - spends all day Monday at Cliveden and the officers tell me they live for this Monday visit. . . Don't let people say England is not doing anything. The other afternoon I went out for an hour. First house was the Barrons - son a prisoner since October 1914 - nephew who lives there with them wounded. Over to the Acland house to see a country friend - one son killed, one with leg stiff and 2 inches short from wound. Then to the Wrights where there are three sons serving and Mrs. Blake there with two. Then to the Sherringtons to condole with her

May
1916

as her only child of 18 has just gone to France. Then to see Mrs. MacDonnell - only son killed, and found with her Mrs. Symonds whose only child had left Salisbury without being able to come home. After that I tottered home and wondered what fate was in store for the Oslers.

It is fortunate that Osler had his library to turn to as a refuge.

On May 27th he writes to Charles Sayle:

Splendid - I am so glad. Sorry to have forgotten about the paper - I send two more - the other a 'chatter' at our Shakespeare meeting. Revere is in the R.F.A. at Fenham Barracks, Newcastle getting licked into shape. We had him with us for a month while he was getting a transfer. You will be delighted with his keenness in English literature. The year in France with books in place of 'bridge' has done him so much good. The Library thrives - the revision of catalogue is nearly complete. My secretary was called up more than a year ago and there has been much delay. The B. prima grows - in mind and in shelves. By the way, is there a full bibliographical description of your Averröes? Lady Osler has been very busy - the hotel full but always a vacant bed for you.

And again on the 29th to Robert Gunther about the 'Richardson Correspondence' which Oxford would have lost but for his ^{intervention:} ~~personal interest:~~

On Friday there is a remarkable collection of letters, etc, relating to the old Oxford botanists (Sherard amongst others) to be sold at Sotheby's. I hope to induce the Radcliffe trustees to allow us to spend £100. The

May
1916

Bodleian will give us £50, and I am trying to get an extra £50, that we may send a limit bid of £200. Do you think you could persuade Magdalen to help?

These things were much more to Osler's taste than the talk of war which was scarcely to be avoided with one or more youngsters just out of the trenches almost constantly in the house. "With all the Bath, Osler and Francis connection," writes Lady Osler, "there are fifty men serving." This in one Canadian family alone! No wonder in England women by now were doing men's jobs - acting as conductors on the busses and workers in the fields. Naturally their ^{in the Northam Garden's household} feelings were more or less coloured at this time by what was happening to the Canadians. "House full as usual - I never thought war could increase the demands on the Open Arms as it has," Lady Osler writes on June 11th. "Such a nice time Sunday with Dr. Hugh Cabot and George Shattuck en route for France." And she adds: "Our hospital is full of wounded Canadians and just now so many Canadian friends ^{in the casualty lists} ~~killed or wounded~~ we felt the whole business was up; but on the other hand Joffre is in London and Kitchener has started for Russia so one tries to

June
1916

take fresh cheer." But on the 19th she writes: "These have been strenuous days and the beginning of Osler sorrows- Ralph Osler, Frank's only child, was wounded Tuesday night at Ypres - taken to the clearing station - operated upon - an abdominal wound - and died Thursday. ~~-----~~

Of course this is the beginning and we shall all have our turn."

Sometime before ^{they} Osler had written in regard to the first visit of the Welsh Commission to Dr. John Lynn Thomas:

I shall be in Cardiff June 21 and 22, and I think it would be important to hold a gathering of the medical profession, at which we could have a full and free discussion on the Medical School problems. Who is the chairman of the Cardiff Medical Society?

I am going to Aberystwith and Bangor the following week. To whom should I write in those places to organize meetings? Would it not do you good to come up there and play the missionary? The first thing is to get the entire profession of the principality interested in the medical school. . . .

And so for the larger part of a week he was campaigning in Wales, arousing the profession with the slogan of "Pick your men - men are the important

June
1916

thing. The day is long past when big buildings mean a big university or a big college - pick them for two things, for their enthusiasm and for their work as researchers" To develop a university spirit, in short, some inspirers and creators were needed rather than transmitters. But there is little trace of all this except that he influenced a wealthy native to endow a Chair of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine; nor does a ^{reminiscent} letter such as the following from Treborth, Bangor, help greatly:

^{After}
~~Since~~ his visit to Penhesgyn he used to send sweets to the children - or money to buy sweets. I used to write to thank him and tell him about them. He always stipulated that the naughty ones should get as many as the good. I told him once of a tiny little two-year-old we had who could curse and swear like a trooper and said she was quickly being cured by a double dose of his sweets. He replied: "Glad to hear such good accounts of the children - a little coprolalia stimulates the nurses and the parson. That one must be a gem."

Early in July he spent a few days ^{at Revere's camp} with ~~Revere~~ and on Sunday the 9th, from Durham, he writes to Mrs. Chapin:

I am having a very happy week-end with Revere who loves this place. We had a splendid afternoon in the libraries and today will see the Dean,

July
1916

and a great collection of a friend of mine who lives near. R. is so well & getting into the work. It is not very much to his liking but he has made up his mind to go through with the horrid business, and take his chances. The war has been a terrible mental shock to many sensitive young fellows. It is bad enough for hardened old sinners like myself. When are you coming over again? it is high time.

July
1916
Aet. 67

And a few days later from Newcastle-on-Tyne to Mrs. Brewster:

I am here to see Revere who is in the Royal Artillery Barracks getting his training. He is very well and taking to the work though it can never be very congenial as his heart is in other things. We had a glorious day at Durham which he knows well

and we had great fun browsing in the Cathedral Library. He goes to Shobergness in a few weeks for gunnery, and then may be drafted at any time for France. I hope it may not be for several months. You can imagine how anxious we shall be. My brother Frank lost his only son two weeks ago - such a fine fellow. Six other nephews are in the thick of it at present. The losses are heart-breaking, but we must go on to the bitter end. The outlook is more hopeful, but it will be a long business. Grace keeps well & is working as hard as ever. We have wounded in ^{our} ~~the~~ Garden every afternoon, many of them Canadians, and her work-shop is booming, 80-100 people every day. These New England women are drivers, when once started. I am away a great deal, always three days a week & lately I have had extra work with the Royal Commission in the Welsh universities. We have just returned from a two weeks inspection of the colleges, at Cardiff, Bangor & Aberystwith. ~~I am concerned with the proposal to establish a national Welsh Medical School.~~ (A most interesting people, a nation apart in thought & in tongue. I was surprised to find Welsh such a living language. I am sending you Hilaire Belloc's new book on Lafayette. Love to Uncle Ned. What splendid work he does for the country & for the Allies by his strong articles.

In a narrative of a man's life, be he one like Osler who above all things

July
1916

loved his home, it is necessary to give some picture of it; and this the following 'bread-and-butter' letter from a sojourner supplies. It was forwarded with a note from Osler to his sister which says: "I enclose a gushing letter written to Grace - so true that I have filched it and send it on to you. Saw Revere on Sunday - very good form & getting into the work. He's a darling. I am very well & very busy & keeping a grip on myself amid all these worries. Things look bright." The 'filched' letter reads as follows:

I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed my week end with you. I have inherited from some miserable Anglo-Saxon ancestor the unfortunate quality of being too shy to express my appreciation - face to face. But from this distance I can tell you frankly what I feel, and that is, that you are simply wonderful. You keep open house - you are always 'en evidence' as it were. You are always the same, welcoming them in and speeding the parting guest - whether they are maids, matrons or children. You do the right thing always. You must be tired, bored, at times sick to death of it but you never appear to be. You spend your life looking after other people, looking after the sick and the afflicted, helping the lame dogs over the stile. Your whole life is lived for others and the fact that you get a certain amount of unselfish pleasure out of being able to do it

July
1916

doesn't alter in the least the fact that you are "wonderful". I tell you candidly there is no woman that I have as great an admiration for as I have for you. My mother, Aunt Jeanette and you are the three that make my ideal. And none of you ask for praise or applause, or expect it - You probably think I am ridiculous to write like this - but I mean it - and I think we all make a mistake sometimes in not expressing appreciation. I love the artistic side of your house - the garden, the roses, the ease, the comfort, the blue carpet on the stairs, though it may be worn, the birds in the morning, the comfortable bed, the towels worked in blue! the writing-table with everything on it, the books - all is perfect, but behind it all I appreciate you - and the organizing power. Other people, many of them, appreciate this but they don't know why - I do - it is you. I take off my hat - with love -

And in due time: "Fancy that letter going to you! It was shocking of Willie for it is a pack of exaggerations. I am quite the biggest coward and most useless person in England and so utterly disgusted with myself that I can hardly endure seeing myself in the glass. She is very anxious about her boy who is flying in France, and his chum was shot, and killed by the fall last week."

In addition to his being a Colonel in the R.A.M.C. and an official

July
1916

consultant for the military hospitals in Oxford, Osler from the early weeks of the war came to occupy a unique position in relation to the Canadian Medical Corps. It was purely accidental and quite unofficial, but as each successive Canadian hospital was established in England he by common consent became its advisory medical head. "To see him sitting on a stool in the laboratory at Bulford talking to his old students and friends - advising, cheering, encouraging, without apparent effort, but with deep effect - to picture him thus is the epitome of all his relations with the C.A.M.C." Thus writes more than one Canadian officer: "From the difficult days on Salisbury Plain to the end, his presence inspired confidence, gave courage and stimulated work." For special cases, moreover, his services were always to be had, and when the matter was more intimate and personal the stereotyped cable which came to be sent by the Canadian medical authorities: "Has been seen by Osler considers doing well" brought comfort to many an anxious Canadian home. It was a task self-imposed and one which drew heavily upon the strength of a man generous of his sympathies. And not only were official cables sent but letters followed;

July
1916

17th [July]

Dear Blackader [he writes his old McGill colleague] I saw your boy today. I had not heard that he had come over until I had a telephone from Armour asking me to come up today. The mouth wound has healed almost, he is still anaemic from the loss of blood, but the complication of importance is a pleuro-pneumonia at the left base, with an aggravating cough. They are to put in a needle as the whole business may be a septic pleurisy. The general condition is good and he will do well. He is most comfortable at the new Hospital. I sent you a cable to reassure you. I will keep you posted. Love to Mrs Blackader Ever yours W^m OSLER.

He finds time to send a series of these letters about this one boy, even though Lady Osler writes at the time that he 'has been rampaging about like mad and looks very weary but insists he is not.' Even a death in so re-

mote a place as Mesopotamia touches him, and though he and ^{Victor Haveler, one of many victims} ~~this particular~~

^{disastrous march up the Tigris,} victim of that ~~trying campaign in the East~~ were as unlike as two mortals

could well be, ^{Osler writes} sends in his memory a fine tribute. ^{which} ~~this reads in part:~~

*Cf. The British Medical Journal for July 29th. It must not be overlooked that during all this time, so far as other engagements permitted, Osler has been regular in his attendance at the meetings of the many societies in which he was interested. Apparently only one of them lapsed on account of the war, (the Association of Medical Librarians) ~~but~~ ^{and} the meetings of the Historical Section of the R.M.S. continued ^{as well as} and of the Bibliographical Society; and on July 25th at the annual meeting in London of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis he gave a most timely address on the Tuberculous Soldier, which was becoming an important military problem, particularly in view of pension claims; and he made some important suggestions regarding a more searching examination in the case of recruits, provision for the study of doubtful cases before discharge, urging that a national organization with subsidiary branches in each county to undertake this work in coöperation with existing societies should look after the welfare of the tuberculous soldier.

July
1916

One summer evening in 1878, at the house of my much-loved friend, Daniel Hack Tuke, I met two young students (of University College) whose bright eyes held the light of high promise. One, Willie Tuke, was cut down at the outset of a brilliant career. The upward path of the other I followed from afar with an affectionate interest ^{and it was with no small measure of} What demon drove a man of this type into the muddy pool of politics? A born reformer, he could not resist. Fearless, dogmatic, and assertive, once in a contest no manna-dropping words came from his tongue. A hard hitter, and always with a fanatical conviction of the justice of his cause, what wonder that the world's coarse thumb and finger could not always plumb the sincerity of his motives! Let us, as dear old Fuller says of Caius, 'leave the heat of his faith to God's sole judgment, and the light of his good works to men's imitation.'

gratification that

Dr. Victor Stanley, became the greatest Hunterian Surgeon of his day.

And then on August 10th after a month of anxiety, ^{on the death of} ~~for~~ his friend's boy

he writes not only to ^{Dr. Blackader} ~~him~~ giving all the details, but also ^{sends this note to} ~~to~~ the boy's

mother:

What a tragedy this is for you & the dear Doctor! I had hoped at first when it was only pleurisy and pericarditis that all would be well. The lung complication was more serious. He was so good and patient & did everything to help us. Except for the racking cough there was not much suffering. Towards the end he realized the situation had become critical. The night before his death he asked the others to leave & spoke to me about the chances, which he feared were against him. Poor fellow! I did what I could to comfort him. There was such a look of you in his

Aug.
1916

eyes - just as I remember you as a girl. His wife has been a trump & so brave. I can realize how you feel. Our boy will be at the front very soon & we too shall have to steel our hearts for the worst With love to you both Your affec. old friend W^m OSLER.

*Copy of
PP 19-54
sent to Prof Osler*

This in every military hospital was a commonplace enough episode - "Died of his wounds" was the only official entry required. But fortunate was the hospital which had the services of one who could relieve suffering distant from as well as at the bedside, and this difficult and painful rôle was one for which ^{he} volunteered in the Canadian hospitals - the 'Consoler General.'

But the world is not made up of purely unselfish people, and just now must be faced the recital of a depressing story which stirred to the depths the entire Canadian Army Medical Corps in which he was merely an honorary consultant. It is an episode of political rivalry and of the misunderstandings which war breeds between the powers at home and those struggling with problems almost beyond human capacity three thousand miles away. It had better be forgotten, were it not that it affected Osler so deeply. For he saw an injustice being done to a member of the profession, which aroused

Aug
1916

his indignation; indeed ^{he does not appear to have} ~~he had not~~ been so stirred since his resentment over the injustice done to John S. Billings in 1885 when his work for the International Congress was undermined.

To keep things going smoothly and to foster a good spirit in the Corps, Osler had planned in his characteristic way to celebrate the second anniversary of the arrival in England of the members of the C.A.M.C. by giving a dinner to their Director-General, invitations to which he issued quite unaware that the affairs of the ^{Corps} ~~C.A.M.C.~~ were about to be subjected to an investigation. The Canadian Minister of Militia who at the time ^{was acting,} to all intents and purposes, ^{acting} ~~was posing~~ as Commander-in-Chief of the Dominion troops, appears to have gained the idea that the British army was effete and that the time had come to separate the Canadian from the Imperial forces. As an entering wedge, steps were taken ^{not only} in contra-
vention to British regulations ^{but} ~~and~~ over the head of ^{the Canadian Surgeon-} ~~their own Director-~~
General, to concentrate the ~~Canadian~~ ^{of the Dominion corps} sick and wounded into special Cana-

of?

Aug.
1916

dian Convalescent Hospitals. To the end of showing that Canadian soldiers had been neglected, he appointed a Commission of Inquiry the composition of which ^{in said to have been} ~~was~~ most unfortunate not to say partisan.

It was, however, not until August 20th that the matter was brought to Osler's attention, and on the basis purely of fair play he wrote a friendly letter to the head of the Commission whom he knew personally, asking whether the ^{body} ~~Commission~~ had been appointed without previous consultation with the ^{Surgeon-} ~~Director~~-General as to its advisability or to its personnel. This request was looked upon as an impertinence, and, meanwhile, the Commission whose chief had had no military experience, inspected the Canadian hospitals, saw only the inevitable mistakes which had been made, listened to the stories of disgruntled people, and after ^{some} three months submitted a lurid and damaging report, ^{the main purport of} ~~which~~ was given out to the press.

The implication that Canadian wounded were badly cared for in British hospitals, and with it the recommendation that they be segregated in their own special hospitals - a recommendation even if wise, almost impossible to

Aug
1916

carry out because of administrative difficulties, - was enough to strain the good relations between Canada and the Mother Country. The ~~Director~~^{Surgeon-} General of the C.A.M.C. was recalled; the members of the Commission stepped in; took over his office; and put themselves virtually in charge of the C.A.M.C. An ancient rivalry between the Canadian 'grits' (liberals) and conservatives, represented in the persons of the ~~Director~~^{Surgeon-} General of the Medical Corps and the Minister of ~~Munitions~~^{Militia}, was supposed to be at the back of all this, and as Osler wrote regarding the action of the inspecting committee, "really nothing more Gilbertesque has ever happened in the profession - a group of a man's subordinates sit upon his work, turn him out and take on his job."

It is a long and complicated story, which concerned the affairs of all the Canadian hospitals with which Osler had been connected, and even led to the dismissal of the ~~Matron~~ at the Duchess of Connaught's hospital at Taplow (Cliveden), an injustice which Osler particularly resented as he could not see how she could in any way have been implicated in a case of

Aug.
1916

malfaisance which had been uncovered there. Osler, deeply interested in the welfare of the Corps, ~~with which, however,~~ ^{through} his official connection ~~with it~~ was purely voluntary, felt so strongly in the matter, even before the report of the Commission was finally issued, that when ^{the Surgeon-General's removal} ~~it~~ became rumoured, ~~that the Director General would be recalled,~~ he cabled to Sir Robert Borden that were this action taken he would regard it as a disgraceful proceeding and would at once resign all consultation appointments at the Canadian hospitals and appeal to the profession for fair play. Apparently he handed in his resignation on or about October 20th, and sent to his old friend, Sir Hugh Graham of the Montreal Star, for publication the following letter of explanation:

My resignation as Consultant to the Canadian hospitals was a protest against the injustice done to the Director in the mode of procedure in appointing the Hospital Commission. The profession and the public should suspend judgment until General Jones's report has been printed and given to the press. I have not, as stated, resigned from the Canadian hospital, Beechborough Park, which is under Imperial authority. During the past two years I have had many opportunities to see Canadian wounded in British hospitals in which I have everywhere found them well treated.)

W^m Osler.

Aug.
1916

The Minister of Militia who appears to have precipitated all this, finally decapitated himself by an ill-advised speech, so 'contrary to the public interest' that Sir Robert Borden was compelled to request his resignation. Subsequently, Sir George Perley was appointed Canadian Minister of War overseas; ^{he called} a second Board of Inquiry, ~~over~~ ^{and in which Osler was requested to serve but refused; it} over which Sir William Babbie presided, reviewed the criticisms made in the report of the first Commission, in all essential respects reversing its findings; and the ~~Director~~ ^{Surgeon-} General was ~~reinstated.~~ ^{reinstated.} It was a long-drawn out and wretched episode, over which Osler lost much weight and for the first time in his life outwardly showed some signs of depression though this may in part have been due to the fact that Revere's battery meanwhile had been ordered to France. Nor was the affair concluded until early in 1917, when, after the report of the Perley Board and the reinstatement of General Jones, Osler's resignation was withdrawn. //

How all this harrowed Osler probably no one but his wife really knew. In a letter to his nephew, W. W. Francis at No. 3 Canadian Gen-

Sept.
1916

eral, where a great hospital out of reach of boards of inquiry was being erected around the ruins of the old Jesuit College, she writes: "I have only two duties in life - to keep on cheering the wounded and to keep W.O. fit for his tremendous amount of work and strong enough to bear the parting with Revere." And ere long Captain Francis, on returning to his unit after a period of leave, carries with him to his O.C. a gift ~~and this letter~~ which shows how Osler loved to plant seed where he knew it would grow.

Sept. 6th/16.

Dear Birkett I am sending by Billy Francis a bit of silver for the mess which please ask the men to accept with my love & best wishes as a souvenir of my visit last year. I wish after the war that you will hand it over to the Medical Faculty of which I hope it may become the nucleus of a collection of table silver, to be used at the Faculty dinners!

Revere by this time was nearly through with his period of training. ^{He}

~~His mother writes on the 7th of September that he~~ is well and likes the

^{writes his mother, and she adds,}
work - in a way, "Do you suppose he will be spared to us? ~~It is all~~

~~too horrible to write about.~~ ^{Spain} The streets are full of legless and armless

Sept.
1916

men. We have an officers' hospital now - about 260 beds and it is pathetic to see men we have known in college so full of life now on crutches or being pushed about in chairs." And on the ^{September} 10th she writes Mrs. Chapin:

I wish you were here now for the garden is lovely and we are having glorious days after that awful rain. I do not know when Revere goes. He should have four days before reporting at Southampton but sometimes they don't get that. It will be hard if we don't see him again. Willie is with him now. He went to Newcastle last Wed, for the British Asso. & was to stay with the Bishop. I was asked but knew I should hate it and only have glimpses of Revere. He is very busy - has had command of the Battery several days since he went back there. They were to go further north yesterday with a literary friend to see some famous old library - so they have been happy together.

In his own letters Osler treats the matter lightly. On September 19th he writes to his ^{former} ~~old Baltimore~~ assistant ^{who, before the days of Mr. Phillips, had helped to organize} ~~G. D. Parfitt:~~
the first tuberculosis clinic:

I was so pleased to have your last letter with an account of your progress. I know what an up-hill battle it has been for you. What a delight to get your own place. I am sending a cheque to the Angel of the House to spend for any little extras in the way of bed-room accessories, trays and cups and saucers - she will know. We are all well. Revere goes over in a few weeks to take his chance with the rest. He likes the artillery. Love to the lassie and to you both from us both.

Oct.
1916

And on a postcard of October 5th to F. H. Garrison:

Harrington? H.C. /

I am sending impressions of a perfect gem of a touch-piece (Elizabeth) which is in possession of the descendants of Sir John ^{Harrington} ~~Huntington~~ (of W.C. fame). Pass it in to the collection. I must get impressions for Storer as well. I hear from Jacobs that the old man is in good form. All goes well here. My incunabula list practically complete (to 1480). I will put in *7* S.G.L. Have you any additions since you sent the list? When does the new edition appear?

And on the 10th to Mrs. Brewster, while in the very thick of the C.A.M.C.

disturbance:

I am so pleased to be asked to be Godfather to the little man, and am counting the years with wonder if I shall hear him the Creed, the Lords Prayer and the Ten Commandments 'in the Vulgar tongue.' I hope so, tho' 'tis a bit doubtful. Give him my blessing. Sue Chapin is sending him a Paul Revere porringer, which please have marked with his name. How I wish I could see you all at Avalon. I have been sharing your anxiety about the infantile paralysis, but I feel sure you are taking all precautions. You will be kept late in the country but all the better for the children. Revere has come for three days leave before going to the front. How I wish you could see him! He has developed so much, & we are boon companions, and he takes such an interest in my books. We shall be terribly anxious of course, but the cause is worth any sacrifice. Grace is slaving and the

Oct.
1916

Hotel is full as usual - so many coming & going. A delightful Texan, convalescing from fever and a nephew with an ankle cracked in a German dug-out are with us at present. I am away a great deal - Hospitals & this Welsh Univ. Commission; but I keep well.

Well might he have wished to be at Avalon, in one of the few ^{parts of the world} ~~places~~

the war had not reached. Teheran it had reached, and Dr. Sa'eed in acknowledging a letter writes at this time: "As you see by the address I am compelled to escape from Hamadan about four months ago for the Turks led by the Germans were coming and the fanatic Kurds too were ready to put an end to ^{this} ~~the~~ apostate Kurds." Small chance for the tomb of Avicenna.

"The old people are bearing up bravely," Lady Osler writes on October 29th to Archie Malloch. "My sole object now is to keep Sir William well enough to meet any great worry that may come, but he careers about so and spends so much time in London ~~over~~ that Education Board I can hardly keep my fingers on him." And the same day Osler writes J. Y. W. MacAlister:

"You are a good friend but a bad diagnostician. I have had a series of very unpleasant worries chiefly about the Canadian Hospitals but I have sealed up

Oct.
1916

the door and am free. The next time you see me I hope you will say the broad arrow has left my forehead."

All through the spring and early summer, while the French were holding at Verdun and the Canadians were fighting for a few hundred yards here and there of ^{magnific} ~~swamp~~ at Ypres, great armies had been gathering and guns ^{were} being massed in Picardy for an offensive ^{movement on a colossal} ~~on a~~ great scale. The

great battle of the Somme had begun July 31st, and into this maelstrom

two? Revere's battery, a mere atom, ^{two months later} had been swept. "He is busy," says his father, "and writes cheerily of mules and mud and ammunition wagons."

¶ The 'Picardy summer' by this time had broken. October was a succession of gales and drenching rains and the troops had to traverse to their

new lines some four miles of nigh-impossible ground which had lost all ^{of the III Division} cohesion. ^{There have reached France October 14th, had promptly been ordered to the front with an ammunition column} There during ^{of the III Division} October and November Revere's ^{and was soon ordered to join Battery A of the 11th Division (D. A. Artillery) in the battle of the Ancre, the last} was engaged with ^{the battery during the rest of October} a battery of field artillery ^{and number he participated in the last} which, in numbers engaged and duration, had ^{that} exceeded even the battle of Verdun. The supposedly impregnable German

exceeded even the battle of Verdun. The supposedly impregnable German

Nov.
1916

lines had been pushed back between the Ancre and the Somme by desperate fighting to a depth of six to eight miles in places - but with what loss to the flower of the British nation!

The casualty lists were long during all these days, but Osler plodded on 'cheerily', as he said Revere was doing. He ^{wrote to} writes F. H. Garrison on November 21st ^{saying} ~~to say~~ that ^{the night before he had}

~~Last night I~~ attended at Fenny Stratford, the 183rd Patronal Festival in honour of the Willis family, and ^{that he had} talked about "old Thomas"; ^{adding,} "It was a most interesting occasion, and the 'Poppers' popped at intervals through the day in honour of Thomas and his grandson, the famous antiquary." * ^{never written two}

*In his charming address on this occasion 'before the villagers who gathered from miles around,' there ^{was} no mention of war. It has been published in full, together with an account of the festival, in an article by Dr. Henry Viets, then studying in Oxford and who accompanied Osler. (Cf. Annals of Medical History, N.Y., 1917, , 118-24).

^{written from London} Two days later ~~in~~ a letter to W. S. Thayer he admits that:

We have had an anxious time of course - so many of the family are here, and in the fighting line. My bro. Frank lost his only son, such a fine fellow who had been Shaughnessy's (CPR) private sec. Norman Gwyn has been doing good work at No. 1 General near Boulogne. Revere is ^{at} in the Somme in a dug-out, just 100 yds from the German lines, & the chief occupation seems to be the exchange of gas bombs. He has taken to the practical work very kindly, writes very cheerfully & seems keenly interested but as a disciple of Isaac Walton the whole business is very distasteful. You remember Miss

Nov.
1916

Parsons - she died the other day near Reading - a most faithful soul. I will write to Sister Rachael about her. I continue to see a great deal of interest - something new every day; but I get very tired of the wounded & of sepsis. I am here at the Welsh Univ. Commission of wh. Haldane is Chairman. We meet twice a week & are taking evidence. The proposal is to start a national school of medicine at Cardiff. [And he returns to a more important subject].)

Revere is in the thick of it - in this last push in the Ancre He is in the 59th Brigade Battery A. Dirty business for a decent lad, but they have to go thro. with it. Of course we are terribly anxious but - the seen arrow slackens its flight as Dante says & we are steeling our hearts for anything that may happen. Love to you all, Yours ever, W.O.

¶ The Miss Louisa Parsons to whom he alludes had been the first temporary Superintendent of Nurses at the Johns Hopkins - a woman of military ardour and a true disciple of Florence Nightingale. ^{The poor woman,} She had an incurable malady and Osler for the past several weeks had kept in touch with her, visited her frequently, kept her old friends in America posted meanwhile as to her condition, attended her funeral having sent a floral tribute in the name of "The Staff and Nurses of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, America", and wrote for the ^{Johns Hopkins} Nurses' Alumnae Magazine ^{a note of appreciation of her career.} He said in fact:

Nov.
1916

November 6, the parish church of Shinfield, Berkshire, witnessed an unusual scene, unique in its history of more than 1000 years. It was a beautiful autumn day and the rumour of something special had brought a large gathering from the neighbouring villages. Shortly after the appointed hour there was seen along the Reading road a military escort with a gun carriage, on which covered by the Union Jack was a coffin with the remains of Louisa Parsons, a woman endeared to many of us who were associated with the early days of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. I had never before seen a military funeral for a nurse, but as a veteran of the Egyptian and South African Wars it had been very properly ordered by the War Office.

It was merely one of the countless small things of a similar sort with which neither the Welsh Commission nor worries over the C.A.M.C. could interfere.

Nov.
1916

It was very good of you to send a nice fat cheque for our poor Belgians [he writes Mrs. Brewster on November 24th]. We were beginning to get a little uneasy about the financial outlook. Fortunately last evening word came from the Rockefeller Foundation that they would help again for 1917. They take the scientific people while Gracés fund helps the other professors. Sue Chapin has come for a few months which is a comfort. Revere . . . likes the artillery, but it is a gruesome business for a laddie with his temperament. A letter from him has just come by the evening post, & as I am sure you would like to have first hand news I copy it. . . . I am keeping well - away from home a great deal, chiefly in London.

And painstakingly he copies out Revere's letter written after the final

attack of the prolonged battle of the Somme of which ^{Mr. John Buchan says:} ~~the communique said:~~

"On the 17th we again advanced and on Saturday the 18th in a downpour of icy rain, the Canadians, attacking from Regina Trench, moved well down the slope toward the river while the centre pushed close to the western skirts of Grandcourt. This concluded the fourth stage of the battle and the weather now closed down like a curtain upon the drama."

Saturday eve [18th]

Dear Dad I would have written yesterday had I not had so much to do. I relieved the brigade forward observing officer at 5 p.m., and

Nov.
1916

spent the night observing. We take out two bombardiers, as look-out men, and two telephonists. It was a bitter cold night, freezing & snowing until 12 o'clock. I took my turn at watching and then retired to the dug-out leaving the bombardiers on watch. I had two blankets, a thermos full of tea and some wood, and had several hours sleep thirty feet under ground. It is a rum little dug-out about the size of your small room but lower & not quite so broad. With a fire & three others, we were quite warm and comfortable. I rather fancy there were some German critters about of the Berlin variety so I shall have a good shake at my clothes to-night. At dawn I watched our barrage of shrapnel put up on the German trenches - then a pause, a ^{revelation} ~~retaliation~~ & rush, and then the prisoners began to come & were herded in a big trench to my right. They looked at first supremely happy but were soon frightened by the shells from their own lines, which were dropping all about. Our own wounded then began to straggle past, looking very sorry for themselves poor fellows. I was relieved at 9.30 a.m. by another officer, and the Major who had come up to observe. Unfortunately just after I left the trench a shell burst near him, a splinter of which caught him on the head. The signaller got him back to the battery & the surgeon has just tied him up, and he is now sitting at the brazier, as cheerful as can be. Anyone else would have gone to the Hospital. I do hope he may be all right but I fear the shock may upset him. There is a good deal of talk about going to rest billets, & I think we shall move within a week. It will be delightful to see trees & grass again & to get away from this pandemonium.

No letters yesterday, but I expect them tonight when the pack-horses

Nov.
1916

come up. Everything comes to the battery by pack & the letters come with the rations in the late evening. It is raining now & much warmer, which is a comfort for the cold is almost worse than the mud. We have a brazier in the mess now & are burning about ten ammunition boxes a day. It is really very comfortable. I am thankful to be here among such delightful men. There is a good atmosphere about this battery. Goodnight, much love. Do not let Muz worry. REVERE.

Not only was Christmas drawing near, but Battery A, 59th Brigade, ^{which all the} ~~had~~ *time had been at Mouquet Farm one of the most fought over places in the Somme had been* moved well forward in the newly-captured region as the following letter ^{from Oiler} to Charles Sayle ^{would indicate:} ~~makes clear:~~

I send books at Xmas to about 100 of my old students, and this year I have selected your "Ages" and the just issued edition (trans.) of Galen's "^{ur} National Faculties." Do not bother please - I can get them through ordinary channels. Revere has been in this recent push. He writes, "We are literally living in bombs as our dug-out is built in an old trench, which must have been used for a bomb store. It is impossible to turn up a shovel of earth without finding some old German or English grenades. Just below us in a great hole is a heap of old mortar bombs, ammunition of all kinds, grenades, broken rifles, and every describable variety of death-dealing weapon, all broken and twisted with the shell-fire and absolutely valueless. I never quite realized how tremendous was the wastage of war until I saw the quantities of once valuable material lying here and gradu-

Nov.
1916

ally being engulfed in the mud. In front of the battery is a tank which fell through a dug-out and had to be abandoned. I had a look at it today. The insides have been removed so that it was disappointing, and very unpleasant because what was once a German is sticking his boots out just at the door. This has been a bad place for Germans. The poor fellows lie all around us, with very little on their bones, but a few tattered rags of flesh, and these are being gradually cleared away by the rats which are plentiful and hungry. We hope to have their bodies cleared up very soon."

For a man of sixty-seven, however young his appearance, alert his mind, elastic his arteries and his step, Osler had been 'careering about' almost too much and with his loss of weight was easy prey to one of his bronchitic infections. This caught him on December 2nd but was shaken off less easily than usual, turned into a ^{broncho}~~mild~~ pneumonia and for the remainder of the month he was confined to the house and much of the time in bed, some rather ominous entries meanwhile being made in his account-book. It gave ^{opportunity} him ~~time~~ to write more and longer letters than usual, many of them having on the margin: "In bed - pencil & pad."

He was really ill this time, but made game of it ~~as usual~~ and was ^{given a most} ~~an~~ obstreperous patient. He minded little a few days in bed; made all man-

Dec.
1916

ner of fun of ^{his malady} it; called for his milk poultice (toast and hot water with milk and sugar - the way his mother used to make it - 'a castle): surrounded himself with books and papers - on the coverlet, the floor, the bedside table, and one may picture him propped on pillows cheerily answering his mail. So on December 4th to J. Collins Warren of Boston:

Dear C.W. What a delightful extract!* It goes in my famous

*Extract from an interview ^{with} C. H. Parker in ~~Harvard~~ Bulletin in his ninety-third year, ~~from Harvard Bulletin~~.

B. Franklin' edition of the de Senectute which was given me at that N. Y. dinner. All goes well - only no peace for us. No one wishes it, except on our own terms - Reparation, Restitution and Security. Reverse ^{the} ~~usual story~~ ^{etc., etc.}... My Anaesthesia collection grows. I made a fine haul of original Simpson pamphlets, and this week I got Vol. IV of 8th edition of the Brit. Encyclopaedia to cut out his chloroform article. . . I lack - and want badly - the Bost. Med. & Surg. Journal for 1846. Tell Mrs. Myers at the M.G.H. (if she is still with you) that there are several copies I am sure, among her duplicates! And I want Bigelow's paper on Simpson. I have written to Sturgis B. about it. So nice to hear about the grandchildren and particularly about another Joseph Warren. . .

I hope this will reach you in time for Xmas greetings [he writes on the 5th to Mrs. Brewster]. The boats are so uncertain now & letters are

Dec.
1916

~~(so uncertain now & letters are)~~ often 3 weeks in transit. We continue to have such cheery letters from Revere who has never been so happy since the war began! He likes the men of his Battery & he seems to stand the hard work & exposure very well. The incessant row of the guns & shells tells on the young & old & they try to send them back for a few days to the base every three weeks. R. has just gone back, to his great joy for a bath & clean clothes. 'Tis a piggie life as they may not have a chance to change for weeks. I have sent you an anthology of the Ages of Man, written by a friend, in which you may be interested. For 60, he has taken my rude remarks. Heavens! that was a long time ago! Every month of the past two years seems a year in itself - and the end is not in sight. There will be an appalling mass of battered humanity to be taken care of. Without any big battle the wounded continue to pour in. We have 1500 beds here - always full. I expect a group of 68 American doctors next week. We have asked for 250 young men who will be placed in the various Military Hospitals & relieve men who can go to the front. It is marvellous how much comes into this country every week from the U. S. Tell Uncle Ned to cheer up. Uncle Sam is doing more than he knows...

And the next day to H. B. Jacobs:

Xmas greetings to you both. This should reach you in time, but boats are few these days & submarines plentiful. We plod on much the same, only with the added anxiety of Revere on the Ancre, but he writes so cheerily and seems wonderfully happy. 'Tis a dirty business though for a lad-
die of his type, but I suppose he will get used to it & return to the stone

Dec.
1916

age with the rest of them. . . . Have the library all rearranged & shelf for shelf marked and the catalogue up to date. My secretary is still away, but Hill from Bodley comes every evening & a vestal who has been helping me with my incunabula study has come to work permanently on the catalogue, with a view to printing (ultimately). Sue Chapin is with us. Norman Gwyn has had trench fever.. Rolleston is much better ^{and} with the grand fleet. We had the three Maggs brothers here for a day - to see the Shakespeare exhibition and such nice men.

And on the 11th to L. F. Barker:

We were I feel rightly hurt by Wilson's statement that the objects for which the nations were fighting were the same - this rankled. Very ill-timed too. There can be no peace & there will be no peace until we are either smashed or victorious. Why leave the nightmare on the world of another great war, just so soon as Germany is ready. Good word from Revere - but very hard work - night & day business with the guns & mud to the knees.

He enters in his account-book opposite Dec. 17-23 - "In bed all week.

Cough better. Rather weak & knocked out." Yet he can write cheerfully

enough and as a tonic there came just in time a copy of the 'excessively

rare' 1683 "Miscellanies" of Sir Thomas Browne. This ^{volume} had been sent by a

~~book~~ which gave him ^{affirmed it} as the ^{cause} of an acute paroxysm of *bibliomania*!

Dec.
1916

number of his old Hopkins friends, to one of whom, Dr. Thomas R. Boggs,

he writes on the 19th:

I wish you could see me T.B. - abed with that priceless copy of the Miscellanies, and all my Brunonian literature about it. I was just paralyzed - vasomotorically - when I opened the parcel, & at a glance saw what it was. For I had the volume in my hand the day before the sale & left a bid, but the man from N.Y. was too much. And now to think that it should have come back! & in this delightful way. 'Twill be the chiefest of my Browne treasures. And so well confined. I am in luck! Only a few weeks ago there came in from Holland No 3 of the 1644 Latin edition, about the existence of which I began to feel doubtful. I now lack only the 1683 Dutch complete ed. Am in bed with a heavy cold - much better. Revere well - on the Ancre pounding away night & day with a battery. He is with such nice men & has enough to do to keep him from worry. You would not know the boy - so developed mentally, & with such a keen eye for books & good literature. I hope you will have a booklet I sent for Xmas.

To each and every one of the sixteen contributors to the gift there went a long letter of like kind, with its characteristic expressions. To one: "I would give my top hair to drop in on you all this evening." To

Dec.
1916

another: "I have coughed my Pacchionian bodies loose and split my central tendon in two places. Am all right now." And again: "Bad time over here for the Dove of Peace. I wish Wilson's note (^{arrived} answered this a.m.) had been shot on the way. Peace at this time would mean another big war within ten years. We ~~have got to~~ ^{must} go through with this ^{one}/now to the bitter end and either come out on top or go under & leave the future of democracy to the U. S. I think we can hold out another 1 1/2 years or longer. The country is at last alive to ~~this~~ ^{the} business." And a few days later: "Poor Wilson's peace kite has come a cropper. I am so sorry he sent it just now. I hope he will be answered with Abe Lincoln's words - wonderful! how Father Abe is quoted here and his example held up as a model."

In every letter is something about his collection. "Library thrives - catalogue finished and all shelves marked - a 1673 apochryphal ed. of Le Malade Imaginaire came in yesterday - I can find no reference to one of that date." And again: "You will have about the end of Jan. a coloured

Dec.
1916

sketch of a bookworm that will open your eyes - caught him at work."

And every letter of course has something about Revere, who 'has become an abandoned bibliophile & is collecting Walton & his friends and the Elizabethans,' and meanwhile is 'pounding away on the Ancre - a devil of a mess. I wonder if we shall ever see the end.'

That he has lost none of his spirit, even though he has 'coughed his Pacchionian bodies loose' is evident from the following Christmas message entitled "The Silent Unit" which appeared among others in Lloyd's Weekly News the day before Christmas:

There was a famous paradox in antiquity - a grain of wheat falls noiselessly to the ground, the same thing happens with the second, the third, the fourth, and so on, for the thousands of grains that make up a bushel. But collect the grains again, and drop the whole bushel, and, behold! a great noise. It seems difficult to explain how the sum of many thousands of silences could result in one great sound.

The silent unit, the single grain, will win the war. In this world's crisis it is the spirit of the individual worker - in trench or camp, factory or farm - that keeps the mouth shut, the heart fixed, the hand steady.

The call is for silent sacrifice, of time, of habits, of comforts, of friends, and of those dearer than life itself - the sacrifice of sanctifi-

Dec.
1916

cation in the old Hebrew sense. It has come. Do we not feel in our hearts of hearts that only a rich anointing of the spirit of the Fathers could have so stirred the Empire from the centre to the circle? My blood was thrilled the other day by the Honour Roll of the Consumers' Gas Company of Toronto - 386 men at the colours from one corporation, of whom twenty-five have been killed, thirty-seven wounded, and eight taken prisoners! Why? The answer is in the words of the Prophet-Poet of Greater Britain:

"Because ye are Sons of the Blood, and call me Mother still."

Let this message be heard above the din of battle and the clash of machinery, the silent unit will win - "In quietness and in confidence will be your strength."

He was up and dressed for a short time on Christmas Day, and writes:

"We have the house full but of course our hearts are empty with Revere away.

I have been laid up for 10 days - a very unusual experience, but it has given

me a good rest and I am going to take it quietly for a month. Grace and

her sister are at the Hospital helping with the Xmas dinners. They are

drivers - I wish you could see the big work-shop," etc.

He 'takes it quietly' on the 25th by writing many letters to old friends - as to Miss Noyes the Librarian of the Medical & Chirurgical

Dec.
1916

Faculty of Maryland:

Dear Sister Marcia I wish I could spend an afternoon with you in the Library - seeing all the changes & improvements. What a great work you have done for us! I wonder whether you appreciate it. I really believe the doctors do! Think of those old days - of such small things - but we had hope. And old Dr. Cordell! How nice to think that his devoted old age was cheered by the prosperity of his much beloved Faculty. My library grows. I have a very ambitious scheme for a printed catalogue, but it will mean years of work - & I have so little time. Greetings to all your staff & best wishes for 1917. . .

And to Thomas McCrae:

Dear T. Mac. An Xmas letter - with first, a plea for forgiveness for all my neglect of you and your kindness. I was so bedevilled and ashamed of my failure to put through that Text-book work properly that I have just put off and put off acknowledging how disgusted I have been with myself. The reprint looks well, but we shall have to struggle [^{in another} after three years] with a proper revision.

Secondly, I wish they would agree at the C.A.M.C. to take prominent Canadians as consultants for periods of, say four months. When I suggested it eighteen months ago to Jones he refused.

Thirdly, this C.A.M. Corps business has been most trying. Bruce should never have lent himself to a political job to oust Jones, and now this Committee on Revision will I believe give a report strongly in Jones' favour, so I hope he will be reinstated. We have had a devil of a row too at

*This letter
might be omitted
if over 1000
pages.*

Dec.
1916

Cliveden Hospital. I resigned in protest against the treatment of Jones. One good result has been the dislocating of Sam Hughes, whose behaviour over here has been that of a G - P.

Fourth, I have had another broncho-pneumonia attack. After a week of ordinary cold I was about as usual and then had a slight chill with fever and cough, slight signs at left base, very worrying cough, temperature for only three nights, sweats. Rusty sputum for one day. It has rather knocked me out, but I shall take it quietly for the balance of the winter.

Fifth, Revere writes very cheerily from ~~Battery A, 59th Division on~~ the Ancre. Campbell located him for us on that famous farm ^{near of Albert} which is marked on all the maps. He is very happy in the work. We hear two or three times a week. It is a pretty hot spot - guns going incessantly.

Sixth, Norman has had a paratyphoid infection - very slow with one attack of haemorrhage. ^{Rhea} Raw and Rose Bradford have had him in charge and they have been most ^{considerate} ~~omitted~~ in writing. He will go to the Riviera and then come to us.

Seventh, our good William, the butler, died of pneumonia ten days ago in one of the military hospitals. He was engaged to Bateman, which makes it additionally sad. We shall miss him ^{greatly} ~~badly~~. I never met a better servant.

Eighth. All of your special friends are well. Allbutt in A.1 condition. I see him at the Hampstead Heart Hospital, of which he and J. MacKenzie and I are the supervisors. So keen and only the deafness indicates his years. Garrod is in Malta - two sons gone! Rolleston at Haslam, and Con-

Dec,
1916

sultant to the Grand Fleet. Jack is all right again. Archie Malloch is here for Xmas. Grace wonderfully well.

Ninth. That Sir Thomas Browne was a beauty. I hope you saw it in the case. I bid on that very copy a few years ago. It was very touching of you all to remember me in the midst of the war.

Tenth, and lastly, and most important of all, love to Amy. Yours ever, W^m OSLER. Give my love to Jim Tyson when you see him.

And on the 28th he wrote a letter which, much soiled, came back to 13 Norham Gardens in a soldier's kit a year later, and which reads in part:

To My Son on his 21st Birthday.

First - regrets that you are not with us - but these are the only ones; and the most satisfactory of all the feelings I have is that no regrets cloud the clear past of 21 years - and this is a great deal to say. You have been everything that a father could wish, a dear good laddie. And it is not often I am sure that father and son have been so happy together. . . .

For the Future - everything is too uncertain to make any plans. We can only hope for the best. But a few years ago your Mother, with her usual good sense, began to save something so that you could have your own money when you came of age. . . . It is in the Toronto Trust Co. and invested in 5% War loan. It will be transferred to your name. This will be enough to pay your average expenses at College and there will be extras if necessary - and an occasional 'rake-off' I hope. It is always so much better for a fellow to have his own money, when possible. Many, many happy returns of

Dec.
1916

the day and I hope when the tyranny is overpast we may have more happy days together - you and I and Muz.

Your loving

Dad.

And on this same day there was being written to 'his dear Dad' a letter from a German dug-out thirty feet under ground, below the ruins of a church which represented the Battalion Headquarters of the South Staffords, which tells of a forty-eight-hour liaison duty with that battalion, - a very cheerful letter which ends by saying: " I can't help feeling that at this time next year we will all be together again. I hope Lloyd George doesn't stop us buying books! I am very happy considering it is my birthday! I have no regrets except for my own shortcomings, only endless love and gratitude for you both."