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1875

OSLER'S EARLY TEACHING DAYS AT MONTREAL

(Notes supplied by Dr. Beaumont Small of Ottawa)

With what expectation does the freshman await the meeting with his respective Professors - those giants of intellect, endowed with such an abundance of learning - how insignificant himself how mighty the other. Particularly Osler - that prodigy among the giants, the author of a prize thesis, and fresh from London hospitals. Added to this a reputation for sternness and severity in his lectures and in his examinations.

With such impressions I saw him first as he entered the lecture room to open his course on the Institutes of Medicine. Quick and active, yet deliberate in his walk and manner, with a serious and earnest expression, it was evident that he looked upon his lectures as serious and at once imparted the same feeling to others. In a very few words he welcomed his class, stated what he hoped to do and what he expected in return, concluding with a general warning that he expected attendance and attention from all. We succumbed to that genial and kindly manner which has been so characteristic throughout his life, and I doubt if any professor had more carefully studied lectures or better attention than was given to him.

The lecture began with an explanation of the old Edinburgh term of Institutes of Medicine. Then in bold outline he sketched ~~impressive?~~ ^{inorganic} and organic matter, vegetable and organic life, vital forces, and closed with a description of cellular life and an outline of future lectures.

From that hour Physiology was an attractive study and the lectures like unto the Gods.

When I look back upon that period it is evident that 1876-7 was the beginning of a period of renaissance for McGill, and Osler the moving spirit, but it would not be right to impart to him all the credit. The recent but previous appointments to the Faculty of Ross, Roddick, Shepherd and Gardner, all young and energetic, of the highest type of professional standing, was not without design. These supported by the mature wisdom of Dean Campbell R. Howard and Craik could mean only progress and resulted in the reputation that McGill achieved during the succeeding decade.

In 1877 the following announcement was issued by the Faculty.*

*The following changes have been made in the curriculum of the Faculty of Medicine.

(1) A practical examination in anatomy will form a part of the Primary Examinations.

(2) Medical and Surgical Anatomy will form part of the practical examination by the Clinical Professors.

(3) The attendance upon the lectures in Hygiene is compulsory.

(4) Students may present themselves for examination in Materia Medica at the end of the second year.

(5) The section in clause 9 of the Qualifications for the Degree in Medicine relating to the Thesis or Inaugural Dissertation is cancelled.

(6) Eighteen months' Hospital attendance is required instead of twelve.

(7) A certificate of having compounded medicines for six months is necessary to qualify for a Degree.