

re Victor Horsley.

Some Personal Appreciations.

SIR WILLIAM OSLER writes:

Better than any man of his generation Victor Horsley upheld a great British tradition, for he combined the experimental physiologist and the practical surgeon in a degree unequalled since John Hunter. In his deft hands experiment reached a perfection not before known in the laboratory. To have recharted (with his friends Beevor, Schafer, Mott, Gotch, and Semon) the cerebral cortex was a brilliant achievement. A technique of such perfection was reached that the surgery of the laboratory was a decade ahead of the clinic. There was a mind, too, behind the hands resolute, keen, and fertile in suggestion. He had the true scientific spirit, open and free, without secrets or seclusion and a fraternal kindness that often gave to others the lion's share of credit. What a pity that twenty five years ago the fragmental medical organization of London had no abiding home in the shape of a great physiological institute for a man of Horsley's genius!

He took over to a hospital career qualities which enabled him to give us within a few years three of the greatest sensations of our time. His paper on Brain Surgery at the Brighton meeting (1886) of the Association electrified the profession, and with Macewen's contemporaneous work put British surgery in the van in this field. Less dramatic, but perhaps more profound, was the impression made in the following year by the successful removal of tumour of the spinal cord. It was truly an epoch making case, and one is at a loss which to admire more the brilliant diagnosis of Gowers or the matchless technique of Horsley. In this great war scores of lives have been saved by the application of his surgical lessons. a direct result of his experimental work on the thyroid gland was the successful treatment of myxoedema, which for the first time placed organo therapy on a scientific basis. Year by year, an increasing output of researches gave him a unique position in the surgical world. In spite of the incessant demands of practice he managed to keep in daily touch with laboratory work, and was rarely without a special research student. From personal experience I know how freely his time was at the disposal of the innumerable visitors who sought his clinics.

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."

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