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SIR WILLIAM OSLER.*

By ALEX. F. ROBERTSON, Jr., M. D., Staunton, Va.

In making the subject of my address a biographical sketch, I feel that I am drawing from a field abundant with interest and teeming with inspiration. The history of medicine portrays numberless romances. When one pauses to think of the marvelous advances of the last century, and of the outstanding achievements of the leaders, he is lost in admiration, and thinks not of how well versed the modern physician is, but rather of how we of this generation may best deserve our priceless heritage. The doctor, with his all absorbing busy life, has the need of the background given by familiarity with the history of medicine—a subject, until recently, not included in the curriculum of any medical school. The announcement last year of a chair of medical history at Johns Hopkins, under Dr. W. H. Welch, is particularly pleasing, and should blaze the way for its general adoption. It is especially appropriate that this should have made its beginning in the medical school which owes its success so largely to Osler.

My father, a layman and a lover of biographies, who presented me with Dr. Harvey Cushing's life of Osler¹, remarked that Osler's life was one of the most remarkable and inspiring he had ever read, and that were he a young doctor, he should read it once each year. To those of you who have not read this life, I commend it most highly, not only for its historical interest, but also for the wonderful inspiration it contains. Even had I the ability, time does not permit me to do justice to my subject, and I must therefore describe very briefly the important phases in the life of a man claimed with equal fervor by three countries.

William Osler, the youngest of nine children, was born July 12, 1849, in the backwoods of Canada. Of Welsh descent, his par-

ents had come to Canada ten years before, as missionaries, and reared their children amidst the rigours of frontier life. As a boy, he was quite athletic, full of fun and pranks, which on more than one occasion, got him into trouble. At the age of sixteen he was sent to school at Weston, where he came under the influence of the Rev. W. A. Johnson, warden of the school. Johnson, in addition to being a philosopher, was a naturalist, and under his tutelage, Osler became intensely interested in botany. Dr. James Bovell, medical director at Weston, had a deep interest in biology, which Osler immediately took up, spending all of his spare time in expeditions in the fields and microscopic study. These two men had a lasting influence upon him, particularly Bovell, so that after a year at Trinity College, studying the arts, preparatory to entering the ministry, he decided to study medicine, and accordingly entered the Toronto Medical School in 1868.

At Toronto he entered into his work with great earnestness. He took the greatest interest in anatomy and spent many hours in the dissecting hall, often taking a sandwich and spending his lunch hour there. During his second year he discovered trichina in the muscles of a German cadaver. Although the condition had been described by Paget in 1835, very little was known of the disease in America at that time. Osler attributed his discovery to his interest in biology, which continued to occupy much of his spare time and holidays. This second year he had a room at Dr. Bovell's house and became interested in his library containing many choice books. During the summer of 1870 he decided to leave Toronto and spend his last two years at McGill in Montreal, where the hospitals offered greater clinical advantages to the students.

While a medical student, Osler started many of his life habits. One of these was to read good literature, not medical books, for half an hour each night after going to bed. Another was to read with note book and pencil in hand, so that he might jot down striking facts. In the course of his reading he adopted

*Presidential address delivered before the Medical Association of the Valley of Virginia, May 26, 1927, at Clifton Forge, Va.

1. The Life of Sir William Osler, by Harvey Cushing, M. D. Vols. I and II, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1925.

outer quadrant of the right eye missing. Following the injection of air into the ventricles for purposes of ventriculography, a complete right homonymous hemianopsia developed, which persisted to the time of the operation.

November 7, 1925, operation was performed. A tumor originating from the hypophysis was found, but this had extended beyond the limits of the sella, upward toward the base of the brain and rather far posteriorly; an aneurysmal dilatation of the left internal carotid was exerting pressure on the left optic nerve; although only a partial resection of the tumor was done, there was profuse hemorrhage and shock, and the patient failed to survive the operation. Post-mortem examination revealed a tremendous tumor of the pituitary, with destruction of adjacent bone, compression of the basilar artery, and with an extension into the pons.

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4. Benedict, W. L.: Early Diagnosis of Pituitary Tumor with Ocular Phenomena, *Am. Jour. of Opth.* 1920, iii, 571.
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Rochambeau Apartments.

JOHN CULLEN.

By WYNDHAM B. BLANTON, M. D., Richmond, Va.

The calibre of many of the men who composed the medical profession of Richmond one hundred years ago was exceptional. Their education and training, their habits and accomplishments arouse our admiration. Foremost among the physicians of that day was John Cullen.

Cullen was born on February 1, 1797, in the city of Dublin, Ireland. There he grew up, and was educated. His training was completed at Trinity College. Napoleon had meanwhile remade the map of Europe and centered in Paris much of the art and intelligence of the world. Young Cullen at the age of 17 went to Paris to further prosecute his studies. On one occasion he felt the iron hand of the Emperor. His uncle lived in Salamanca, Spain. The nephew set out to visit him, but was arrested and brought back to Paris. He was fortunate in being set at liberty. He made the most of his time now studying French, anatomy and

surgery. It was a transition period in medicine in Paris. As an American student wrote "They were always telling of Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, etc., as if not a particle had been added to the stock of knowledge since their time". Broussais' supremacy was just beginning to be shaken. "Observation and method" were displacing theory and speculation. Corvirsart, Napoleon's physician, had done a great service, in translating the *Inventum Novum* (1808). Laennec was busy with his clinicopathological studies, but it was not until the year after Cullen left Paris that the inspiration of the stethoscope came to him; and his great work on auscultation did not appear for three years more. After the collapse of Napoleon, June, 1815, Cullen went back to England. As a matter of fact he took passage on the same ship with the allied sovereigns.

It was New York, not Ireland, that now attracted him. So he set sail again and landed in America. The young son of Erin found employment as a chemist working with what was considered in that day a large manufacturing company. His interest in this science stretched back to his student days and later on we find him lecturing on chemistry in Petersburg, Va. For a career, however, he had determined on medicine, and shortly made his way to Philadelphia where he began study in the University of Pennsylvania. Among the faculty at this time were Philip S. Physick and John Syng Dorsey. Dr. Dorsey became very fond of young Cullen and took him as his private pupil. It is said that but for the death of Dr. Dorsey in 1818 they would have been associated in practice. As a tribute to this affectionate relationship years after, Dr. Cullen named a son, John Syng Dorsey. After graduation he served in the "Almshouse" as one of the resident physicians.

About 1820 Cullen made a trip to Virginia. Shields says the object of this visit was to confer with Mr. Jefferson about a position at the University of Virginia. But for the intervention of sickness he might have joined Dunglison on the faculty there. It appears he at first went to Petersburg on the invitation of his friend Dr. Robertson to lecture on chemistry. On his way through Richmond one of those fevers about which Bartlett wrote, and which were so common at the time, laid him low. He never reached Charlottesville. On his recovery, his new made friends had no difficulty in persuading him that after all the capi-

tal of Virginia offered splendid opportunities for a young man of his training in medicine. Richmond was then a city of only 6,000 whites but was enjoying the peace and prosperity that followed the Revolution. Soon after Cullen's arrival came Lafayette on a rainy October day, and not long after this the great Constitutional



From the original silhouette of John Cullen, in possession of Dr. Joseph L. Miller.

Convention was held on Academy square near the site of the present old Medical College building—a building for which Cullen himself was to be largely responsible. The two famous parsons, Blair and Buchanan, died soon after his arrival.

The young Irishman, now twenty-three or four, was a fine specimen of manhood, standing six feet, with a full red face, blue eyes and dark brown hair. He dressed superbly in the style of the times—high hat, long tail frock, velvet vest, silk scarf, and dark pants. In the early days of his practice he went on horseback. In later years he was to be seen, often with his two boys, riding in a closed carriage behind two fine roans.

He rapidly acquired a large practice in Richmond. His business methods were in advance of his time. He employed a full time male secretary. He built a large house on the corner of Ross and Governor streets, overlooking the Capitol Square, with commodious offices on the first floor. This house later became the original St. Luke's hospital. It has since been

razed and the Richmond Press stands on the site.

In 1838 Dr. Cullen was one of the group of five who planned and organized in Richmond its first medical school as the Medical Department of Hampden-Sidney College. He occupied and ornamented the chair of the Practice of Medicine until his death. He shared in the struggles of the young institution against poverty and political opposition. The school grew and moved into a fine new structure in Academy Square in 1845. He was active in the fight of 1854 which involved the whole state and which ultimately gave his institution a new and independent charter. He was a founder of the Medical College of Virginia and the distinguished first professor of medicine.



From a portrait of John Cullen, in possession of Dr. Leigh, of Danville, Va.

Dr. Cullen enjoyed the reputation of being an orator. His teaching was primarily from the rostrum, though he met and instructed students at the bedside in the college infirmary which was often crowded with typhoid fever. He held his listeners by his fluent and rich Irish brogue, punctuated with a rare admix-

ture of wit and satire. The gold snuff box was always in evidence and the lecture was never underway until he had gracefully taken snuff before the class. Dr. Cullen's contributions to medical literature must have been few, if any. Search through the current journals of the time failed to disclose his name. There are several bound manuscripts in the library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia which were recently a gift from the descendants of Dr. Cullen. They were given to this library because Dr. Cullen got his medical education in Philadelphia, and were thought by the donors to be his lecture notes. However, they bear the name of William Cullen, and are now considered by the librarian of the College of Physicians to be notes taken from the lectures of the great Edinburgh physician. But there is no record of John Cullen having studied in Edinburgh.

Among the interesting things the late Dr. Charles Shields relates in a paper about Dr.



John Cullen's Tomb, Hollywood Cemetery.

Cullen, under whom he studied, are the details of his treatment of certain common diseases. They reveal in a charming, sometimes shock-

ing, way the therapeutics of the last century. He was described as a bold therapist, when the lancet was part of the armamentarium of every physician and Rush had so popularized the use of calomel as to call it the Sampson of Medicine. Shields recalls a case of tetanus cured by Dr. Cullen's lancet. Acute pleurisy he first bled—bled as did others until syncope intervened. Four grains of opium were then administered and, if pain was a prominent feature, a blister was applied. For mumps he gave a large dose of calomel, followed by a Seidlitz powder every four hours. If severe purging then became alarming, four grains of opium turned the scales in the other direction. His treatment of delirium tremens appears to have been heroic and was as follows: Calomel Gr. xx, Ext. Colocynth Comp. Gr. x, and Croton oil mxii, followed by a saline purge, and then opium, if the patient did not sleep, obeying the popular dictum "that the patient must sleep or he will die".

After thirty years of incessant work and practice, Cullen became ill. He sought advice in Philadelphia. His disease was pronounced softening of the brain. He demanded to be bled, but his favorite knife could not stem the course of his malady. He died in the 52nd year of his life. He was a genial, gentle and approachable man.

In Hollywood Cemetery, amid the ivy, oaks and magnolias, on a high eminence, stands a tall granite shaft with this simple inscription:

JOHN CULLEN, M. D.
BORN IN THE CITY OF DUBLIN,
IRELAND,
FEBRUARY 1, 1797.
DIED DECEMBER 25, 1849.

NON-SPECIFIC PULMONARY INFECTIONS WITH CHRONIC SINUSITIS AS AN ETIOLOGICAL FACTOR.*

By GRANT PRESTON, M. D., Harrisonburg, Va.

From a review of the literature, it seems that prior to 1918 little attention was given to the study of non-specific lung infections. Whether this seeming indifference on the part of the profession to an important malady was due to failure of our methods of diagnosis or to a dearth of material, I do not know. It is generally believed that there has been a great increase in diseases of the upper respiratory

*Read at the eighth annual meeting of the Virginia Society of Oto-Laryngology and Ophthalmology in Charlottesville, Va. April 30, 1927.