

OSLER'S
"A WAY OF LIFE"
&
OTHER ADDRESSES,
WITH
COMMENTARY
&
ANNOTATIONS

Sir William Osler

Shigeaki Hinohara, M.D., and Hisae Niki, M.A.

With a foreword by John P. McGovern, M.D.

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TO
THE LATE DR. WARNER F. BOWERS,
THE LATE DR. GRANT TAYLOR,
AND
DR. JOHN P. MCGOVERN

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FOREWORD

MORE THAN A century and a half after his birth and eighty years after his death, Sir William Osler (1849–1919) continues to be an icon for the medical profession. He followed a career of accelerating excellence, after his graduation from McGill University, first in Canada, then in the United States, and finally in Great Britain. In particular, at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore his medical expertise made him a leader of the profession and the most sought-after consultant in North America. He and his colleagues there perfected methods of medical education that continue to be the working model more than a century later. Dr. Hinohara's brief chronology of Osler's career succinctly epitomizes his remarkable life. Osler's influence spread rapidly through his many writings, innovative teaching, and way of life. His medical text, *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* (first edition, 1892), became the standard for the English-speaking world and, through translations, far beyond. It was this first edition that inspired the creation of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. But today it is his nonscientific books and articles that continue to be read, enjoyed, and oftentimes to inspire: his message is the practical art of living. One of his cardinal messages is the primacy of being humane, in one's life and one's patient-centered medical practice. The practical, everyday utility of his insight and example reaches beyond the practice of medicine and holds value for all who investigate his words. And it is Osler's essays that this book celebrates. It does so by presenting them anew to the reading public. But much more than that, it also clarifies the numerous literary allusions and metaphors that, a century and more after they were written, may be unclear to a public that is less at home with the classics of all ages than was the case then.

Although this collection of Osler's essays, with comments and annotations, is timeless, its publication could hardly be more timely. Finding one's way in the world of medicine today is a daunting challenge for health care providers as well as the recipients of their care. The profession of medicine presently is under severe pressure of a nature rarely if ever before witnessed, while the image of the physician is increasingly called into question. In addition to rapid technological growth and the massive accumulation of scientific data that physicians must understand, assimilate, and use on an ongoing basis, other profound forces have been shaping medicine and surgery at an accelerating rate during the past twenty years. Among the shifting influences on the contemporary practice of medicine are the recent healthcare reform programs, which greatly influence rationing of professional time; those caregivers whose time is excessively restricted may well lose altogether the interlude necessary to develop the trust that in turn empowers patients to enter into their own healing process.

There always has been societal pressure on the practice of medicine. Today, medical services are more in demand than ever before, at a time that people are less happy with the medical profession. This is true despite the fact that modern medicine empowers its practitioners to offer their patients more than ever before in the way of prevention, treatment, and cures to avoid or alter the course of disease. They have at their disposal precise technologies for diagnosis and for monitoring treatment, and exponentially more effective drugs than in Osler's day, and physicians are much better equipped than their forebears to relieve the agonies of constant pain and physical handicap. Nevertheless, doctors today are less trusted and respected than in years past. Could it be that in spite of the modern medical armamentarium an essential ingredient in medical care has been attenuated or neglected, and if so, what would it be?

There is today much debate as to whether the practice of medicine is a science, an art, a trade, a business, a profession, or some combination thereof. Here is what Osler stated in "The Master-Word in Medicine": "The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head." At the time of that quote (1903) there was precious little science, and the technology of medicine has advanced to a degree beyond imagination in his day. Today, one could speculate that Osler might say: "The practice of medicine is an art *based on science*; a *profession not a trade*; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart must always be exercised along with your head." As technology and science advanced, Osler clearly would still have realized that a physician would always not be treating just a disease, but rather a *unique, living, feeling human being* with disease. The "heart" then signified compassion, empathy, and deep caring,

as it still does. That is the essential ingredient that seems to many patients to be neglected today. Far too often I hear such remarks as: “He/she doesn’t seem to really listen to me; to answer my questions; to explain anything; always appears to be in a hurry; I just feel that they don’t really care—I’m just a number.”

An inordinate overemphasis on science can easily tip the balance away from the art, the caring and compassionate side of medicine. Thus, between the science and the art, the rapid changes in healthcare delivery systems are challenging medical schools throughout the country to find and teach the relevance of that balance. Osler’s cogent observations and insight reflected in these essays give much timeless good guidance toward the resolution of this imbalance.

Osler insisted that for physicians to be properly educated to practice their art, knowledge of the science of medicine (limited as it was) must be supplemented by familiarity with the humanities. He believed firmly that the humanities were the leaven in the dough of caring, compassion, and empathy. “Twin berries on one stem, grievous damage has been done to both in regarding the Humanities and Science in any other light than complementary” (“The Old Humanities and the New Science”). His own command of the humanities shines through in these essays, and lights the way not only toward the practice of “head and heart” medicine, but a way of life for anyone.

What a burden a physician takes on: to be knowledgeable and up to date in medical science, versed in the humanities, and caring at every level of the struggle of the patient. This calls for one additional necessary attribute of a physician, a philosophy of life that enables him to carry and manage that burden, one that is clearly laid out in the first Osler essay, “A Way of Life.” In it he said that he owed much of his success to a simple habit, cultivated early in his life—one of “living in day-tight compartments.” He emphasized the wisdom of not dwelling morbidly on the mistakes and cares of yesterday or of anticipating with anxiety and fear what tomorrow might bring. Instead he urged that all of one’s resources be brought to bear on today, because “the load of tomorrow, added to that of yesterday, carried today makes the strongest falter.” Such an approach is also appropriate for the anxious patient or one in great pain. Pain is easier to bear if it is seen as just for today.

Even with the rapidly changing medical delivery system and the dominance of technological and scientific discoveries that occur at an accelerating pace, Osler’s ethics, principles, and practices portrayed herein, in concert with increasing efforts in our medical and nursing schools, could help transform and energize academic teaching and the delivery of quality care. Practicing physicians and nurses, as well as paramedics, physical therapists, and other invaluable

members of the healthcare team must all persevere as compassionate scientific healers.

Though there have been several other collations of Osler's addresses, no other exists with cogent comments before each essay, nor especially with comprehensive annotations, making each essay much more lucid for modern readers. We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to co-editor Professor Hisae Niki, for her expertise and devoted and persevering work for more than twenty years in making this book possible.

In a more personal vein, from my own lifetime experience as a teacher, clinician, and Oslerian, I am convinced that these annotations add clarity to the many metaphorical expressions, citations, and allusions, and thus an increased insight into these important Osler essays—thereby providing an invaluable resource not readily available prior to this publication. My great regret is that these outstanding annotations were unavailable to me many years earlier as they will be a tremendous asset for the serious reader. I strongly believe that all who thoughtfully read and digest the messages of the life and calling in this book will find enhanced satisfaction—even joy—in their demanding work. An understanding of Osler's patient-centered approach will especially help the healthcare provider participate in finding solutions to the pressing problems in our current healthcare delivery systems and to be better able to practice “head and heart” service to the ill who come to them in need; and who, in turn, will be much more satisfied with their care.

It is important not to forget that the messages of Osler are truly messages of life with practical insight about daily living and human potential that reach beyond the healthcare professional to all whom venture to turn these pages. No matter what one's occupation or calling, we all share in common a continual need to sharpen our skills at daily living. A gifted physician and teacher, Osler never ceased in his own quest for self-improvement as both a physician and a citizen. To that end, these essays represent a real treasure that extends the reach of his essays from the archives of medical history to our contemporary world of the new millennia.

About the Editor

Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara is an indefatigable, peripatetic international medical ambassador and renowned Oslerian. As an internist and educator, Dr. Hinohara has devoted more than sixty years to medicine and medical science, in his home country of Japan and internationally. He has developed and maintained a life-

long affiliation with St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo, where he is currently the chairman of its board. In addition, he also serves as the chairman of the board of St. Luke's College of Nursing and maintains a number of consultative positions in medical schools in Japan.

Dr. Hinohara received his M.D. degree from Kyoto University Medical School in 1938. There he also was awarded a Ph.D. for his study on atrial heart sounds, detected through the esophagus by a tiny microphone that he devised. Later, he undertook advanced studies in general internal medicine and residency training programs under Professor Paul Beeson at the Emory University School of Medicine.

Dr. Hinohara's affiliation with St. Luke's International Hospital dates back to 1941, when he joined the medical staff in the Department of Internal Medicine. In 1951, he became Chief Physician of that department, a position he held for a quarter century. During this period in his career, his principal medical interests were in the fields of cardiology, psychosomatic medicine, water and electrolyte metabolism, and preventive medicine.

From 1971 to 1989, Hinohara served on a number of governmental committees established by the Japanese Ministries of Education and Health and Welfare. His responsibilities included serving as chairman of the Council on Graduate Medical Education and chairman of the Council of Accreditation of Specialties Board.

Dr. Hinohara is a member of a number of Japanese medical organizations, including the Society of Medical Education and the Medical Society of Primary Care. Internationally, his memberships include fellowship in the American College of Cardiology and honorary fellowship in the American College of Physicians. He is past president of the International Society of Internal Medicine and the International Health Evaluation Association. Lately, his writings have focused on aging and hospice care and on alternative approaches in healing such as music therapy.

Among the plethora of awards that Dr. Hinohara has received over his extensive career are the Japanese Medical Association Supreme Award for Scientific Achievement (1982), the Japan-United States Visiting Medical Scientist, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia (1985), and the Japanese-American Award of Merit, from the Foundation of Thanatology, Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, USA (1992). In 1993 he received the Order of the Secret Treasure, Gold and Silver Star from the Japanese Emperor Akihito. In 1998 he was elected as one of two honorary citizens of Tokyo Metropolitan and also in that year received a Doctor of Humane Letters at the 174th Commencement from Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University. On November 3, 1999,

the Memorial Day of Culture in Japan, Dr. Hinohara was named by Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture a Person of Cultural Merit, the only physician so honored.

Dr. Hinohara is known as a great Oslerian who has spread Osler's principles and ideals throughout the world. He has conducted extensive studies and published articles and books about the life and works of Sir William Osler. He founded the Japan Osler Society in 1983 and still serves as its President; he was elected an honorary member of both the American Osler Society (1983), and the Osler Club of London (1984). Significant articles published in English relative to his Oslerian interests include "Osler's Peregrinations in Asia—A Report on an Unusual Event," *American Diseases of Children*, vol. 24, September, 1972, "Osler in Japan," *Osler Library Newsletter*, no. 45, February 1984, and "Sir William Osler's Philosophy on Death," *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 118:8, 13 April, 1993.

John P. McGovern, M.D.

PREFACE

WILLIAM OSLER (1849–1919) dedicated his life to practice, education, research, and social concerns in medicine. He was active in Canada, the United States, and Britain during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. This book is a collection of some of his nonclinical lectures, with added commentaries and bibliographical annotations that clarify the citations and metaphorical expressions he used.

Osler wrote 1,158 medical publications, and 182 literary papers and essays in his lifetime, of which we have chosen twenty. In 1905 he published a collection of his essays entitled *Aequanimitas with Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine*.

“Aequanimitas,” the first essay in the volume, is the farewell lecture he gave when he resigned his position of Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. In it he emphasized that “aequanimitas” (serenity) of the mind is the most important quality for a physician, no matter what crises he might face. Subsequently, Osler gave twenty-two nonclinical addresses up to 1905, as Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. They were addressed to medical students, nurses, medical practitioners and teachers at various medical schools, medical associations, nursing schools, and medical-science institutions.

In 1941, I started working as a hospital physician at St. Luke’s International Hospital, Tokyo, Japan. Immediately after World War II, in August 1945, St. Luke’s was requisitioned by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces as one of their army general hospitals. As I stood witnessing the hand-over ceremony, the head of this army general hospital, Dr. Warner Bowers, gave me a copy of *Aequanimitas with Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses, and Prac-*

titioners of Medicine. Ever since, the book has been my “comes viae vitaeque,” companion on the journey. Dr. Bowers himself admired Osler; I was told that the book was given to him by Eli Lilly and Company when he graduated from medical school, and even during the war he read it on the hospital ship.

With deepest appreciation I read this gift from Dr. Bowers. I then resolved, although the text was rather difficult, that one day I would translate it into Japanese for Japanese medical students. My plan was to select sixteen lectures out of the twenty-two, which are still applicable to contemporary medical personnel, and add four splendid lectures, ones that Osler gave after he moved to Britain in 1905 to become Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University. Those four are: “Sir Thomas Browne,” given in 1905 at Guy’s Hospital in London, which introduces this man, whom Osler greatly admired; “Man’s Redemption of Man,” a lay sermon delivered at a Sunday service for the students of the University of Edinburgh in 1910; “A Way of Life,” to the Yale students given in 1913 the day before he delivered the annual Silliman Lectures at Yale University; and “The Old Humanities and the New Science,” his Presidential Address delivered before the Classical Association at Oxford, May 1919, the year of Osler’s death.

In November 1980, Professor Hisae Niki of Meikai University (who was then a professor at St. Luke’s College of Nursing and a Shakespearean scholar) and I started translating the lectures into Japanese. By 1983, we had added over 800 annotations to the text, and published it through the medical publisher Igaku-Shoin Ltd. The book was widely read by the Japanese general public, not only by Japanese medical students, physicians, nursing staff, and other medical personnel. At the end of March 2001 more than 27,000 copies had been sold. In his lectures relating to medicine, Osler referred frequently to the literary and philosophical passages of ancient and contemporary authors, philosophers, and educators. But he lived in an age when people wrote allusively, making extensive references to literature and the Bible without citing chapter and verse, because all readers, sharing a common classical education, were expected to recognize the sources. Graceful allusion to those texts was the mark of a learned and distinguished writer. But Japanese readers are generally outside that common education of the English-speaking world, and thus our detailed commentaries and annotations must have enhanced the comprehension of the original difficult lectures for Japanese readers. That might be why more than twenty-seven thousand copies of the Japanese translation were sold.

Then the idea came to us that we might publish the original lectures with our commentaries and annotations in English. Such a book would help contemporary medical students and medical personnel in the English-speaking world to better understand Osler’s thoughts and spirit, for no longer was the “classical” education the prevalent academic curriculum as in Osler’s day.

For this purpose, Professor Niki visited many libraries in the United States, Canada, and Britain to work further on the annotations. After more than twenty years, with assistance from Professor Niki's friends such as Jane Kuwana of the United States and other scholars in the United States, Canada, and Britain, we completed the project.

Finally, I wish to express my warm and sincere gratitude to my friend and colleague Dr. John P. McGovern, founder of the American Osler Society, for his great efforts in helping structure and edit parts of this book, writing its foreword and in helping guide it to publication. I would also like to voice appreciation to Mr. Yuu Kanahara, president of Igaku-Shoin Ltd, for his expert technical help and support.

Shigeaki Hinohara, M.D.

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PREFACE

TO THE READER

THE PRESENT TEXT is a collection of Osler's addresses aimed at sharing the importance and relevance of his ideas to modern times, in particular those writings that deal with ethics in the medical profession. The essays were originally published in *The Collected Essays of Sir William Osler*, ed. by John P. McGovern and Charles G. Roland (Birmingham: The Classics of Medicine Library, 1985); *Aequanimitas: With other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine*, 3d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961); *Selected Writings of Sir William Osler* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), and *Man's Redemption of Man* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., 1913). The date when each address was originally delivered or printed is stated at the beginning of the chapter.

Osler's writings abound in references, the range of which is very extensive, to all literature from the classics down to the works of his contemporaries. The notes not only give definitions of words that may be unfamiliar to medical students and the general public but also clarify references—classical, historical, literary, theological, and medical (especially the names of Osler's contemporaries). Some explanatory notes have also been added to help elucidate the text. Obviously, medical schools have greatly changed, and Osler would certainly be waging different campaigns now; this book is not meant to propound his arguments for more laboratories nor his very Victorian views of women. However, we have decided to leave these issues intact for their historical interest and hope that the reader will focus on those things that do not change. Examples of these are the physician's need for perspective and equanimity; the relationship among physicians and between physician and patient; and the complementary but still understressed roles of the humanities and the sciences. Although his writings are

primarily directed to medical students, we hope they will give enjoyment and inspiration to many others, including physicians, nurses, librarians, and laypeople, and that they will add richness to each reader's life.

Since this project has occupied me for over twenty years, my indebtedness to colleagues and other scholars is correspondingly extensive. Directly and indirectly I am indebted to the work of many preceding editors and scholars. I also owe much to the staff of several libraries: especially, the Osler Library (McGill University), the Bodleian Library (Oxford University), the Library of the University of Illinois, the Library of Johns Hopkins University, the Library of Iowa State University, the Library of the University of Toronto, and many other institutions. My thanks are especially due to Dr. Faith Wallis and Mrs. June Schachter, Osler Library, for having facilitated my work.

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TO THE
READER

I am most grateful and deeply indebted to Jane Kuwana for preparing the introductory notes before each address. In the preparation of the manuscript and in proofreading, I had the assistance of Sylvia Garfield, Alicia Andre, Megumi Kishino, and Kiyoshi Nanao (Igaku-Shoin Ltd.), to all of whom I express my sincere thanks.

Dr. Miriam Skey, on the staff of the Records of Early English Drama at the University of Toronto, was very encouraging and helpful in looking over some of my chapters. Also, I owe special gratitude to Dr. William Cooke, now an independent scholar in Toronto, for his editorial assistance, in reading all the chapters in manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

Last of all, I would like to thank Dr. Hinohara and Dr. McGovern. This book would never have been conceived nor brought to publication without their steadfast guidance and support of my efforts.

Hisae Niki, M.A.