

The Oslerian

A Message from the President

Osler and Epictetus (c. 50-130 C.E.)

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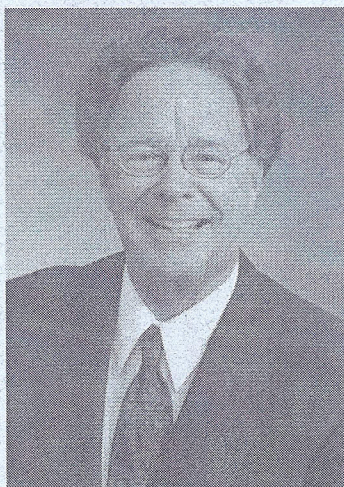
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Call for abstracts for 2005 annual meeting, Pasadena, California, 10-13 April



Chester R. Burns

Greetings, Fellow Oslerians

Osler's bedside library for medical students included writings by Epictetus who was approximately five years younger than Plutarch. Epictetus was born to a slave woman in Hierapolis in Phrygia (Asia Minor). As a boy, he was a slave to Epaphroditus, a freedman in the court of Nero in Rome. As a boy, he attended the lectures of the Stoic philosopher, Musonius Rufus. Permanently injured by his master, Epictetus walked with a lame leg for the rest of his life. Freed with the death of Nero in 68 C.E., he became a teacher of philosophy in Rome. Sometime between 89 and 93 C.E., Domitian expelled Epictetus and fellow philosophers because their teachings were too compatible with Christian beliefs and practices that undermined the emperor's tyrannical policies. Epictetus moved to the city of Nicopolis in Epirus (northern Greece), founded a school for teaching Stoicism, and lived the remainder of his long life as an impoverished teacher of philosophy.

Epictetus himself wrote

nothing, but his pupils took extensive notes when listening to his lectures. Flavius Arrianus, later consul under Hadrian, published eight books of *Discourses* by Epictetus; four have survived. Arrian also prepared a digest of the main ideas of Epictetus and published those as the *Encheiridion* or *Manual* or *Fragments*. On 29 June 2004, a search of Epictetus in Amazon.com gave 17 results that included an edition of both *Discourses* and *Manual* in the Loeb Classical Library.

In his collection of quotations from the authors in Osler's bedside library titled *Saints of Humanity*, Charles Bryan selected 49 quotations from the writings of Epictetus. Consider five. From *Fragments*: "Examine yourself, whether you had rather be rich or happy. And if rich, be assured that this is neither a good, nor altogether in your power; but if happy, that this is both a good, and in your power; since the one is a temporary loan of Fortune, and the other depends on will." (*Saints*, 28). "If you would be well spoken of, learn to speak well of

others." (*Saints*, 35). From *Discourses*: "To make the best of what is in our power, and take the rest as it occurs." (*Saints*, 10). "The school of a philosopher is surgery." (*Saints*, 64). "The chief concern of a wise and good man is his own reason." (*Saints*, 68). Other quotes by Epictetus are found in *Saints* on pages 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25, 30, 32, 34, 37, 42, 45, 46, 51, 53, 58, 60, 62, 67, 72, 74, 77, 78, 80, 82, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 100, 101, 103, 106, 108, 110, and 114. Examining these quotes provides some insight into the reasons for Osler's interest in Epictetus.

The emphasis on will in the first quote of the previous paragraph was a dominant belief for Epictetus. An individual is not fully responsible for the events and ideas that happen in his life, but an individual is fully responsible for choices made in dealing with these events and ideas. These values of personal autonomy and integrity were central to the philosophy of Epictetus, who emulated the conversational and dialogical style of Socrates. Because of their

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Osler and Epictetus (continued)

rationality, all humans are children of God as well as citizens of a commonwealth. To survive and thrive as an individual, each human must contribute to the common good, to the welfare of the commonwealth in which he lives. Humility and charity were also emphasized by Epictetus.

These glimpses allow us to discern some of the reasons for Osler's interest in Epictetus. A more thorough analysis of the latter's writings would enable us to have a richer appreciation

of Osler's interest in this very influential Greek philosopher. Would Osler, for example, have agreed with the following two statements by Epictetus? "Whatever rules you have adopted, abide by them as laws, and if you would be impious to transgress them; and do not regard what any one says of you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours" (*Saints*, 8). "Some things are good, some evil, some indifferent. Now the good are the virtues, and what-

ever partakes of them; and the evil are the vices, and whatever partakes of vice; the indifferent lie between these, as riches, health, life, death, pleasure, pain." (*Saints*, 18). Would Osler agree that rules are to be regarded as laws? Would Osler have considered health as "indifferent?" These are just a few of the questions that could be considered by someone making a more thorough study of Osler and Epictetus.

According to Clyde Partin's list of papers presented during previous annual meetings, no one has given a paper on Osler and

Epictetus. I hope that a reader of this column will become interested in preparing such a paper for presentation during a future meeting. For help in studying Epictetus, consult a new book by A.A. Long entitled *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002). Long is Professor of Classics at the University of California at Berkeley.

Chester R. Burns
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A Note on Osler's philosophy

There have been to my knowledge two in depth studies of Osler's philosophy, one by Ludwig Edelstein (*Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1946; 20: 270-293), the other by William Deprez Inlow (*Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1964; 38: 199-225), both of which emphasize mainly Osler's pragmatism, which was influenced by his contemporary William James. Chester Burns's presidential message on "Osler and Epictetus" (above) underscores what I consider to be an equally important take on Osler's philosophy, namely the influence of Stoicism. Osler was no doubt familiar with the first paragraph of Epictetus's *The Enchiridion*, or *Manual*, a classic statement of Stoic thought:

Of things some are in our power, and others are not. In our power are opinion, movements towards a thing, desire, aversion; and in a word, whatever are our own acts: not in our power are the body, property, reputation, offices (magisterial power), and in a word, whatever

are not our own acts. And the things in our power are by nature free, not subject to restraint nor hindrance: but the things not in our power are weak, slavish, subject to restraint, in the power of others. Remember then that if you think the things which are by nature slavish to be free, and the things which are in the power of others to be your own, you will be hindered, you will lament, you will be disturbed, you will blame both gods and men: but if you think that only which is your own to be your own, and if you think that what is another's, as it really is, belongs to another, no man will ever compel you, no man will hinder you, you will never blame any man, you will accuse no man, you will do nothing involuntarily (against your will), no man will harm you, you will have no enemy, for you will not suffer any harm.

In short, *Aequanimitas*!

—CSB

Oslerian Progress Notes

Herbert L. Fred has received the Distinguished Teacher Award from the American College of Physicians, of which he also became a Master during the annual session in New Orleans.

The Persisting Osler III (edited by Jeremiah A. Barondess and Charles G. Roland; Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company; 2002) received a favorable review by S. Ryan Gregory in the *Journal of the History of Medicine* (2004; 59: 156-157), which reads in part: "Having read this volume and having attended a meeting of the American Osler Society in the past year, I might rephrase my original question and ask 'why have physicians dedicated so much effort to the study of William Osler and why should anyone else pay attention? Physicians have a particular reverence for the history of their profession and its leaders that is now rather uncommon among modern professionals. . . . By nature, this process rarely involves negative role-modeling and thus seldom reveals the seedy side of medicine. Yet these proceedings give evidence of deeper motivations. . . . They seek often to enrich the context in which Osler's life and influence may be understood. Historians and other scholars of

medicine might learn much about physicians' use of history—and about the uses of history more generally—from the essays in this latest collection."

Lawrence D. Longo has had published *Our Lords, the Sick: McGovern Lectures in the History of Medicine and Medical Humanism* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2004). Copies have now been sent to AOS members, courtesy of a generous subvention from Dr. John P. McGovern. Philip M. Teigen of the National Library of Medicine, in the forward, argues that studying the history of medicine has three purposes: (1) a social good, for recognizing and promoting various values; (2) a political good, contributing "to the larger political effort to prevent medical calamity," and (3) an intellectual good, explaining "why things are the way they are." He suggests that the American Osler Society promotes chiefly the first good; that the Sigerist Circle promotes the second; and that the American Association for the History of Medicine promotes the third.

Minutes, AOS Board of Governors Meeting, 18 April 2004

1. The meeting was called to order by president Marvin J. Stone at 7:35 p.m. in the Presidential Suite of the Warwick Hotel, Houston, Texas. Present were: Marvin J. Stone, Chester R. Burns, Claus A. Pierach, Charles S. Bryan, Joseph W. Lella, John Noble, P. Preston Reynolds, Neil McIntyre, Daniel D. Morgan, Clyde Partin, Jr., Mark E. Silverman, Charles A. Ambrose, T. Jock Murray, Herbert M. Swick, and John C. Carson. The following members were absent: Charles G. Roland, Jacalyn Duffin, and Clifton R. Cleaveland. There were no additional agenda items.
 2. A moment of silence was observed to commemorate members who died during the previous year: David M. Mumford, Alex Sakula, and Frederick B. Wagner.
 3. The minutes of the 2003 Board of Governors meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, were approved as written and distributed.
 4. Dr. Bryan gave the secretary-treasurer's report.
 - Year-end financial information, previously distributed to the Board of Governors and published in *The Oslerian*, was briefly reviewed.
 - Membership currently stands as follows: 96 active members, 3 associate members, 52 emeritus members, 5 student members, and 2 inactive members, for a total of 159 members.
 - Expenditures made during 2003 from the Society's two checking accounts were reviewed, accompanied by a list of all checks written. Dr. Bryan reported that all checks with justifications and all bank statements had been given to the accountant and would be made available to members of the Board of Governors upon request.
 - Current account balances (prior to expenses for the 2004 annual meeting) were reported as follows: Bank of America checking account, \$70,866.28; Fidelity Investments investment account, \$439,045.83; Fidelity Investments money market account, \$37,029.36; total liquid assets, \$536,941.47.
 - Income and expenses for the annual meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, 21-24 May 2003, were reviewed. Total expenses were \$64,940.97. Difficulties encountered in receiving payments from Albert E. Yougel and Atlanta Company Travel, Inc., for income received from the meeting led to litigation for the balance due of \$9,503.22. Dr. Bryan indicated that the attorney retained by the Society for this purpose, Mr. Marc Hershovitz, settled the matter with the opposing attorney, whereupon Mr. Yougel and Atlanta Company Travel, Inc., paid the Society \$9,500.00. The net cost of the meeting to the Society was \$3,910.43, this expense being explained by the costs of the litigation.
 - Dr. Bryan reported that Clyde Partin, Jr., is now a second signatory for the Bank of America and Fidelity Investment accounts.
 - Dr. Bryan reported that the Society has re-registered as a 501(c)(3) organization in the State of Minnesota, with Claus A. Pierach as the Society's registered owner for this purpose.
 5. Committee reports:
 - The Society's inventory was reviewed.
 - Preliminary arrangements for the 2005 annual meeting in Birmingham, Alabama, were reviewed. The Board of Governors meeting would be on Sunday, 3 April 2005, and full-day meetings would be held Monday through Wednesday, 4-6 April 2005. The American Association for the History of Medicine has apparently reserved the meeting rooms at The Sheraton in Birmingham for Thursday, 7 April 2005.
 - Dr. Bryan reported that his term as Secretary-Treasurer would expire in 2006 and that, although the position has been most enjoyable, he did not currently intend to offer himself for a third term thereafter. This led to considerable discussion concerning the extensive duties now performed by the Secretary-Treasurer. Dr. Carson made a motion to provide the Secretary-Treasurer's position with adequate funds in such a way as to lighten the load of the office. It was also recommended that long-range planning be considered toward combining the American Osler Society's secretarial needs with those of other organizations, should this be considered to be in the Society's best interests.
- Duffin's absence. There were no applicants for the award this year. A motion was made, seconded, and approved that the stipend for the award would be increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Publicity for the award was reviewed. It was suggested that sending the information to the offices of medical school deans might result in some of the posters being discarded prematurely. The posters might be sent to Deans of Student Affairs instead. It was also suggested that medical schools be asked to disseminate information about the award through their e-mail distributions to their students.
- John P. McGovern Lectureship Committee: Dr. Bryan gave the report in Dr. Michael Bliss's absence. This year's recipient is William F. Bynum.
 - Nominating Committee: Dr. Mark E. Silverman offered the following slate of nominees: for second vice-president, T. Jock Murray; for three-year terms on the Board of Governors, Charles T. Ambrose, William O. McMillan, and Herbert M. Swick. A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to approve this state.
 - Finance Committee: Dr. Bryan gave the report in Dr. Paul G. Dymont's absence. It was recommended that the Society's investment

Minutes, AOS Board of Governors Meeting (continued)

- portfolio be made slightly more conservative.
- Membership Committee: Dr. Claus A. Pierach presented the committee's report. The following applicants, all of whom have attended meetings and presented papers, were approved for membership: Jack B. Alperin, John A. Kastor, Alan M. Mentor, Michael E. Moran, Charles Stewart Roberts, and Mark E. Weksler. In addition, William E. Jarrett was promoted from associate membership to full membership.
- Publications Committee: Dr. Clyde Partin, Jr., reviewed the proposal for a subvention from the Osler Library of the History of Medicine to publish a symposium commemorating the 150th anniversary of Osler's birth. All members of the committee carefully reviewed the proposal. There was little or no enthusiasm for publishing the symposium in its present form. A motion was made, seconded, and approved that the proposal should be rejected, but that the Osler Library of the History of Medicine should be invited to resubmit a revised proposal. It was suggested that the Osler Library should consider (1) appointing an editor to coordinate the proposal, (2) deciding on a unifying theme for the proposal, and (3) seeking a collection of papers that would support the common theme. It was reported as information that the publication of the collection of McGovern lectures by Krieger Publishing Company, edited by Lawrence D. Longo, was progressing on schedule.
- Program Committee: Dr. Burns reported that after some difficult decisions the program for the 2004 annual meeting was in place. Concern was expressed that allowing only 20 minutes for each paper might prove inadequate for development of themes and for discussion. Dr. Bryan raised again the possibility of experimenting with parallel sessions during at least one day of the meeting. There was no support for this suggestion.
- Local Arrangements Committee: Dr. Rakel summarized arrangements for the 2004 annual meeting. He acknowledged a \$5,000 contribution from the John P. McGovern Foundation and thanked Drs. Stephen B. Greenberg and Burns for their work on the committee.
- 6. Old Business.
- AOS Visiting Professorships: Dr. Burns reported that since only three members had volunteered to be AOS Visiting Professors, the concept had been tabled at least for the time being. Various members of the Board of Governors reaffirmed the potential importance of this concept especially as proposed during 2002-2003 by Dr. Lawrence D. Longo. By common consent it was decided that the concept of AOS Visiting Professorships would continue to be an agenda item.
- Mr. Robert Stone's videotape project: Dr. Stone reported on the status of the videotape project being developed by his son, Robert. Numerous AOS members have been interviewed, a script has been developed, and the film has been extensively edited. A short version of this film would be presented at the annual banquet on 19 April 2004. Attempts to market the film will begin in the foreseeable future.
- 7. New Business.
- Proposed Bylaws Change: Notice of a proposed Bylaws change whereby various committee appointments would be made by "the First Vice-President in consultation with the President" rather than by the president was reviewed. The rationale behind the proposal is that it is the incoming president (that is, the First Vice-President) who will work most closely with the new appointees. Dr. McIntyre suggested that recommendations for appointments should be made by the entire Board of Governors rather than by one or two individuals, especially because members of the Board would be naturally reluctant to put forth alternative candidates for these positions at an open session of the Board of Governors. Discussion followed to the effect that all members of the Society including members of the Board of Governors were eligible to suggest potential appointees, or to volunteer for such appointments, well prior to the meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to change the Bylaws as indicated above.
- Ad Hoc Committee on Professionalism: Dr. Swick presented an update on this committee's activities. During the past year, the committee members have shared a great deal of information and discussed various ideas. In addition, an open discussion among 18 members and guests took place for 1.5 hours on 18 April 2004, just prior to the Board of Governors meeting. At this point, there is no clear consensus regarding how to move forward. Possibilities include (1) making professionalism a project of the proposed AOS Visiting Professorship program; (2) conducting a joint seminar on professionalism with the American Association for the History of Medicine (AAHM) in April 2005; and (3) developing a book or monograph on this subject.
- Committee Appointments: Dr. Stone made the following recommendations, each of which was approved by the Board of Governors: Nominating Committee (membership of which is established by the Society's Bylaws): Drs. Carson (chair), Longo, and Stone (new appointment) (Dr. Silverman will rotate off this committee); Finance Committee: Drs. Dymont (chair), Perry Hookman, Dee J. Canale, Bruce Fye, and Charles F. Wooley (new appointment); William B. Bean

Minutes, AOS Board of Governors Meeting (continued)

Student Research Award Committee: Drs. Swick (chair), Richard J. Kahn, and Robert C. Kimbrough, III (Dr. Duffin will rotate off the committee); John P. McGovern Award Committee: Drs. John West (chair), Robert Martensen, John P. McGovern (ex-officio), and Paul D. Kligfield (new appointment) (Dr. Michael Bliss will rotate off the committee); Membership Committee: Drs. Murray (chair), Mor-

gan, and Pamela Miller (new appointment) (Dr. Reynolds will rotate off the committee); Program Committee: Drs. Pierach (chair), Lella, Philip W. Leon, Bryan (ex-officio), and Dennis K. Wentz (new appointment) (Dr. Burns will rotate off the committee); Publications Committee: Drs. Partin (chair), Neelon, Clark T. Savin, Lella, Charles G. Roland, and Leon (new appointment).

- Future meetings and dates:

Dr. Bryan reported that the 2005 annual meeting is scheduled for Birmingham, Alabama, in tandem with the AAHM annual meeting. Because the AAHM has already reserved most of the meeting space for Thursday, 7 April 2005, the AOS meeting is tentatively set for Sunday, 3 April (Board of Governors meeting) through Wednesday, 6 April. As indicated above, the pos-

sibility of a joint AOS-AAHM symposium on professionalism is being discussed for Thursday, 7 April 2005. The date and location for the 2006 annual meeting has not been set.

8. Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Stone at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles S. Bryan
Secretary-Treasurer

Minutes, AOS Annual Meeting, 21 April 2004

1. The meeting was called to order by president Marvin J. Stone at 7:24 a.m. in the lecture hall of the John P. McGovern Museum of Health and Medical Science, Houston, Texas.

2. Members stood for a moment of silence in memory of members who had died during the previous year: David M. Mumford, Alex Sakula, and Frederick B. Wagner, Jr.

3. The minutes of the 2003 Annual Meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, were approved as written and previously distributed.

4. The secretary-treasurer's report was given by Dr. Bryan, reference being made to the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.

5. Committee reports:

- William B. Bean Student Research Award Committee: Dr. Stone reported that there had been no applicants for the award. Several persons suggested that the announcements

(advertisements) should have a wider distribution, especially since medical school deans' offices are typically inundated with unsolicited mail resulting in matters such as this being frequently overlooked. It was moved, seconded, and approved that the stipend for the award be increased to \$1,500.

- John P. McGovern Lectureship Committee: Dr. Stone reported that this year's lecture had been William F. Bynum. It was moved, seconded, and approved that the stipend for the lectureship be increased to \$2,000.
- Nominating Committee: Dr. Mark E. Silverman gave the committee's report. The nominating committee recommended Dr. Jock T. Murray for second vice-president. There being no additional nominations, Dr. Murray was elected by

acclamation. The committee recommended Drs. Charles T. Ambrose, William O. McMillan, and Herbert M. Swick for three-year terms on the Board of Governors. There being no additional nominations, Drs. Ambrose, McMillan, and Swick were elected by acclamation.

- Finance Committee: Dr. Bryan summarized Dr. Paul G. Dymont's recommendations, reference being made to the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.
- Membership Committee: Dr. Claus A. Pierach gave the report, reference being made to the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.
- Publications Committee: Dr. Clyde Partin,

Jr., gave the report, reference being made to the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.

- Program Committee: Dr. Chester R. Burns gave the report, reference being made to the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.
 - Ad Hoc Committee on Professionalism: Dr. Herbert M. Swick gave the report, reference being made to the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.
6. New Business:
 - Mr. Robert Stone's videotape project: Numerous members expressed their enthusiasm for the videotape as presented at the annual banquet of the Society. Dr. John C. Carson spoke at length about the desirability of the Society supporting this project financially if

Minutes, AOS Annual Meeting (continued)

necessary. A motion was made, seconded, and approved by acclamation that the Society support Mr. Stone's videotape project for this purpose. An Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by John Carson, will be appointed for the purpose of reviewing the need for such support as the project evolves.

- Committee appoint-

ments for 2004/2005: Drs. Burns and Stone gave the report, reference being made to the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.

- Future meetings and dates: Dr. Stone made these announcements, reference being made to the minute of the Board of Governors meeting of 18 April 2004.
7. Dr. Stone expressed his

gratitude to this year's McGovern lecturer, Dr. William F. Bynum.

8. Dr. Stone introduced new members and presented certificates.
9. Dr. Stone introduced Dr. Chester R. Burns as the new president of the American Osler Society and presented him with the symbol of office, the latchkey.
10. Dr. Burns expressed, on behalf of the Society,

his appreciation of Dr. Stone and presented him with a plaque in commemoration of his service as president.

11. The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Burns at 8:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles S. Bryan

In Memoriam

Frederick B. Wagner, Jr. (1916-2004)

Frederick B. Wagner, Jr., surgeon, historian, and luminary of Jefferson Medical College and of Thomas Jefferson University, died 17 January 2004 in Waverly Heights Medical Center, Gladwyne, Pennsylvania. He was for many years a faithful participant in the annual meetings of the American Osler Society, and his writings included *The Twilight Years of Lady Osler: Letters of a Doctor's Wife* (Canton, Massachusetts: Science History Publications, 1985).

Dr. Wagner was born in Philadelphia and spent most of his life in that city. He received a City Scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania, from which he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude. He then won the Francis W. Shain Scholarship to attend Jefferson Medical College, where he was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha and received the Alumni Medal for the highest academic average. He did his surgical training at Jefferson and stayed on to teach generations of medical students and surgical

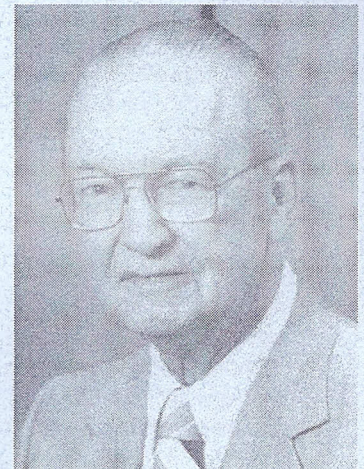
residents, becoming Clinical Professor in 1955. He served as Acting Chairman of the Department of Surgery in 1977, and the next year became the Grace Revere Osler Professor of Surgery. A portrait was presented to the University by colleagues and friends in 1978. He received the Samuel D. Gross Distinguished Service Award from Jefferson's Department of Surgery, and he led a campaign to ensure that Thomas Eakins's famous painting, *The Gross Clinic*, would remain at Jefferson. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Jefferson Hospital, president of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery, and president of the Meigs Medical Association, one of the oldest medical societies in the world that still hold meetings.

After retiring from the active practice of surgery in 1984, Dr. Wagner became the first official University Historian at Thomas Jefferson University. In that capacity he wrote a trilogy of that institution's history: *Tradition and Heritage* (1989), *A Chronological History and Alumni Directory* (1992), and *Legend*

and *Lore* (1995). These volumes provide a chronicle not only of the first private medical school in the United States but also of an historic hospital. His bibliography also includes 16 articles related to the history of medicine. Dr. Wagner had a lifelong interest in languages and music, and was an accomplished pianist and organist.

As an Oslerian, Dr. Wagner will no doubt be best remembered for assembling Grace Revere Osler's letters as *The Twilight Years of Lady Osler*. This chapter in her life, poignantly retold by Michael Bliss in *William Osler: A Life in Medicine*, includes her difficult relationship with W. W. Francis and her fond relationship with T. Archibald (Archie) Malloch. George T. Harrell, in his foreword to Dr. Wagner's volume, wrote:

Her life was marked by repeated tragedies, the deaths of two husbands, a stillbirth sired by the first and the loss of two boys fathered by the second. The death in action during World War I of the surviving boy, Revere, was a particularly bitter blow . . .



Frederick B. Wagner, Jr.,
author of *The Twilight Years of Lady Osler*

Archie Malloch replaced Revere in Lady Osler's eyes. He was an excellent choice. He was imperturbable, could accept her tirades about Bill Francis, and took no sides. . . . The letters tell of increasing loneliness in her older years. . . . The accurate, detailed researching, the sensitive selection and editing of the letters by Dr. Wagner make this trying period of a wonderful lady come alive.

Dr. Wagner concluded his volume by observing that "the Grace Revere Osler Professorship is an honorary title . . . [that] honors the spirit of Lady Osler herself."

—Steven J. Peitzman and
CSB

In Memoriam

Palmer Howard Futcher (1910-2004)

Palmer Howard Futcher, who was the grandson of R. Palmer Howard (Osler's mentor in Montreal, who encouraged Osler toward a career in internal medicine) and who was also the godson of William Osler, died in Cockeysville, Maryland, on 30 January 2004 of complications of pneumonia.

Dr. Futcher was born in Baltimore in 1910 and received his M.D. degree from Johns Hopkins in 1936. After serving in World War II, he returned to Johns Hopkins as a faculty member from 1948 to 1966, his positions including director of the outpatient service and assistant dean of the School of Medicine. In 1967 he moved to Philadelphia to become executive director of the American Board of Internal Medicine as well as a faculty member at the University of Pennsylvania. After retiring in 1975, he continued to teach physical diagnosis to medical students and to treat patients at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Philadelphia. His hobbies included sailing, trout fishing, bird watching, and astronomy.

Dr. Futcher's mother was born Gwendolyn Marjorie Howard, who was born in Montreal in 1882 to Robert Palmer Howard and his second wife Emily Severs. Marjorie, as she was known, was orphaned by the death of both of her parents by the time she was 10 years old. Much of her education took place in England, and in 1907 she returned to Montreal as housekeeper to her older brother, Campbell Howard. William Osler felt much responsibility for his mentor's orphaned children and became attached to both of them.

William Osler saw a great deal of Marjorie both in Baltimore and at Oxford, and wrote to her frequently. Palmer Futcher donated the 94 existing letters and post-

cards from Osler to Marjorie to the Osler Library of the History of Medicine at McGill (see *Osler Library Newsletter*, No. 90, October 1990). His gift also included more than 31 photographs of the Oslers kept by Marjorie in two albums. Palmer Futcher also wrote a moving account of Osler's relationship to Marjorie based in part on this correspondence (Futcher PH. The letters of William Osler to Marjorie Howard: shared courtship, family, and bereavement. *Transactions & Studies of the College of Physicians, Philadelphia* 1990; 12: 413-445).

Marjorie Howard was an attractive young woman, and Osler's relationship to her often seems inappropriate by today's standards. Osler's salutations to her in letters written between 1904 and 1907 include the following:

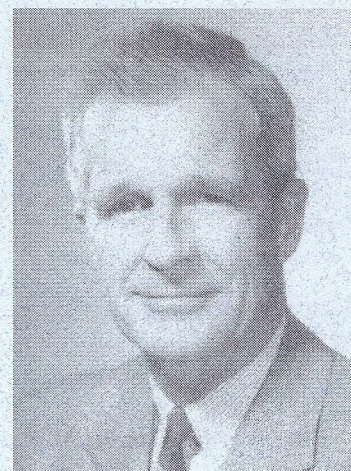
- Light of my later life—adorable superba
- Dearest M.
- Dearest D.
- Dearest Darling
- Dearest Missus
- Angel of light
- Heartless Creature
- Dear Honey
- Angel

Moreover, in Palmer Futcher's words, "Osler kept himself informed of Marjorie's admirers and sometimes raised defenses against suitors whom he may have regarded as threats to his territory." In a 1907 letter that begins "Dearest Honey," Osler asked: "How is your fluttering heart? We shall miss you horribly. I wish you could live with us always." Faith Wallis has observed that although Osler wrote mock-romantic letters to a

number of young women, "[Marjorie's case] is the only one I know of where a young woman in her twenties was addressed in this way."

It would seem to be no accident that, in 1909, Marjorie married Thomas Barnes Futcher, who was not only a Canadian and a graduate of the University of Toronto but also the third of Osler's chief residents at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. Indeed, Osler encouraged the relationship. Thereafter, Osler toned down the quasi-amorous nature of his correspondence, usually addressing her as "Dearest Marjorie." However, he continued to write her frequently, expressed great interest in her pregnancy, and offered the young couple much advice. Palmer Futcher observes that "one wonders if Osler to some degree fantasized Thomas Futcher . . . As his proxy in the evolution of a young family." When Marjorie became pregnant soon after her marriage, Osler wrote: "Tis simply scandalous!" Marjorie and Tom Futcher named their firstborn Palmer Howard Futcher after Marjorie's father, making Osler the godfather. In 1919, they named their fourth child Grace Revere Futcher, after Lady Osler.

Thomas B. Futcher honored Osler's memory with at least five publications. In 1949, Palmer Futcher published from his father's case files the details of one of Osler's attacks of renal colic (*Archives of Internal Medicine* 1949; 84: 40). Tom Futcher died of a myocardial infarction in 1938. Marjorie remained a widow, dying in 1969 at the age of 87. According to Palmer Futcher, "rare



**Palmer Howard Futcher,
William Osler's godson**

had been the day when she had not spoken lovingly of the William Oslers."

Another important contribution by Palmer Futcher to *Osleriana* consists of a definitive editorial entitled "William Osler's religion" (*Archives of Internal Medicine* 1961; 107: 475-479). He writes:

I have been able to glean something of the outward trappings of Osler's religious practices from my mother. . . . She recalls Osler as a frequent churchgoer, attending as he did the services of the Church of England. She also remembers seeing him saying his prayers in his bedroom at Oxford. . . . While one cannot guess as to how many of the 39 Articles of Religion of the Church of England Osler subscribed, one may conclude that when he went to church he was, at last, warmed by Jesus's example of loving concern. His agnostic streak . . . did not obscure a warm charitable spirit . . . which very likely emanated in part from his religious concepts.

—CSB

AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY

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The American Osler Society has been founded for the purpose of bringing together members of the medical and allied professions who are, by their common inspiration, dedicated to memorialize and perpetuate the just and charitable life, the intellectual resourcefulness and the ethical example of **William Osler** (1849-1919). This, for the benefit of succeeding generations, that their motives be ever more sound, that their vision be on everbroadening horizons, and that they sail not as Sir Thomas Browne's Ark, without oars and without rudder and sails and, therefore, without direction.

Call for Abstracts for 2005 Annual Meeting in Pasadena, California, 10-13 April

The Board of Governors will meet on Sunday, April 10. Assuming that we once again have a surplus of abstracts, we will meet through the afternoon of Wednesday, April 13.

For several years we have received more quality submissions that can be accommodated. The Program Committee will be chaired by the First Vice-President, Claus A. Pierach. Please note the following guidelines for submission of abstracts (some of these are required for Continuing Medical Education credits):

1. Abstracts must be **received** by the Secretary-Treasurer by 15 November 2004. **FAX and e-mail submissions will be accepted only from overseas members and guests.** Members and invited guests are encouraged to submit their abstracts well prior to the deadline.
2. The abstract should be no longer than one page. It should begin with the complete title, the names of all co-authors, and the corresponding author's mailing address, telephone number, FAX, and e-mail address. The text should provide sufficient information for the Program Committee to determine its merits and possible interest to the membership. The problem should be defined and the conclusions should be stated. Phrases such as "will be presented" should be avoided or kept to a minimum.
3. Three learning objectives should be given after the abstract. Each learning objective should begin with an active verb indicating what attendees should be able to *do* after the presentation (for example, "list," "explain," "discuss," "examine," "evaluate," "define," "contrast," or "outline"; avoid noncommittal verbs such as "know," "learn," and "appreciate").
4. Each author should provide a brief (two- to five-sentence) description of himself/herself, which will serve as the speaker's introduction. We have learned that providing this information in the program booklet saves valuable meeting time.
5. Each author supply a curriculum vitae (a one-page synopsis is acceptable), which is required for Continuing Medical Education.
6. A covering letter should state:
 - The corresponding author's opinion of the paper's potential interest to members.
 - Whether any of the authors have a potential conflict-of-interest such as direct financial involvement in the topic being discussed, and whether there will be any mention of off-label use of drugs or other products during the presentation.
 - Audiovisual requirements for the presentation (e.g., computer and LCD or 35 mm projector).
 - *Optional:* Whether the author(s) insist on a time slot longer than 20 minutes (At the 2004 meeting, we determined that 20-minute time slots, with papers carefully timed to 15 minutes, worked quite well for nearly all presentations).
 - *Optional:* Are there any special considerations, such as insistence by one's organization that a paper be presented to receive reimbursement for the costs of attending the meeting?

Please send five copies of the abstract, a computer diskette containing the abstract (ideally in Microsoft Word format), curricula vitae of all authors, and a covering letter to: Charles S. Bryan, Secretary-Treasurer, American Osler Society, Two Medical Park, Suite 502, Columbia, SC 29203. Again, the deadline for receipt is 15 November 2004.