William Osler's historiography: a rhetorical analysis

It is as problematic for us to read our author's description as it was for him to write it... Where did he draw lines in order to separate this phenomenon from that? And what categories did he choose for sorting out sensations when he put his pen to paper?¹

William Osler the historian is viewed principally as an early collector of medical and scientific books² and as an advocate of a method of teaching the history of medicine, namely, that it be taught on wards and in clinics rather than in formal courses.³ Although these are accurate descriptions of his book-collecting activity and his convictions about the teaching of the history of medicine, one can go further and relate these two features to his historical writing and see the whole as a unified and consistent interpretive endeavor. My approach to Osler is rhetorical in the sense that it is primarily concerned with his historical writing as writing, and focuses specifically upon his preferred concepts (inventio), the characteristic order in which he arranged his evidence (dispositio), and how his style integrated them to form the historiographical direction of his writing. I use rhetoric not in its pejorative sense of misleading and overblown language, but as "persuasive reasoning, honestly and earnestly persuasive when good, that is, when the rhetor meets Cato's standard: vir bonus dicendi peritus."⁴

Osler published many historical and biographical essays, some of
them in medical and scientific journals. Thirty-five were collected during his lifetime into two anthologies, An Alabama Student and Other Biographical Essays (1908) and Aequanimitas with Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses, and Practitioners of Medicine (1904). Post-humously, several collections were also made, including most notably and conveniently, A Way of Life and Selected Writings of Sir William Osler (1951), edited by a committee of the Osler Club of London, and Sir William Osler 1849-1919: A Selection for Medical Students (1982), edited by Charles G. Roland. In these four anthologies appear the most representative and popular of Osler's historical and biographical writings. He also wrote two large-scale histories of medicine, short in length but covering long time spans. The first was "Evolution of Internal Medicine," published in 1907 as an Introduction to Modern Medicine: Its Theory and Practice and the second was Evolution of Modern Medicine, given as lectures at Yale in 1913 but not published until 1921, two years after his death. Although neither has been as popular as his essays, both reveal clearly what in the history of medicine interested him and how he characteristically interpreted the historical record. Although not as lively and readable as the essays, they are the best place to begin reading Osler the historian. Finally, Osler's scientific essays, lectures, and clinical writings abound in historical references and perspective, but they will be of less concern here except to say that one of his major assumptions about the history of medicine and medicine was their ultimate integration. He did not reduce the one to the other but saw each as distinct albeit inseparable activities.

My purpose here is to characterize Osler's historiographical style. Although I will mention in passing other 19th-century historians who adopted styles similar to his, my intent is not to relate his writing to the 19th-century intellectual context nor to trace his historiographical ancestry. Each of these approaches is fruitful but all three are not manageable in a single essay.
William Osler's strategy as a historian was to integrate the fragments of the historical record into a balanced whole. He did this with a variety of tactics, including unifying concepts, a favored narrative form, and a selection of stylistic devices, all of which interrelated to produce Osler's characteristic approach to history.

Osler's chief integrative concept was the profession, a phrase referring exclusively to the medical profession that recurred frequently in his writing, usually without comment or definition but with an obvious meaning to him and his audience. On two occasions he defined the concept explicitly. In an essay entitled "Chauvinism in Medicine," he described four features of the profession, or guild as he called it there. These were its noble ancestry, its remarkable solidarity, its progressive character, and its singular beneficence. Three years later in "Unity, Peace, and Concord," he focused on additional qualities of the profession. It had world-wide distribution, possessed a community of interests, and was marked by concentration, fusion, and consolidation, all of which distinguished it from the law and clergy.

Today, members of the medical profession, historians, and sociologists of medicine generally use profession as a tool for social, political, economic, or cognitive analysis. But to Osler and his audience, the profession was not so much a tool as a cultural and historical belief used to integrate those whose common history was a source of sympathy and pride who, through their mutual efforts, would keep that heritage alive. This use of the term had obvious social implications and Osler, I think, was aware of them. His scurrying about on behalf of academies of medicine, professional organizations, journal clubs, and libraries; his collecting of "sacred" medical and scientific authors (eventually recorded and ranked in the catalog of his book and manuscript collection, Bibliotheca Osleriana); and his vast network of correspondents, are all...
evidence of this awareness. At the same time, he was uninterested in political and economic ways of defining the profession. It was for later generations of physicians, historians, and critics to make explicit the relationship between the medical profession as a cultural or historical entity and the medical profession as economic, social, and political activity.

In defining the profession as he did, Osler was using a style of thought similar to that of other 19th-century historians, the "national" historians such as Herder, von Ranke, and John Richard Green. They used the terms nation, Volk, and people as integrating concepts in writing political history. For them, heritage and tradition transcended political and economic circumstances, especially in cases of perceived oppression or social and economic underdevelopment. This sometimes led to the construction of a past more consistent with national aspirations and self-definitions than with reality. Frequently, these aspirations contained an altruistic element, service or beneficence to mankind, that generalized them or made them more persuasive. What these historians did for their national past, Osler did for the medical past. Perceiving the medical profession to be both fragmented and inferior in social status to its calling, Osler wrote about the glorious past of medicine, stressing its continuity, unity, and the beneficence it brought to mankind. Thus, upon leaving Johns Hopkins University for the University of Oxford, he could assert, "in a little more than a century a united profession, working in many lands, has done more for the race than has ever before been accomplished by any other body of men." All this is not to assert a cause-and-effect-relationship between the historical writings of Osler and the national historians but only to say that integrating approaches were available and served Osler's needs and aspirations for 19th-century physicians, just as they served the needs and commitments of some political historians.

The net effect of using the term profession as Osler does was to
Osler's historiography integrate individual physicians separated by geographic, linguistic, political, and economic circumstances—to say nothing of the barriers of centuries and millennia—into one unified and coherent whole. It was an umbrella that covered past, present, and future, one that united Imhotep, Hippocrates, Avicenna, Harvey, and Boerhaave with Osler and his contemporaries, and all of them with future generations of physicians having similar inclinations.  

The second integrating feature of Osler's historiography, and one closely related to his notion of the profession, was his belief that, in spite of the profession's progressive nature, the medical past, present, and future were not separable. Disease, pain, ill-health and death were universal experiences and hence the profession of the healer was timeless also. The most obvious indication of this is his inclusion of some of his liveliest historical writing in essays that were not chiefly historical. In addition, as already noted, he strongly favored teaching the history of medicine on wards and in outpatient departments rather than in separate courses devoted to the subject. Although he argued that the curriculum was too crowded for separate history of medicine courses, his opposition to separate courses also came from a reluctance to violate the integrity of medicine's past, present (teachers), and future (students). Finally, his own historical writing is premised on the belief that since physicians of all eras and countries were members of an historical unity (the profession), their trials, tribulations, and successes were as relevant to the 19th-century profession as to that of their own day. Thus in an essay, Physic and Physician as Depicted in Plato, he attempts "to estimate from the Dialogues the social standing of the Greek doctor... and [to] speak on other points which bear upon the general condition of the profession." Also on the presumption of the atemporality of the profession, Osler declares that were Galen alive, he could walk into a 19th-century physiological laboratory and be at home and that Mithridates "could today talk intelligently with Ehrlich
One of the most vivid examples of Osler's temporal integration appears at the conclusion of a long discussion of Galen:

But here we must part with the last, and in many ways, the greatest of the Greeks—a man very much of our own type, who, could he visit this country today, might teach us many lessons. He would smile in scorn at the water supply of many of our cities, thinking of the magnificent aqueducts of Rome and of many of the colonial towns—some still in use—which in lightness of structure and in durability testify to the astonishing skill of their engineers. There are country districts in which he would find imperfect drainage and could tell of the wonderful system by which Rome was kept sweet and clean. Nothing would delight him more than a visit to Panama to see what the organization of knowledge has been able to accomplish. Everywhere he could tour the country as a sanitary expert, preaching the gospel of good water supply and good drainage, two of the great elements in civilization, in which in many places we have not reached the Roman standard.

Here, then, is Osler, the 20th-century Prospero translating himself and his listeners, first back in time to second-century Rome to add Galen to the entourage, and then forward into the 20th-century to Central America and Balboa Heights, where all can ponder the meaning of the nearly completed Panama Canal. There they glimpse the future when 20th-century technology and the 19th-century gospel of preventive medicine have united East and West, the Atlantic and the Pacific, to say nothing of the past and the present, in a new medical and social dispensation. This may be too much for positivistic historians of the 20th-century, but the relationship of past and present is a perennial and vexing question for all historians. One may not follow Osler but one cannot dismiss his stance either; it is also widely held and defended by reflective historians having far different rhetorical and philosophical commitments than he.

Besides his notions of the profession and its atemporality, Osler used biography to integrate the historical record also. One of the most obvious and popular features of his writing is its concentration on the
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lives of individual physicians and scientists. Not only are the majority of his historical essays biographical studies, but his one book-length history, The Evolution of Modern Medicine, is full of brief biographies of representative members of the profession; indeed, it is a biography of the profession. But it is not enough just to say that as an historian Osler was drawn to biography and practiced it frequently. Historians using quite different modes of discourse than Osler’s also use biography extensively, but in other ways. For example, collective biography is used by historians to illuminate social networks and contexts of historical events and change, a manner of proceeding that is quite different from focusing on individual lives. Consequently, Osler’s own use of biography and history must be specified in greater detail, not only to differentiate it from the uses of biography made by social and intellectual historians, but also to see how it contributed to his overall strategy of integration.

His predilection is to use individual physicians to represent the profession: Casper Wistar, its comradeship and social esprit; William Beaumont, the army surgeon; Sydenham, the clinical and practical physician; Linacre, the literary physician; and Harvey, the physician as scientific researcher. In short, Osler is taking a part—an individual physician—to represent the whole, the profession. In rhetorical terms, he takes the sign for the thing signified. This is synecdochical thinking and assumes an integral relationship between the two terms, the physician whose biography is being written, and the profession, or the part thereof, he represents. This manner of writing history through biography integrates physicians living in different eras into the timeless profession, while at the same time it socialized and inspires new generations of physicians. Taken together with his notions of the profession and its timelessness, Osler’s representation of the history of medicine in terms of individual biographies reinforces his message that the past, present, and future are one.
II.

Having examined the principal features of Osler’s conceptualization of the historical record, I turn to the characteristic way in which he arranged, or emplotted, the fragments of that record. Generally his emplotment furthered the strategy of integration, as is shown most clearly in his large-scale histories, *The Evolution of Modern Medicine* and "The Evolution of Internal Medicine." In the former, after a perfunctory account of Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Far Eastern medicine his story begins in Chapter II with a description of the golden age of medicine, that of the Greeks, called rational by Osler in that its theory was based on careful observation and was generally free of religious interference. Chapter III describes the abandonment of the Greco-Roman achievement in the "wasteland" of the Middle Ages. Chapter IV is the turning point, when the Renaissance and the rise of anatomy and physiology halt the decline. The continuing progress of the medical profession and its work is recounted in Chapter V, "The Rise and Development of Modern Medicine," and finally, in the last and climactic chapter of the book, "The Rise of Preventive Medicine," the story ends happily with 19th-century society and medicine regaining the heights which had been achieved by the Greeks and Romans.

Osler’s other full-scale history of medicine, a history of clinical medicine, spanning more than two millenia from the pre-Hippocratic period to the end of the 19th-century, has a similar emplotment. It also begins with the Greek golden age (pp. xvi-xx), describes the decline in the Middle Ages when "there was no such thing as an accurate study of clinical medicine" (p. xx), presents the Renaissance as a time in which the decline was halted by the restoration of Hippocratic and Hellenic methods, and then shows how clinical medicine continued to improve as the practical methods of the Hippocratic school were revived and extended. The climax takes place in Osler’s own century when bacteriology, endocrinology, and biochemistry reach maturity. Indeed, the achievement in
metabolic research, "warrants the belief we shall have a safe platform from which to investigate to a finish such serious perversions as are present in gout, diabetes, etc." (p. xxviii). In short, Osler's generation has not only reclaimed ground lost since the Greco-Roman period but has gone beyond it.

It was not only when writing large-scale histories that Osler used his favored emplotment. He relied on it also when writing about specific episodes having limited timespans, as for example, in his essay on William Beaumont. On the Michigan frontier a voyageur, Alexis St. Martin, has been shot, apparently fatally. Almost miraculously he lives, although it appears that his survival may not have been a blessing after all, for his life turns out to be an unhappy one, full of notoriety, pain, and drunkenness. Fortunately, William Beaumont recognizes the opportunity for research in gastric physiology that St. Martin's wound offered. This recognition and Beaumont's 238 observations make an enormous contribution to physiological science and clinical knowledge, thereby balancing in the social and scientific sphere the pain and suffering of the unfortunate voyageur. Osler's history of fevers has a similar pattern: the recognition, or recovery, of an important research commitment becomes the turning point of the story. Between Sydenham and Broussais, he exclaims, "what a desolate sea of theory and speculation." In the early 19th-century, Paris professors speak of Hippocrates, Galen, and Celsus as if nothing had been added to the knowledge of fevers since their time. Then Pierre-Charles-Alexandre Louis recognizes the need for observation and method and communicates it to his American readers and pupils especially, who carry "his great message to the New World," where further progress is made. Sometimes the recognition is made by Osler the historian, not the historical figure Osler is portraying. John Y. Bassett of Huntsville, Alabama, desires further medical knowledge. But he is poor and to satisfy his urge he leaves his wife and travels to Paris. There his fortunes improve and he studies with the great names
of French medicine. Eventually, he returns home but dies prematurely, unknown and "voiceless" until Osler the historian recognizes Bassett for what he was, a man who made an effort and who was true to his ideals. Through Osler's famous essay, "An Alabama Student," Bassett achieves the voice and fame he never had but deserved when alive. Bassett's death, it turns out, was not an unhappy ending but a turning point to a greater, if posthumous, career as exemplar of important professional qualities.

In general, then, Osler begins his historical books and essays with a "golden age" or when affairs are in a state of equilibrium. Events take a turn for the worse and there is decline or disequilibrium. Next comes reversal, the recognition of an important opportunity, as in the case of Beaumont and St. Martin and Osler and Bassett, or in the recognition of a newly discovered, or rediscovered, idea or method, as in the case of Louis. Events continue to improve toward a happy ending: animosity or notoriety is replaced by public or historical recognition; bad fortune is counterbalanced by good; the ill fortune of an individual leads to a greater social good; or the heights of medical achievement are regained. In the theory of narrative, this pattern is called Comic as it leads to a happy ending, or at least to reconciliation, and was one of a small number of forms that 19th-century historians could select in writing their narratives. For some critics and theologians this is also the emplotment of the book of Job and the Christian Bible, books Osler knew well and referred to often. (This is not to say that Comic emplotment is the only way Osler arranged his historical materials, but it is his principal choice and the one with which he was most comfortable.) Equally important, his audience understood and responded to it, at ease with its moral and philosophical implications. Their satisfaction and his skill in meeting their expectations are reasons for his continued popularity as an historian.
So far I have described Osler's strategy of integration through conceptualization and emplotment. In addition to these elements, he favoured stylistic devices, or figures of speech, that also allowed him to synthesize the fragmented historical record.

The most obvious feature of Osler's style, and sometimes a frustrating one by reason of its obscurity for 20th-century readers, is his frequent use of allusion, "tacit reference to historical and literary figures."33 In a single paragraph of the essay, "Unity, Peace, and Concord," he refers to the Old Testament, the New Testament, an Arabic philosopher, Thomas Fuller (a favourite 17th-century writer), and two figures of classical mythology (Aesculapius and Circe).34 In a characteristic paragraph of the essay "A Student's Life," he refers to Shakespeare, Milton, Louis Carroll, Harvey, and Charles Lamb, to mention only the first five allusions.35 While his frequent use of allusion demonstrates wide reading and erudition, it works at another level also, integrating him with his 19th-century audience: by virtue of their similar education they had no difficulty recognizing the allusions. It was a shorthand way for him to demonstrate the common ground he and his audience shared and to indicate not only that they had something important in common with each other but also with the experiences recorded in the Old and New Testament, the Greek and Roman classics, and the classics of English literature.36 For Osler and his audience the frequent use of allusion implicitly united human experience, belief, and values, saying in effect that the myriad, confusing circumstances of history do not separate the past from the present at all. Underneath all the variety and chaos of change, there is a unity—common experience and a common understanding—that transcends time. Ultimately, human experience is atemporal.

Osler's urge to integrate and to order his historical materials synthetically is revealed through another important stylistic feature, a
favoured imagery used when writing about his central notion, the profession. When speaking of his ultimate values, he fell back upon organic metaphors. In his "Valedictory Address at Johns Hopkins University" he wrote:

There are several problems in university life suggested by my departure. It may be asked in the first place, whether metabolism is sufficiently active in the professoriate body, is there change enough? May not the loss of a professor bring stimulating benefits to a university? We have not here lost very many—this is not a university that men care to leave—but in looking over its history I do not see that the departure of anyone has proved a serious blow. It is strange of how slight value is the unit in a great system. A man may have built up a department and have gained a certain following, local or general; may, more, he may have had a special value for his mental and moral qualities, and his fission may leave a scar, even an aching scar, but it is not for long. Those of us accustomed to the process know that the organism as a whole feels it about as much as a big polyzoon, when a colony breaks off, or a hive of bees after a swarm—'tis not indeed a calamity, often-times it is a relief.37

Organic metaphors integrate and subordinate parts to larger wholes. In this passage, charged with emotion and touching on values and institutions Osler held dear, he fell back on a series of organic metaphors: metabolism, scar tissue, bees, and micro-organisms, which underline his assertion "of how slight value is the unit in a great system."

On another occasion, when speaking about the history and present status of the medical profession in Canada, he wrote:

In some parts of the Dominion we may study the profession in its simplest form; in the Northwest Territories, for example, it has not advanced beyond the amoeba stage. The doctors there are so many unicellular creatures—masses of undifferentiated professional protoplasm, without organization or functional activities. They cannot even exercise the rhizopodal mode of multiplication, but increase by the low inorganic method of accretion. In the older Provinces, on the other hand, the professional units have combined for the general good into a sort of Polipidon—the organized profession—a great advance on the amoeba stage; there are special organs of reproduction known as the medical schools, and there are signs of a nervous system—medical societies.38
This passage, too, is replete with organic metaphors communicating the interrelatedness and interdependency of physicians and their institutions. One could argue that from his training and experience in natural history and as a physician, Osler would be inclined naturally to such metaphors. That may well be, but for whatever reason he chose them, the net effect of their use is the same: they communicate on logical and emotional levels the ultimate value that he placed upon unity, interrelatedness, interdependence, and fusion in the history of medicine as well as in his own life and work. In short, on the microcosmic level of style, specifically through frequent allusions and a reliance on organic metaphors, Osler reaffirms what he has said more explicitly on the macrocosmic level (section I above): the inherent qualities of the profession are its coherence and its universality which transcends circumstances of time, place, and geography. By coming to believe in itself, the profession can overcome these divisions and restore itself.

IV.

Having looked at Osler's formal argumentation, his characteristic plot structure, and two aspects of his style, I can briefly summarize the effect of all these by describing the tone of his historical writing and the ideological commitments revealed there. His attitude towards historical figures is positive, laudatory, and at times celebratory. He "pays homage" to Aristotle, he "cherishes" old medical teachers, and he composes a "role of Honour" couched in religious terms for great physicians. Even the "bad-guys" of medical history, Galen and medieval physicians and scientists, are viewed more favourably than by other medical historians of his time. To Osler, at least until the beginning of World War I, life was good because it turned out well, as evidenced by the "glad tidings of the final conquest of nature by which man has redeemed thousands of his fellow men from sickness and from death." This is not to say he denied the existence of pain, suffering, and
evil. Indeed, they had to be presumed in order to speak of the redemption of mankind through medical science and research. He recognized the existence of pain and suffering but firmly believed that, in the long run, good overcame or at least balanced it. This confidence is as much a precondition as a result of his historical research and is one reason he was shattered by the outbreak of World War I. That catastrophe not only brought death and destruction to his own family, friends, and physicians on both sides of the conflict, it shattered his conviction that the profession transcended political, geographical, and temporal differences.

In ideology—not necessarily politics—Osler was a conservative in the sense that he placed his ultimate social values in such historically established and continuing institutions as the profession, university medical education, the local medical society and societies, and preventive medicine. This position was distinct from medical reformers who stressed an ideology of individualism as the basis for action. For Osler economic and social individualism, revolution, or radical reform were not pathways to scientific, clinical, or professional success; rather, it was by working with and within the profession that individual physicians achieved effectiveness and a larger significance. In other words the whole was larger than the individual parts and by recognition of that the profession strengthened itself.

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Placed within the analytical framework of Hayden White's *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973), William Osler's writing is an example of what White calls an Organicist historical style. He defines it thus:

The Organicist attempts to depict the particulars discerned in the historical field as components of synthetic processes. At the heart of the Organicist's strategy is a metaphysical commitment to the paradigm of the microcosmic-macrocosmic relationship; and the
Organicist historian will tend to be governed by the desire to see individual entities as components of processes which aggregate into wholes that are greater than, or qualitatively different from, the sum of their parts. Historians who work within this strategy of explanation, such as Ranke and most of the 'nationalistic' historians of the middle decades of the 19th-century . . . tend to structure their narratives in such a way as to depict the consolidation or crystallization, out of a set of apparently dispersed events, of some integrated entity whose importance is greater than that of any of the individual entities analyzed or described in the course of the narrative. 41

In specifically rhetorical terms, Organicists rely upon the argument from definition, where by explanation is made by telling what something is, what differentiates it from other entities, what are its essential qualities, and by specifying what does or does not belong to that category. 42 In Osler's case integration is carried out through his definition of the nature of the profession and a specification of its qualities. With his characteristically Comic emplotment, Osler integrates by constituting the history of medicine as decline and fall followed by redemption and reconciliation. On the stylistic level his synthesis is carried out through a reliance on organic metaphors and the frequent use of allusions which integrate him, his subject matter, and his audience.

Finally, whether one views Osler's historical writing favourably—and many do not—it was a major event in 19th-century medicine. It not only proved an enduring and wide-ranging interpretation of the historical record, but it came to the fore in the era of the 1880s–1920s—a key period in the development of the 20th-century medical profession—when it played a part in the way physicians came to think about themselves, their work, and their profession. Indeed, it still does; but examining how Osler and his brethren in the profession have used and are using his historiography to influence the course of the 20th-century medical profession is a subsequent story.
NOTES


9. Cultural is used in this paragraph to mean mental training and


13. Osler's concept of the profession and its timelessness are one reason why there are still dozens of Osler societies, thousands of articles (including this one) about him, and scores of anthologies containing his essays. There is a contradiction or at least a paradox in defining a profession both as being timeless and as having a long heritage. So far as I can tell Osler was not aware of it.


15. See note 3.


18. *The Evolution of Modern Medicine: A Series of Lectures Delivered at Yale University on the Silliman Foundation in April 1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), p. 83. This view of the timelessness of history is called ceremonial time and has recently been explored

19. For example: "The study of history, like history itself, runs an ever-shifting course. Indeed, the two are tightly linked. In a sense their course is the same. Always and inevitably, current history molds the interests, the questions, the values that historians bring to the life of the past," John Demos, New York Times Book Review, 20 May 1984, p. 3; "All art is a dialogue. So is all interest in the past and one of the parties lives and comprehends in a contemporary way, by his very existence. It seems also to be inherent in human existence to turn and return to the past (much as powerful voices may urge us to give it up). The more precisely we listen and the more we become aware of its pastness, even of its near-inaccessibility, the more meaningful the dialogue becomes. In the end it can be only a dialogue in the present, about the present," M. I. Finley, Aspects of Antiquity: Discoveries and Controversies (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1977) p. 15; "I want my work to make a difference to historians; I do hope the documents I find and the questions I ask will be useful to fellows in my craft. But I also want the questions to be important for political and cultural reasons," Natalie Zemon Davis, p. 115 in Visions of History, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). I belabour this point because charges of presentism and of a failure to write about the past for its own sake are leveled at Osler and other "amateur" historians without taking into account the full range of philosophical issues involved in writing history.

20. Osler, Aequanimitas, p. 81.


25. For the former see note 18; the latter served as an introduction to Osler's and Thomas McCrae's, Modern Medicine: Its Theory and Practice (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers, 1907), I:xv-xxxiv.


30. White, Metahistory, pp. 7-11, 163-190.


32. For example, "Medicine in the 19th-Century," in Osler, Aequanimitas, pp. 219-262, is a chronicle.

33. "The technique of a[llusion] assumes: (1) an established literary tradition as a source of values; (2) an audience sharing the tradition with the poet; (3) an echo of sufficiently familiar yet distinctive and meaningful elements; and (4) a fusion of the echo with elements in the new context. It has analogs in biblical and religious writings, the novel, and elsewhere, and usually requires a close poet-audience relationship, a social emphasis in literature, a community of knowledge, and a prizing of literary tradition," Preminger, Princeton Encyclopedia, p. 18.


35. Osler, A Selection, p. 27.

36. At the same time, of course, it underlines Osler's view of the importance of high culture and its value to the profession.


40. Osler, Evolution of Modern Medicine, p. 233.

41. White, Metahistory, p. 15.