

## Preface

*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.*

*To study the phenomena of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, while to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all.*

*In taking up the study of disease, you leave the exact and certain for the inexact and doubtful and enter a realm in which to a great extent the certainties are replaced by probabilities.*

SIR WILLIAM OSLER

Sir William Osler's teachings survive through his valued axioms that capture the essence of the finest principles of medicine, education, character, and philosophy of life. *The Quotable Osler* is an extensive selection of these sayings, published for the use of the many admirers of Sir William who are seeking the apt quotation to enhance their articles or lectures and for those readers who simply want to enjoy the inspiring message of his humane and wise remarks. For those who may want to know more about Osler, the man and his influence on medicine, we have included an article by Richard Golden, written for the 150th anniversary of Osler's birth, and have listed other useful sources below (1-11).

With the aid of the invaluable *Sir William Osler: An Annotated Bibliography*, a listing of Osler's 1500 publications (7), and two previous collections (8,9), the editors and members of the American Osler Society have sifted through his writings for an observation or description deemed to be original, wise, inspiring, educational, amusing, or of historical interest. Along the way, many little-known quotes of importance were unearthed, and others, usually shortened into aphorisms, have been restored to their full significance by being placed in context.

Since the first edition of *The Quotable Osler*, the Osler Library at McGill University has discovered an unpublished, handwritten address by William Osler, which he delivered to the University of Pennsylvania

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entering class of 1885. From this manuscript, forty eloquent remarks have been added to this edition. This orientation address shows Osler, then only 36 years old, advising the young students how to develop the proper study habits that will carry them from the basic sciences through to their clinical responsibilities. At the same time, he emphasizes that “no two cases of the same disease are ever alike” and warns them “not to loose [*sic*] sight of the individual.” Although some of these quotes may seem antiquated, they still retain a powerful message that the beginning student must learn to take care of the sick through an understanding of the basic sciences and the art of medicine.

The exhumation of this significant collection, ten more quotes from other sources, and the addition of a chronology of Osler’s life justifies this softcover revised edition. We hope that it will be a gladly appreciated gift to a medical student, graduating resident, or even the veteran physician who stubbornly feels that Osler’s teachings remain valuable today.

The quotations are sorted into nine major areas, each divided into sections. All quotations are numbered, and a short summary of each quote is provided. The extensive index refers the reader to the appropriate quotation number. Occasionally, bracketed comments are added within the quotations to clarify the source of Osler’s literary references or to add needed explanation. Sir William’s own literary influences were many and add a further dimension to his writing. References 10 and 11 provide an excellent resource for those interested in this subject. The source of each of quotation is given; frequently cited sources, such as *Aequanimitas*, have had their titles shortened in the text and complete bibliographical information moved to page 291. For all references without a stated author, Osler should be the assumed writer.

Because few women practiced medicine during Osler’s period, some of his comments have a male gender orientation common to his time. These were understood then as an indefinite reference.

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*Mark E. Silverman, MD*

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*Charles S. Bryan, MD*

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