

### Book Reviews

*The Gold-Headed Cane*, by WILLIAM MACMICHAEL, facsimile of 1827 ed., with introduction by Thomas Hunt, London, Royal College of Physicians, 1968, pp. 26 + 179, illus., £4.

William Macmichael (1783–1839), M.D. Oxon., F.R.C.P., F.R.S., was educated at Bridgnorth Grammar School and Christ Church, Oxford. After graduating in Arts he studied medicine at Edinburgh and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, took the M.B. Oxon. and obtained a Radcliffe Travelling Fellowship in 1811. He visited Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania, Russia, Turkey, Sicily and Australia, studied at Stockholm under Berzelius, the famous Swedish chemist, and also researched in mineralogy. In 1816 he came to England, returning to Europe in 1817–18, as described in his first book, *From Moscow to Constantinople* (1819).

Being ruined by the failure of his bankers, he practised in London. From 1824 to 1829 he was Registrar of the College of Physicians, physician to the Middlesex Hospital from 1822 to 1831, Physician Extraordinary to King George IV and Librarian to the king; and later Physician-in-Ordinary to King William IV. He worked hard in College administration, married Mary Jane Freer and had one daughter, afterwards Mrs. John Cheese. In 1836 he became paralysed and aphasic, and died in 1839.

Dr. Thomas Hunt, his great-grandson, possesses Macmichael's annotated, interleaved copy of the first edition of *The Gold-Headed Cane*, here published in facsimile with an introductory memoir by Dr. Hunt, and a coloured reproduction of Macmichael's portrait, painted by William Haynes (1778–1848) and owned by Miss Joan Cheese, also a descendant.

The book is published by the Royal College of Physicians in commemoration of its 450th Anniversary. It recounts the lives of John Radcliffe, Richard Mead, Anthony Askew, William Pitcairn, David Pitcairn and Matthew Baillie, each of whom in turn possessed the cane, supposed to be the narrator. The cane is now in the Royal College of Physicians.

Macmichael's other valued literary work was *Lives of British Physicians* (1830), which he edited and partly wrote.

Sir Max Rosenheim, President of the Royal College of Physicians, has supplied the Preface to Dr. Hunt's Commemoration volume of *The Gold-Headed Cane*. It is a book that all medical historians and scholarly physicians will treasure.

ARTHUR S. MACNALT

*A Continual Remembrance. Letters from Sir William Osler to his Friend Ned Milburn 1865–1919*, by HOWARD L. HOLLEY, Springfield, Illinois, C. C. Thomas, 1968, pp. xxiii, 132, illus., \$6.75.

William Osler was born at Bond Head, Ontario, on 12 July 1849 and Edward (Ned) Fairfax Milburn at nearby Oakville on 13 April 1849. They first met in 1864 when they attended Barrie Grammar School and their intimate friendship was maintained by a correspondence which started in 1865 and was to last until Sir William's death in 1919. Osler's letters to Ned Milburn became part of a lifetime's collection of medical historical material by Dr. Lawrence Reynolds of Ozark, Alabama, who bequeathed it to the University of Alabama. The reviewer has fond memories of a visit