parochialism. The book is overwhelmingly centered on England and particularly on the City of London. Although there is a potentially persuasive case for making London the focus of an "ingenuity-based" account of the Scientific Revolution, that case is never explicitly presented. I can also see some physical scientists taking umbrage at an account of the Scientific Revolution that puts natural history on a par with the "harder" sciences. But Jardine notes that, in the Royal Society of the early 18th century (that is, Newton's Royal Society), "the physics, astronomy and mathematics we associate with the birth of modern science was a minor, specialist interest." She is just right about that, and if you want to approach the Scientific Revolution—warts and all—as the "rich mix" of practices in which "ingenious pursuers" actually engaged, then her position is unassailable. If you are not interested in seeing the Scientific Revolution in those terms, there are many alternative accounts available. Few, however, are as attractively produced as Lisa Jardine's.

Reflector reconstructed. A reproduction of Newton's telescope from his original design.

CREDIT: (LEFT) THE ROYAL SOCIETY/FROM *INGENIOUS PURSUITS*; (RIGHT) ALAN MASON CHESNEY MEDICAL ARCHIVES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS

BOOKS: HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Sainthood Confirmed

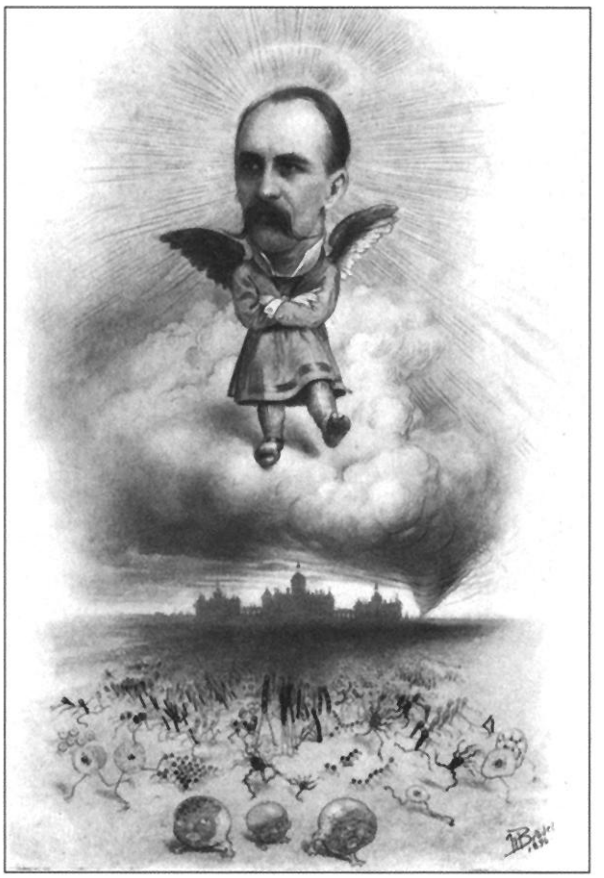
Ronald L. Numbers

In the pantheon of North American doctors, William Osler stands with Benjamin Rush and the Mayo brothers on the highest pedestal of the clinical wing. Although Osler contributed little to medical science in terms of major discoveries, he helped revolutionize the teaching and practice of internal medicine, particularly by emphasizing the importance of training aspiring physicians at the bedsides of patients. He co-founded the Johns Hopkins University Medical School, served as its first professor of medicine, and inspired the creation of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. His immensely successful textbook, *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* (1892), became the classic text of modern medicine. By the time of his death he had achieved medical sainthood. Sober men described him as "the greatest doctor in the history of world."

The author is in the Department of the History of Medicine, 1300 University Avenue, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706, USA. E-mail: RNumbers@med.wisc.edu

The son of an Anglican missionary to the wilds of Upper Canada, young Osler briefly flirted with a ministerial career before turning to medicine. After completing his formal medical education in Toronto and Montreal and subsequently visiting London, Berlin, and Vienna, he taught successively at the medical schools affiliated with McGill, Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins, and Oxford universities. Oxford appointed him regius professor of medicine, and in 1911, eight years before his death, the British crown dubbed him Sir William.

Michael Bliss, the leading medical historian of Canada, discloses few surprises in this skillful biography—not because of his own sloth but because so much has already been written about his subject. Shortly after Osler's death, the neurosurgeon Harvey Cushing brought out a monumental, Pulitzer Prize–winning 1400-page hagiography, *A Life of Sir William Osler* (1925). Since then, hundreds of acolytes have delved into seemingly every facet of Osler's life, leaving few facts unknown and few stories untold. Bliss's achievement consists primarily of a judicious, contextualized retelling of the Osler story in fewer than 600 pages. I particularly like his discussion of the contentious debate at Johns Hopkins over making clinicians salaried full-time employees.



Canonized in his lifetime. In Max Brödel's *The Saint* (1896), Osler strolls above the fleeing microbes.

William Osler
A Life in Medicine
by Michael Bliss

Oxford University Press, New York, 1999. 595 pp. $35, £27.50. ISBN 0-19-512346-8.

A dutiful social historian, Bliss inquires into Osler's sensitivity to issues of ethnicity, class, and gender, but occasionally he tosses in annoying asides about what Osler might do if he were living today. Although Bliss steadfastly avoids psycho-biography, he convincingly lays to rest rumors of Osler's youthful "sexual romping and bonking" with a cousin. After meticulously examining Osler's long life through untinted lenses, Bliss reaches the historiographically courageous conclusion that the Oslerians were right all along: Sir William was a truly great man, in private as well as in public.

By far the most controversial of Bliss's interpretations is his characterization of Osler's famous Hopkins colleagues as a bunch of misfits and misogynists. Of the other "big four" professors, the dean-pathologist William H. Welch comes across as lazy, disorganized, irresponsible, and distant from students; Bliss suspects that he was gay. The pious, street-preaching gynecologist, Howard Atwood Kelly, took more interest in his students' souls and his own exorbitant fees than in his professorial duties. The innovative surgeon William Stewart Halsted was a "sarcastic and mean-spirited" drug addict. Among the lesser lights, Bliss portrays physiologist H. Newell Martin as "a hopeless alcoholic," the anatomist Franklin Mall as "a lazy son-of-a-bitch," the obstetrician J. Whitridge Williams as a male chauvinist, and the pharmacologist John J. Abel as a brilliant eccentric. Not surprisingly, Bliss credits Osler, a very, very good man, with contributing much more than any of his dysfunctional colleagues toward making "Johns Hopkins a very, very good medical school."