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#### Please cite as:

Hooker, C. 'Middlemarch' in Michael A. LaCombe, MD, David J. Elpern, MD (eds.), *Osler's Bedside Library*, ACP Press, Philadelphia, pp 155-166. eISBN 9781934465479, ISBN 10 1-934465-47-X.

## Dr Osler and Dr Lydgate: George Eliot's Middlemarch

Claire Hooker (2009)

At the time George Eliot wrote *Middlemarch*, the boundaries between History and Fiction (like those between Science and Romance, or Medicine and various Arts<sup>1</sup>) were still blurred.<sup>2</sup> We who are the heirs of that era have liked to insist on distinguishing the soberly factual nature of history from the unhampered fantasies of fiction. Yet there are occasions when we must admit that the multi-faceted emotional and sensuous grasp of an era or a character that a good novelist can evoke may be at least as insightful as scholarly history. Eliot offers us this Gestalt-like experience, for she is unsurpassed in the ability to set her characters, with all their uniqueness of traits and doubts and actions and dreams, within the relentless current of the society that shaped them. And our compassion for them is increased by this broader and many-layered conception of them.

When *Middlemarch* was published to instant acclaim in 1871-2, the William Osler was in the midst of his medical education. *Middlemarch* was and is famous for its finely-tuned portrayal of Dr Lydgate,<sup>3</sup> one of its two leading protagonists, and thus this 'history' of a fictional physician, may tell us something of what was passing in the young Osler's heart and mind. And Osler was hardly unique in identifying with Lydgate, as his own note on the novel suggests: 'if [he] was to ask the opinion of a dozen medical men upon the novel in which the doctor is best described ... the majority will say, 'Middlemarch'.<sup>4</sup>

How could Osler have helped identifying with Lydgate? Lydgate embodies the loftiest ideals and the happiest balances associated with medicine –working for social good rather than personal profit, combining intellectual activity with emotional and social engagement. Few student physicians then or now would like to admit to lesser ambitions. Additionally, the young Osler and the young Lydgate had many things in common: like Lydgate, Osler was driven by intellectual passion (and one fortuitously stumbled upon, since the education of neither could have evoked it, and both were indifferent students as boys); like Lydgate, Osler similarly harboured hopes of building a 'reputation' as a scientific discoverer; like Lydgate, he could not earn a living in research, and had to integrate his intellectual ambitions with his

professional life. And, although leaving the bench for the bedside initially depressed him,<sup>5</sup> like Lydgate Osler is known for his care for his patients as unique individuals.

Consider the interest – perhaps the shock of identification – with which he must have read Eliot’s famous introductory portrait of Tertius Lydgate:

He was one of the rarer lads who early get a decided bent and make up their minds that there is something particular in life which they would like to do for its own sake, and not because their fathers did it. Most of us who turn to any subject with love remember some morning or evening hour when we got on a high stool to reach down an untried volume, or sat with parted lips listening to a new talker, or for very lack of books began to listen to the voices within, as the first traceable beginning of our love. Something of that sort happened to Lydgate. He was a quick fellow, and when hot from play, would toss himself in a corner, and in five minutes be deep in any sort of book that he could lay his hands on: if it were *Rasselas* or *Gulliver*, so much the better, but *Bailey's Dictionary* would do, or the Bible with the Apocrypha in it. Something he must read, when he was not riding the pony, or running and hunting, or listening to the talk of men. All this was true of him at ten years of age; he had then read through "*Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea*," which was neither milk for babes, nor any chalky mixture meant to pass for milk, and it had already occurred to him that books were stuff, and that life was stupid. His school studies had not much modified that opinion, for though he "did" his classics and mathematics, he was not pre-eminent in them. It was said of him, that Lydgate could do anything he liked, but he had certainly not yet liked to do anything remarkable. He was a vigorous animal with a ready understanding, but no spark had yet kindled in him an intellectual passion; knowledge seemed to him a very superficial affair, easily mastered: judging from the conversation of his elders, he had apparently got already more than was necessary for mature life. Probably this was not an exceptional result of expensive teaching at that period of short-waisted coats, and other fashions which have not yet recurred. But, one vacation, a wet day sent him to the small home library to hunt once more for a book which might have some freshness for him: in vain! unless, indeed, he took down a dusty row of volumes with gray-paper backs and dingy labels--the volumes of an old Cyclopaedia which he had never disturbed. It would at least be a novelty to disturb them. They were on the highest shelf, and he stood on a chair to get them down. But he opened the volume which he first took from the shelf: somehow, one is apt to read in a makeshift attitude, just where it might seem inconvenient to do so. The page he opened on was under the head of Anatomy, and the first passage that drew his eyes was on the valves of the heart. He was not much acquainted with valves of any sort, but he knew that valvae were folding-doors, and through this crevice came a sudden light startling him with his first vivid notion of finely adjusted mechanism in the human frame. A liberal education had of course left him free to read the indecent passages in the school classics, but beyond a general sense of secrecy and obscenity in connection with his internal structure, had left his imagination quite unbiassed, so that for anything he

knew his brains lay in small bags at his temples, and he had no more thought of representing to himself how his blood circulated than how paper served instead of gold. But the moment of vocation had come, and before he got down from his chair, the world was made new to him by a presentiment of endless processes filling the vast spaces planked out of his sight by that wordy ignorance which he had supposed to be knowledge. From that hour Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion.

... [H]is scientific interest soon took the form of a professional enthusiasm: he had a youthful belief in his bread-winning work, not to be stifled by that initiation in makeshift called his 'prentice days; and he carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh, and Paris, the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. Lydgate's nature demanded this combination: he was an emotional creature, with a flesh-and-blood sense of fellowship which withstood all the abstractions of special study. He cared not only for "cases," but for John and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth.<sup>6</sup>

One of the delights of reading *Middlemarch* is its great pleasure in science – from the metaphors wrought from science that give breadth and illumination to the characters, to the intellectual depth a lay reader gains from the sudden attempt to recall and compare how blood circulates or paper serves instead of gold, a kind of theorising that does not enter into the general tenor of one's life. As readers we feel how Eliot's era (beginning with Lydgate in 1829, and reaching its zenith with Osler) was revolutionised and captivated by science. Osler himself must have felt the reverberations of shock and excitement of the discoveries outlined in the novel – the impact of the stethoscope and microscope and the opening up of the science of pathology in consequence – and felt himself still connected to the intellectual events that animated Lydgate, to whom he was a scientific heir:

Perhaps that was a more cheerful time for observers and theorizers than the present; we are apt to think it the finest era of the world when America was beginning to be discovered, when a bold sailor, even if he were wrecked, might alight on a new kingdom; and about 1829 the dark territories of Pathology were a fine America for a spirited young adventurer. Lydgate was ambitious above all to contribute towards enlarging the scientific, rational basis of his profession. The more he became interested in special questions of disease, such as the nature of fever or fevers, the more keenly he felt the need for that fundamental knowledge of structure which just at the beginning of the century had been illuminated by the brief and glorious career of Bichat, who died when he was only one-and-thirty, but, like another Alexander, left a realm large enough for many heirs. That great Frenchman first carried out the conception that living bodies, fundamentally considered, are not associations of organs which can be understood by studying them first apart, and then as it were federally; but must be regarded as consisting of certain primary webs or tissues, out of which the various organs--brain, heart, lungs, and so on—are

compacted, as the various accommodations of a house are built up in various proportions of wood, iron, stone, brick, zinc, and the rest, each material having its peculiar composition and proportions. No man, one sees, can understand and estimate the entire structure or its parts--what are its frailties and what its repairs, without knowing the nature of the materials. And the conception wrought out by Bichat, with his detailed study of the different tissues, acted necessarily on medical questions as the turning of gas-light would act on a dim, oil-lit street, showing new connections and hitherto hidden facts of structure which must be taken into account in considering the symptoms of maladies and the action of medicaments. But results which depend on human conscience and intelligence work slowly, and now at the end of 1829, most medical practice was still strutting or shambling along the old paths, and there was still scientific work to be done which might have seemed to be a direct sequence of Bichat's. This great seer did not go beyond the consideration of the tissues as ultimate facts in the living organism, marking the limit of anatomical analysis; but it was open to another mind to say, have not these structures some common basis from which they have all started, as your sarsnet, gauze, net, satin, and velvet from the raw cocoon? Here would be another light, as of oxy-hydrogen, showing the very grain of things, and revising all former explanations. Of this sequence to Bichat's work, already vibrating along many currents of the European mind, Lydgate was enamoured; he longed to demonstrate the more intimate relations of living structure, and help to define men's thought more accurately after the true order. The work had not yet been done, but only prepared for those who knew how to use the preparation. What was the primitive tissue? In that way Lydgate put the question--not quite in the way required by the awaiting answer; but such missing of the right word befalls many seekers. And he counted on quiet intervals to be watchfully seized, for taking up the threads of investigation--on many hints to be won from diligent application, not only of the scalpel, but of the microscope, which research had begun to use again with new enthusiasm of reliance. Such was Lydgate's plan of his future: to do good small work for Middlemarch, and great work for the world.<sup>7</sup>

The parallels between the doctors do not end here. Like Lydgate, Osler was conscious of wanting to place his profession on a more scientific basis; like Lydgate (and in the manner of scientifically ambitious medical students of the era), he travelled to Europe, had his outlook revolutionised by scientific developments there, and returned to a provincial home with a zeal for reforming medical education and practice along scientific lines. Perhaps Lydgate's resolves even came to inform his own:

There was another attraction in his profession: it wanted reform, and gave a man an opportunity for some indignant resolve to reject its venal decorations and other humbug, and to be the possessor of genuine though undemanded qualifications. He went to study in Paris with the determination that when he provincial home again he would settle in some provincial town as a general practitioner, and resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical

knowledge in the interest of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the range of London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling, and win celebrity, however slowly, as Jenner had done, by the independent value of his work. For it must be remembered that this was a dark period; and in spite of venerable colleges which used great efforts to secure purity of knowledge by making it scarce, and to exclude error by a rigid exclusiveness in relation to fees and appointments, it happened that very ignorant young gentlemen were promoted in town, and many more got a legal right to practise over large areas in the country. Also, the high standard held up to the public mind by the College of which which gave its peculiar sanction to the expensive and highly rarefied medical instruction obtained by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, did not hinder quackery from having an excellent time of it; for since professional practice chiefly consisted in giving a great many drugs, the public inferred that it might be better off with more drugs still, if they could only be got cheaply, and hence swallowed large cubic measures of physic prescribed by unscrupulous ignorance which had taken no degrees. Considering that statistics had not yet embraced a calculation as to the number of ignorant or canting doctors which absolutely must exist in the teeth of all changes, it seemed to Lydgate that a change in the units was the most direct mode of changing the numbers. He meant to be a unit who would make a certain amount of difference towards that spreading change which would one day tell appreciably upon the averages, and in the mean time have the pleasure of making an advantageous difference to the viscera of his own patients. But he did not simply aim at a more genuine kind of practice than was common. He was ambitious of a wider effect: he was fired with the possibility that he might work out the proof of an anatomical conception and make a link in the chain of discovery ...

He was not going to have his vanities provoked by contact with the showy worldly successes of the capital, but to live among people who could hold no rivalry with that pursuit of a great idea which was to be a twin object with the assiduous practice of his profession. There was fascination in the hope that the two purposes would illuminate each other: the careful observation and inference which was his daily work, the use of the lens to further his judgment in special cases, would further his thought as an instrument of larger inquiry. Was not this the typical pre-eminence of his profession? He would be a good Middlemarch doctor, and by that very means keep himself in the track of far-reaching investigation. On one point he may fairly claim approval at this particular stage of his career: he did not mean to imitate those philanthropic models who make a profit out of poisonous pickles to support themselves while they are exposing adulteration, or hold shares in a gambling-hell that they may have leisure to represent the cause of public morality. He intended to begin in his own case some particular reforms which were quite certainly within his reach, and much less of a problem than the demonstrating of an anatomical conception. One of these reforms was to act stoutly on the strength of a recent legal decision, and simply prescribe, without dispensing drugs or taking percentage from druggists. This was an innovation for one who

had chosen to adopt the style of general practitioner in a country town, and would be felt as offensive criticism by his professional brethren. But Lydgate meant to innovate in his treatment also, and he was wise enough to see that the best security for his practising honestly according to his belief was to get rid of systematic temptations to the contrary.<sup>8</sup>

No portrait of a physician could be more endearing! Now, as then, many young physicians combine exalted intellectual ambitions with selfless, absorbed dedication in their work. Eliot reminds us of how noble such a manner of living is, with continually broadening mental horizons and the satisfactions of humanistic interaction and social good in one's daily work. But having reminded us of the preciousness of intellectual activity, Eliot invites us to speculate on the potential for Lydgate's success:

We are not afraid of telling over and over again how a man comes to fall in love with a woman and be wedded to her, or else be fatally parted from her. Is it due to excess of poetry or of stupidity that we are never weary of describing what King James called a woman's "makdom and her fairnesse," never weary of listening to the twanging of the old roudour strings, and are comparatively uninterested in that other kind of "makdom and fairnesse" which must be wooed with industrious thought and patient renunciation of small desires? In the story of this passion, too, the development varies: sometimes it is the glorious marriage, sometimes frustration and final parting. And not seldom the catastrophe is bound up with the other passion, sung by the Troubadours. For in the multitude of middle-aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them much in the same way as the tie of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deeds and alter the world a little. The story of their coming to be shapen after the average and fit to be packed by the gross, is hardly ever told even in their consciousness; for perhaps their ardor in generous unpaid toil cooled as imperceptibly as the ardor of other youthful loves, till one day their earlier self walked like a ghost in its old home and made the new furniture ghastly. Nothing in the world more subtle than the process of their gradual change! In the beginning they inhaled it unknowingly: you and I may have sent some of our breath towards infecting them, when we uttered our conforming falsities or drew our silly conclusions: or perhaps it came with the vibrations from a woman's glance.

Does it seem incongruous to you that a Middlemarch surgeon should dream of himself as a discoverer? Most of us, indeed, know little of the great originators until they have been lifted up among the constellations and already rule our fates. But that Herschel, for example, who "broke the barriers of the heavens"-did he not once play a provincial church-organ, and give music-lessons to stumbling pianists? Each of those Shining Ones had to walk on the earth among neighbors who perhaps thought much more of his gait and his garments than of anything which was to give him a title to everlasting fame: each of them had his little local personal history sprinkled with small temptations and

sordid cares, which made the retarding friction of his course towards final companionship with the immortals. Lydgate was not blind to the dangers of such friction, but he had plenty of confidence in his resolution to avoid it as far as possible: being seven-and-twenty, he felt himself experienced ...<sup>9</sup>

Osler saw Lydgate as both an example and a warning, writing that 'the warning in his case is plain – not to marry a fool with a pretty face!' and adding, 'Would that the Lydgates existed only in fiction!'<sup>10</sup> But to take this view of the novel is to miss both its lesson and its intelligent complexity. Lydgate loses his way as a result of his marriage, yes – but his marriage is the further result of the 'spots of commonness' that Eliot reminds us even men of genius possess in their make-up.

Among our valued friends is there not some one or other who is a little too self confident and disdainful; whose distinguished mid is a little spotted with commonness; who is a little pinched here and protruberant there with native prejudices; or whose better energies are liable to lapse down the wrong channel under the influence of transient solicitations?<sup>11</sup>

In Lydgate, she tells us,

'that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour, did not penetrate his feeling and judgement about furniture, or women, or the desirability of it being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons.'<sup>12</sup>

Lydgate's commonplace prejudices about women, combined with his native tender-heartedness, marries him to – well, Osler's description of her as 'a fool' loses the compassionate unfaltering insight that Eliot shows and that doctors might ideally aspire to in their relations with their patients (and others). It is the character of Rosamund's foolishness that is important, and she is not so much a fool as a woman of intense egoism, with entirely worldly ideas and ambitions, for whom Lydgate is merely a constellations of signs that initially fit him for the chief role in her preconceived romance. In these days where 'reflective practice' is promoted, Eliot's work should inspire us to scrutinise our own prejudices as thoroughly as possible. Osler himself, among other things a man infected with notions of the importance of the British Empire, was not free of them, though none cost him his career.

That Lydgate should find himself struggling to keep his grand aims in view while increasingly hampered by his marriage and by financial difficulties that come to prey daily on his mind to the exclusion of science may be the inevitable result of his character (both his faults and his virtues) combined with the misconceptions and anxieties of the uneducated and prejudiced social milieu in which he lives and works. But the joylessness that pervades his life is no less poignantly described:

Lydgate's discontent was much harder to bear; it was the sense that there was a grand existence in thought and effective action lying around him, while his self was being narrowed into the miserable isolation of egoistic fears, and

vulgar anxieties for events that might allay such fears ...Only those who know the supremacy of the intellectual life – the life which has a seed of ennobling thought and purpose within it – can understand the grief of one who falls from that serene activity into the absorbing soul-wasting struggle with worldly annoyances.<sup>13</sup>

The web of his difficulties eventually leads Lydgate to a moment of moral weakness and consequently to a situation that could cost him his professional life. He fails to fully investigate a death because he does not wish to question the financial benefactor on whom he has become wholly reliant. Modern investigators of clinical ethics and of lapses in medical professionalism will appreciate, as Osler undoubtedly did, the sympathetic complexity and subtle shades of grey with which Eliot describes this and other moral crises faced by the characters of Middlemarch. Lydgate's case is neither simply bad or illegal, but rather enmeshed in both the social context of the event and in the whisperings of his own heart and conscience. When the death occurs, he is conscious that he had recommended a treatment that, in keeping with his dedication to scientific innovation, was at odds with that of his fellow practitioners (for those interested, it was to shockingly *withhold* alcohol (then considered a great fortifier of the ill) from one suffering delirium tremens); that the outcome was in any case uncertain; and that there was little to be gained by offending either his benefactor by instituting an inquiry, when the outcome could not be changed.

That was the uneasy corner of Lydgate's consciousness while he was reviewing the facts and resisting all reproach. If he had been independent, this matter of a patient's treatment and the distinct rule that he must do or see that done that which he believed best for the life committed to him, would have been the point on which he would have been the sturdiest. As it was, he had rested in the consideration that disobedience to his orders, however it might have arisen, could not be considered a crime, that in the dominant opinion obedience to his orders was just as likely to be fatal, and that the affair was simply one of etiquette. Whereas, again and again, in his time of freedom he had renounced the perversion of pathological doubt into moral doubt, and had said 'the purest experiment in treatment may still be conscientious ...the very breath of Science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive.' Alas! The scientific conscience had got into the debasing company of money obligation and selfish respects.<sup>14</sup>

Doctors today will easily relate to the ways in which political and social pressures can influence both treatment decisions and the ways in which we rationalise our actions. Perhaps more importantly for the medical humanities, they, like other readers, will be uncomfortably compelled as Eliot reveals how immoral actions come into being. Very few people intend to act in a manner that is simply deceptive or base, as she writes of Mr Bulstrode the banker, Lydgate's benefactor:

He did not measure the quantity of diseased motive which had made him wish for Lydgate's goodwill, but the quantity was nonetheless actively there, like an



irritating agent in his blood. A man vows, yet will not cast away the means of breaking his vow. Is it that he distinctly means to break it? Not at all; but the desires which tend to break it are at work in him dimly and make their way into his imagination, and relax his muscles in the very moments when he is telling himself over again the reasons for his vow.

He was simply a man whose desires had been stronger than his theoretic beliefs, and who had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs.<sup>15</sup>

Lydgate – who, like another character in the novel and indeed, like us all – is not unmixedly adorable – has had mixed reviews over the years, sometimes being deplored as a kind of fool and buffoon himself.<sup>16</sup> Yet I find a potent heroism in the actions he manages to take at the times when he is most conscious of loss and failure. Some of these actions are prompted by his chosen role as Healer, which remains the centrally defining impulse of his life. In the worst crisis he acts first as a doctor:

‘Bulstrode grasped the corner of the chair so totteringly that Lydgate felt sure there was not strength enough in him to walk away without support. What could he do? He could not see a man sink close to him for want of help. He rose and gave his arm to Bulstrode, and in that way led him out of the room; yet this act, which might have been one of gentle duty and pure compassion, was at this moment unspeakably bitter to him. It seemed as if he were putting his sign manual to that association of himself with Bulstrode, of which he now saw the full meaning as it must have presented itself to other minds. He now felt the conviction that this man who was leaning tremblingly on his arm, had given him the thousand pounds as a bribe, and that somehow the treatment of Raffles had been tampered with from an evil motive ... Poor Lydgate, his mind struggling under the terrible clutch of this revelation, was all the while morally forced to take Mr Bulstrode to the Bank, send a man off for his carriage, and wait to accompany him home.’<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, Lydgate struggles constantly to maintain the heartbeats of his marriage, as Eliot poignantly describes:

It was as if a fracture in delicate crystal had begun, and he was afraid of any movement that might make it fatal. His marriage would be a mere piece of bitter irony if they could not go on loving each other. ... the first great disappointment had been borne: the tender devotedness and docile adoration of the ideal wife must be renounced, and life must be taken up on a lower stage of expectation, as by men who have lost their limbs. But his real wife had not only her claims, she had still a hold on his heart, and it was his intense desire that the hold should remain strong. In marriage the certainty, ‘she will never love me much’ is easier to bear than the fear, I shall love her no more.<sup>18</sup>

And we who live in the age of divorce may yet appreciate that there is both honour and admirable self sacrifice in his choosing to make his life by placing Rosamund's happiness above any other concern.

In fact, throughout the novel Eliot explores what moral failure and moral achievement might mean, and show these to be measured, not simply by outcomes or even actions, but by an individual's struggle overcome concern for self. The grand moments of the novel do not, after all, come from intellectual achievement, but from the achievement of selflessness. This is as true for the other characters as for Lydgate, for our capacity for ruining our own best purposes through our mistakes, illusions and egoism is a central theme of the novel:

An eminent philosopher among my friends, who can dignify even your ugly furniture by lifting it into the serene light of science, has shown me this pregnant little fact. Your pier-glass or extensive surface of polished steel made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! The scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles around that little sun. It is demonstrable that the scratches are going everywhere impartially, and it is only your candle which produces the flattering illusion of a concentric arrangement, its light falling with an exclusive optical selection. These things are a parable. The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism any person now absent.<sup>19</sup>

But – to echo the novel – why always Lydgate? I am doing doctors a disservice by concentrating so exclusively on him, when the book tells the histories of another protagonist and three additional leading characters, supported by four major figures and a host of minor ones. Each places humorous insight and benevolent analysis at the service of the humanistic reader. The same themes are woven through these twined histories: the ardent desire to work selflessly towards the social good struggling against the fetters of social convention; the difficulties and delights of finding a vocation, and of working in a modest plodding daily way at it in the service of larger ends; the wearing pressures and self-restraint imposed by marriage; the internal struggles of scholarship; the importance of looking beyond our immediate desires.

Osler loved Eliot's lightly dropped analogies and the poetry she infused into her observations of daily humdrum existence. That Osler often referred to or quoted her<sup>20</sup> is testimony to the ways her observations had been caught and woven into his own life, and to the transient sense of grasping the ineffable – the fabric of existence, the meaning of our lives – that she provides. Osler became the doctor that Lydgate started out to be – and who knows but that it was the whispered repetition of Lydgate's story in his inmost heart that held him firmest to his purpose and encouraged him along the way.

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<sup>1</sup> Fulford, T. (ed) *Romanticism and Science, 1773-1833*. London: Routledge, 2002. On medicine in the Victorian period, see Pickstone, J. *Medicine and Industrial Society: A history of hospital development in Manchester and its region*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Iggers, G. *Historiography in the 20th Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997; Appleby, J., Hunt, L., and Jacob, M. *Telling the Truth About History*. New York: WW Norton, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> *Middlemarch* has attracted extensive scholarship since its first publication. Interested readers may enjoy: Hardy, B. *The Novels of George Eliot: A Study in Form*. London: Athlone Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1959; Harvey, W.J. *The Art of George Eliot*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1962; Bloom, Harold. *George Eliot's Middlemarch*. New York: Chelsea House, 1987; Wright, T. R. *George Eliot's Middlemarch*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Pelling, M. Scenes from professional life: medicine, moral conduct and interconnectedness in *Middlemarch*. In Ghosh, P., Goldman L. (eds) *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain: Essays in memory of Colin Matthew*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2006. p 223

<sup>5</sup> Bliss, M. *William Osler: A life in medicine*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Eliot, G. *Middlemarch*. W. J. Harvey, ed. London: Penguin, 1965 (reprinted 1988). pp. 169-175, chapter 15

<sup>7</sup> *Middlemarch*, pp. 174-77, chapter 15

<sup>8</sup> *Middlemarch*, pp. 173-76, chapter 15

<sup>9</sup> *Middlemarch*, pp. 172-177, chapter 15.

<sup>10</sup> Pelling, op. cit; Bliss, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> *Middlemarch*, p. 179, chapter 15

<sup>12</sup> *Middlemarch*, p. 179 chapter 15

<sup>13</sup> *Middlemarch*, p. 793 chapter 73

<sup>14</sup> *Middlemarch*, p 795 chapter 73

<sup>15</sup> *Middlemarch*, p 761

<sup>16</sup> Janis McLaren Caldwell. *Literature and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Britain: From Mary Shelley to George Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> *Middlemarch*, pp. 783-4, chapter 71.

<sup>18</sup> *Middlemarch*, p. 702, chapter 64

<sup>19</sup> *Middlemarch*, p. 297 chapter 27

<sup>20</sup> Eg in his address 'Doctor and Nurse', when speaking of how we live as if the suffering that we know surrounds us is not really there, Osler quoted a lovely snippet from *Middlemarch*: 'if we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow or the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar that lives on the other side of silence.' Osler, W. *A Way of Life and Other Addresses*. Shigeaki Hinohara, Hisae Niki (eds). Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001, p. 102