

THE OSLER CLUB OF LONDON

IN connexion with the Darwin centenary, a meeting of the club was held on 8 October 1958, at the Royal College of Physicians of London. Professor Robert Platt, M.D., President of the College, gave an address on 'Darwin, Mendel, and Dalton'. Among those who took part in the subsequent discussion were Sir Charles Darwin, Lady Barlow, Dr. Erasmus Darwin Barlow, Sir Gavin de Beer, Professor D. M. S. Watson, and Dr. George W. Corner. Professor Platt's address appears in this issue of *Medical History* (p. 87).

The November meeting, held at the Medical Society of London, on Guy Fawkes night, was dedicated to Albrecht von Haller. Dr. Heinrich Buess, Professor of the History of Medicine in the University of Basle, read a paper on 'Albrecht von Haller and his *Elementa physiologiae* as the Beginning of Pathological Physiology'. At the conclusion of the main paper Dr. E. M. Bircher of the Swiss Embassy spoke on Haller as a poet; Mr. W. J. Bishop gave a short estimate of Haller's achievements as a bibliographer; and Dr. F. N. L. Poynter dealt with Haller's place in the history of anatomical illustration. Professor Buess's paper is printed in this issue (p. 123).

On 9 December 1958, the club visited the Royal Microscopical Society. Mr. John Bunyan, L.D.S., President of the Society, gave an address on 'The development of the Microscope and its Application to Medicine', and Dr. E. H. Mercer of the Chester Beatty Research Institute spoke on electron microscopy. A special exhibition of early microscopes had been set up for the occasion.

On 23 January 1959, the club held a dinner meeting at the Talbot Restaurant in honour of the bicentenary of Robert Burns. The guest speaker was Mr. Archibald L. Goodall, M.D., F.R.C.S.Ed., Honorary Librarian of the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, who took as his topic 'The Treatment of Burns by the Doctors'. Professor James R. Sutherland, Lord Gorell, and Sir George Rostrevor Hamilton took part in the discussion following Mr. Goodall's address. Miss Edith M. Lawson gave readings from Burns and Dr. Sinclair R. Wilson and Miss Sylvia Haggard rendered song settings of Burns's poems.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HISTORY OF
MEDICINE SOCIETY

THE opening meeting of the academic year was held on 24 October, when Sir Geoffrey Keynes spoke on the history of blood transfusion. There were about a hundred present, of whom two-thirds were undergraduates.

On 4 November, Mr. Peter Richards spoke on 'A Thousand Years of Leprosy in Scandinavia'. Leprosy is thought to have been endemic in Scandinavia since the time of the Vikings, and is still not quite extinct. There are thirteen known lepers in the Scandinavian countries today. The speaker's own work was concerned with medieval leper graveyards in Denmark, and it was shown that without doubt those buried there had suffered from leprosy. The lecture was illustrated with colour slides of the excavations and of the skeletons removed.

On 20 January, Mr. J. V. Kinnier Wilson, University Lecturer in Assyriology, read a paper on 'Some Diseases of Assyria and the Bible World'. This was based on an extensive study of texts, and, after explaining how there were in Assyria two different kinds of doctor, the speaker attempted to identify the syndromes described in some of the reports, especially deficiency diseases. The paper ended with a discussion of some Old Testament topics, including Job, Naaman, and the problem of 'leprosy'.