

Society Reports

The concept that worms cause disease goes back to antiquity. It probably arose partly from fear of serpents, partly because maggots could be found in dead or putrifying material and partly because worms were known to inhabit the gut of man and animals.

Owing to poor sanitation worm infestation was far commoner in the past than it is in civilized communities today. Many medical symptoms, including fevers, were ascribed to ascariasis in children. Intestinal obstruction with perforation was not uncommon when large numbers of worms were present. Treatment was crude, consisting mainly of bitters to drive the worms to the lower intestine, or sometimes sweet enemas to encourage them there. It was hoped that they would then be easily voided.

THE SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

THE twenty-eighth meeting of the Society was held on Friday, 1 March 1957, in the Hall of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, Mr. A. L. Goodall, F.R.C.S., the president, in the chair. Papers were read by Drs. R. A. Krause and A. T. Wallace respectively.

In his paper dealing with 'Healing as represented on Stamps' Dr. Krause discussed mythology and its medical associations, doctors' portraits, including literary doctors, physician-explorers and others, the contributions of scientists to healing, diseases, hospitals, sanatoria and congresses, illustrating his remarks by showing specimens from his own collection. In addition to these representative specimens, Dr. Krause also displayed his full collection of stamps with medical associations. This display was augmented by contributions made by a philatelist who was a guest at the meeting.

The second paper was given by Dr. Wallace who reviewed the life and work of Sir Robert Philip (1857-1939). Describing Philip's early discouraging experiences at the hands of the elder physicians, he showed how Philip, convinced that his outlook was the right one, evolved the dispensary system, the hospital for advanced cases of tuberculosis, the sanatorium for curable cases, and the farm colony for the rehabilitation of the convalescent. Philip's views on the notification of tuberculosis were also discussed. Finally, Dr. Wallace gave a delightful and sympathetic account of Philip as a man.

H. P. TAIT