

(From secretary's notebook)

CUS 417/118. 118  
(To J. W. Y. MacAlister, London)

Dear MacAlister:

Nov. 17, 1914.

It is not a good way to pull up the turnips to watch their growth, and we cannot make medical historians in a couple of years. I think if your friend will look over the material presented to the section, while perhaps it does not indicate much research, I do not think there is much that could be called folk-lore or gossip. What is wanted in this country is not dilettante students like myself and some others but real scholars and your friend will be interested to know that some of these are at work on serious medical research. Thistleton Dyer, for instance, is doing for us at the Press a splendid piece of work in Greek botanical terms, etc.; Withington is making a special study for us in Galen and Hippocrates for revision of the medical terms in Liddell & Scott. We have formed at the Bodleian a separate little department for the study of the history of science and medicine at which at present five are working, one making a comprehensive study of the English medical manuscripts; Singer is doing a very interesting unknown MS of Manfredi, another is collating and will edit an unknown MS of Maimonides; another is working at the Spanish medical MSS in the Library; while we have one of the Belgian professors at work on some interesting iatromathematical literature. Of course, this is the sort of stuff we need, and I think it is quite possible that we may gradually get associated with the history section a group of scholars, capable of doing spade work. If your friend wants a job in the historical branches send him along. The harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few. Thank you all the same for his criticism, but if he looks over the papers he will come to my view that it is a bit bilious.

Wm. Osler.